

Mahoosuc Range, ME



Your Guide

ROGER DOUCETTE

Years on location: 64

Favorite dayhike: North Percy

Peak, near Stratford, NH

Best post-hike meal: Smokin'

Good BBQ in Bethel, ME;

smokingoodbarbecue.com

From left: Approaching the summit of Goose Eye Mountain in Maine's Mahoosuc Range; according to his daughter-in-law, Roger Doucette "has lived and breathed this area his entire life."

HIDDEN IN THE SHADOW

Find bald, big-view summits, jumbled geology, and North Country beauty—without the hut crowds.

→ I'm a New England newcomer with only two years under my belt, which means that most New Hampshire chipmunks have more local status than I do. Luckily, I married into North Country authenticity. When I'm looking for the best hike—without squeezing into the ever-popular AMC huts—I look no further than my father-in-law, Roger

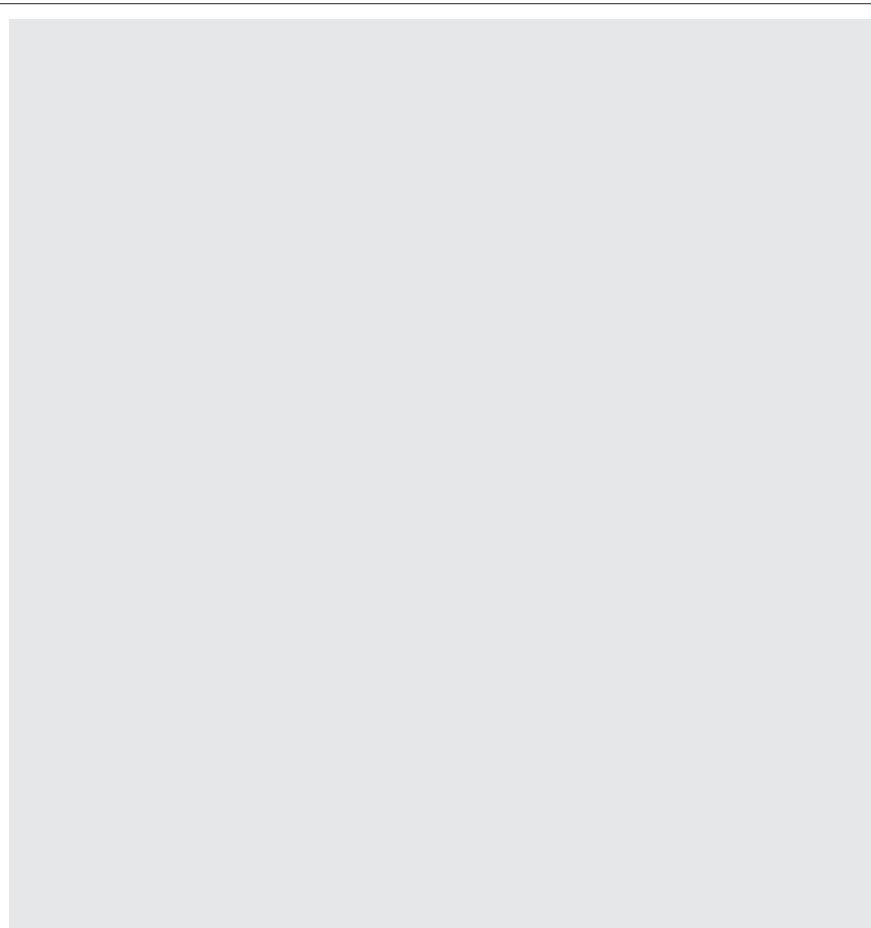
Doucette. His suggestion: the Mahoosuc Range just beyond the New Hampshire border in southern Maine. With bald summits, craggy outlooks, and trailside shelters, it's his standout favorite for classic Northeast backpacking. And he should know: He's lived within 40 miles of the Mahoosuc for 64 years and counting, and has hiked all 48 of the 4,000-footers in New Hampshire.

While you can travel the four-day, 31-mile hike in either direction, going south to north builds anticipation (and stamina) for tackling the "toughest mile on the AT" on day three.

Start your trip heading up the Centennial Trail over three summits to Gentian Pond Shelter. Day two is a hair over 10 miles long and, en route, you can scout for plane wreckage from the 1954 crash of a twin-engine DC-3 on the side of Mt. Success before retiring at Full Goose Shelter for the night. Day three is the most demanding. Rest up at Fulling Mill Mountain with views of the Bull Branch gorge and Goose Eye Brook before tackling the AT's toughest mile through Mahoosuc Notch—choked full of garbage-truck-size boulders. Your reward: another 1,390 feet of climbing up Mahoosuc Arm to a wide-open summit view. From here, you're less than a mile from a dip into spruce- and fir-ensconced Speck Pond. After a final night in the nearby shelter, 4.6 miles and Old Speck's 4,170-foot summit are all that separate you from your post-hike celebration.

—MAJKA BURHARDT

TRIP PLANNER Shuttle 44.590192, -70.946574; 46 miles northeast of Berlin, NH, on ME 26 (private option: Trail Angels Hiker Services; \$120 up to three people; 978-855-9227; trailangelshikerservices.com) Trailhead 44.403986, -71.120167; 11 miles southeast of Berlin on Hogan Rd. Contact (603) 466-8116; outdoors.org



PHOTOS BY (FROM LEFT) TIM SEAWER; PETER DOUCETTE; COURTESY; LEANNA JOYNER