



Flattop Mountain Trail

Complete Alaska Hiking Guide

AnchorageHikes.com -- Alaska's #1 Hiking Resource

TRAIL STATISTICS

DISTANCE

3.4 mi RT

ELEVATION GAIN

1,350 ft

EST. TIME

2-3 hours

DIFFICULTY

MODERATE

DOGS ALLOWED

Yes - on leash

BEST SEASON

June - October

DIFFICULTY: MODERATE

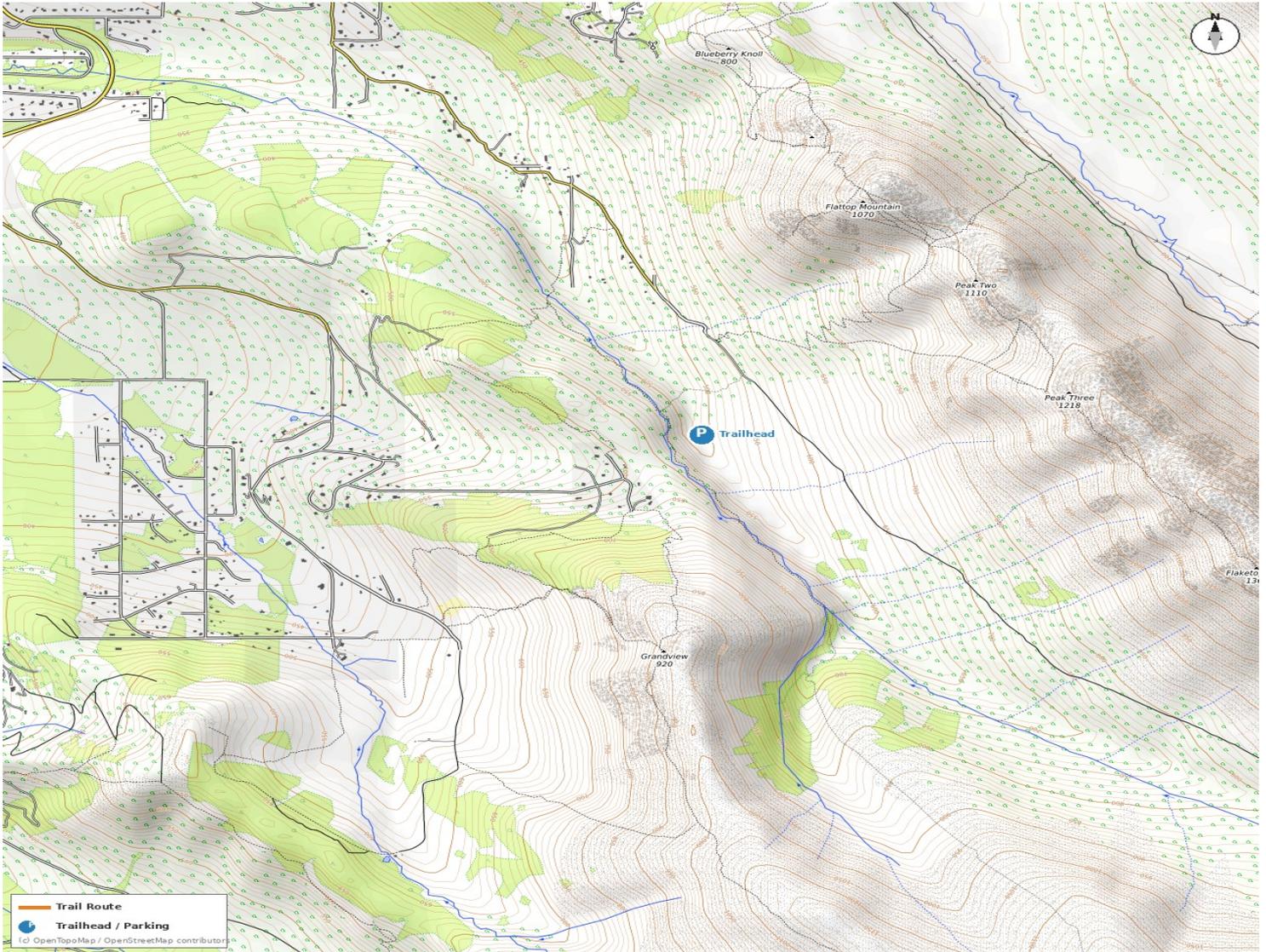
TRAIL HIGHLIGHTS

- 360 degree panoramic views of Anchorage & Cook Inlet
- Alaska Range visible on clear days
- Most summited peak in Alaska
- Tundra wildflowers (July-Aug)
- Dall sheep sometimes visible on ridge

IMPORTANT WARNINGS

- ! No water on trail -- bring all you need
- ! Summit can be icy April-June
- ! Bears active May-October -- make noise
- ! Weather changes rapidly -- check forecast
- ! Trail crowded weekends -- go early

TRAIL MAP -- FLATTOP MOUNTAIN TRAIL



Map: (c) OpenTopoMap contributors | Data: (c) OpenStreetMap contributors | anchoragehikes.com

MODERATE

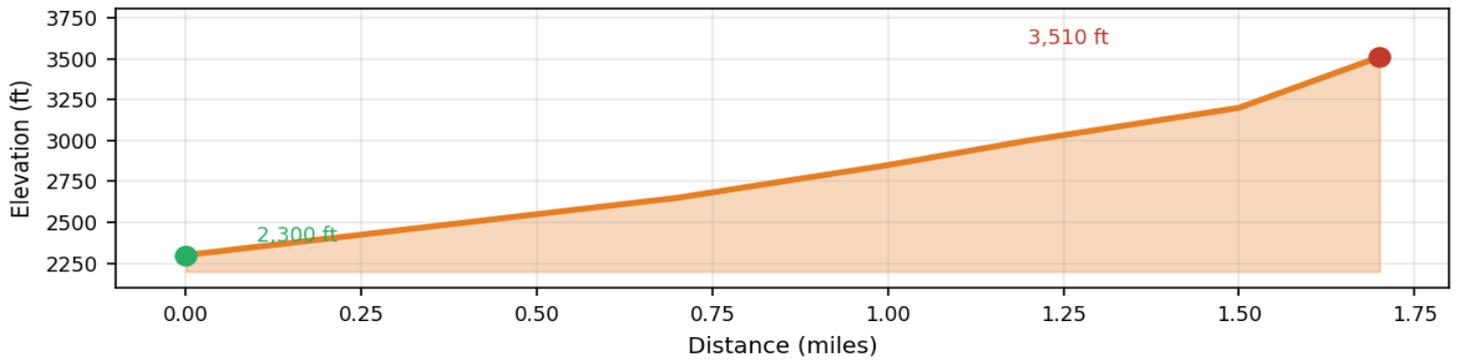
Dist: 3.4 mi RT

Elev Gain: 1,350 ft

Time: 2-3 hours

ELEVATION PROFILE

Elevation Profile - Flattop Mountain Trail | Gain: 1,210 ft



Flattop Mountain Trail Guide

Trail Overview

Flattop Mountain, a prominent peak in the Chugach Front Range, stands as Anchorage's most popular and accessible summit hike. Located within the vast expanse of Chugach State Park, this iconic trail offers a rewarding challenge with unparalleled panoramic views that stretch from the Anchorage cityscape across the shimmering waters of Cook Inlet to the distant Alaska Range. The trail ascends approximately 1,350 feet over 1.7 miles one way, culminating at an elevation of 3,510 feet. While the initial sections are moderate, the final push to the summit involves a strenuous rock scramble, making the overall experience a blend of scenic stroll and thrilling climb. Whether you're a seasoned local or a first-time visitor, Flattop promises an unforgettable Alaskan adventure, best enjoyed from late spring through early fall.

The Hike

Your journey begins at the Glen Alps Trailhead (approximately 2,160 feet elevation), where a wide, well-maintained gravel path gently ascends. The initial quarter-mile (0.25 miles) is a pleasant walk, often bustling with hikers and families. Here, the trail winds through subalpine brush, primarily dwarf birch and willow, offering your first glimpses of the expansive landscape unfolding behind you.

As you progress past the 0.5-mile mark, the trail gradually steepens and transitions to a rockier, more rugged surface. The path becomes a series of well-worn steps and switchbacks, often reinforced with wooden planks or retaining walls to combat erosion. Around the 0.75-mile point, you'll begin to appreciate the rapidly expanding vistas. To your left, the entire Anchorage bowl stretches out, framed by the sparkling waters of Cook Inlet and the distant outline of Mount Susitna, affectionately known as "Sleeping Lady." On exceptionally clear days, the snow-capped giants of the Alaska Range, including Denali, might grace the horizon far to the northwest.

Reaching the 1.0-mile mark, you are now well above the treeline, entering true alpine tundra. The terrain becomes increasingly rocky, with larger, natural rock steps forming a challenging but manageable ascent. This section can feel like a natural staircase carved into the mountain. The air often feels crisper here, and the views behind you continue to grow more dramatic with every step. You may encounter sections of loose scree, so watch your footing.

The final ascent, beginning around 1.5 miles from the trailhead, is where Flattop truly earns its "strenuous" rating. This is a legitimate rock scramble, requiring the use of hands as well as feet. The path here is less defined, often a choose-your-own-adventure over large boulders and steep rock faces. While some sections may offer remnants of old chains or ropes, they are often unnecessary for most hikers. Focus on three points of contact and test your handholds and footholds carefully. This segment is not for those with a fear of heights or limited mobility. Take your time, breathe, and enjoy the challenge, knowing the summit reward is just ahead.

Summit Experience

After navigating the final scramble, you'll emerge onto the broad, relatively flat summit of Flattop Mountain. At 3,510 feet, the sense of accomplishment is immediate and profound. The summit offers an unparalleled 360-degree panorama that is truly breathtaking. To the north and west, the entire Anchorage metropolitan area lies spread out like a map, with Cook Inlet's vast expanse leading your eye towards the distant Susitna Valley and the majestic peaks of the Alaska Range. To the south, Turnagain Arm snakes its way through the Chugach Mountains, a ribbon of turquoise water against a

GEAR CHECKLIST

Pack List for Flattop Mountain Trail

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hiking boots (ankle support recommended) | <input type="checkbox"/> Trekking poles (optional but helpful) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bear spray (accessible, not in pack) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunscreen & sunglasses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2L water minimum | <input type="checkbox"/> Navigation: map or offline GPS app |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Snacks/lunch | <input type="checkbox"/> First aid kit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rain jacket (weather changes fast) | <input type="checkbox"/> Headlamp |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Warm layer (windy at summit) | <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency whistle |

GETTING THERE

From Anchorage: Take O'Malley Rd east, turn on Hillside Dr, follow Upper Huffman Rd to Glen Alps Trailhead. \$5 parking fee. GPS: 61.0839, -149.6758.

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