



# Go Take A Hike

Good Places For Day Hikes  
Around The World

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## Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center, Alaska

A modest city bus trip out of Juneau, Alaska (12 miles) is the Mendenhall glacier with a Visitor Center. This is not technically a national park but part of the Tongass National Forest with the Visitor Center and trails operated by park rangers. The center has a number of informative exhibits and the rangers provide lectures and nature walks. There is a US\$5 admission fee to the area.

There are a number of short trails near the Visitor Center with a short stroll to some great views. For panoramic views of the lake, glacier, peaks and shoreline take the **Photo Point Trail** (0.3 miles) and **Nugget Falls Trail** (0.7). The **Moraine Ecology Trail** (1.5 miles) starts at the north side of the second parking lot. This trail offers a nice walk over a glacial plain and into the areas youngest forest. The **Trail of Time** forms a short loop (0.5miles) from the Visitor Center with a small gain in elevation that crosses Steep Creek twice.

From the Visitors Center it is only a short walk on **Nugget Falls Trail** (0.7 miles) to the base of the falls but the trail continues on for a nice hike of 3.8 miles along the glaciers edge (round trip 7.5 miles).



Three additional hiking trails begin behind the Visitor Center and travel up hill into forest. You will notice, the farther away and higher in elevation you are from the glacier and lake, the more diversity of broadleaf plants and larger trees you will see.

**East Glacier Loop** (3.5 miles) follows the glacial trim line (an area carved out during the glaciers advance) with an elevation gain of about 400 feet. As the glacier receded 200 years ago forest along this trail began to grow in and is

now beginning to develop some “old growth” forest characteristics.





As you hike the Mendenhall glacier's trails you'll get an opportunity to see regrowth patterns in the hardwood forest from the glacier receding over the past few hundred years as well as an appreciation of the incredible wildflowers, ferns and mosses taking advantage of the Alaska summer.



**Warning:** Many black bears are in the Mendenhall Visitor Center area feeding on the salmon in Steep Creek along with berries ripening in

late summer and fall to get ready for winter hibernation. When hiking make noise to let the bears know you're there, especially if by yourself or even in a small group. Carrying bear spray and insect repellent are recommended. Carrying a compact rain parka is also a good idea.

**Nugget Creek Trail** (3 miles + 3.5 mile access from East Glacier Loop trail) follows Nugget Creek above the falls with a 500 foot elevation gain. You may reach this trail from the east portion of East Glacier Loop along Nugget Creek.

