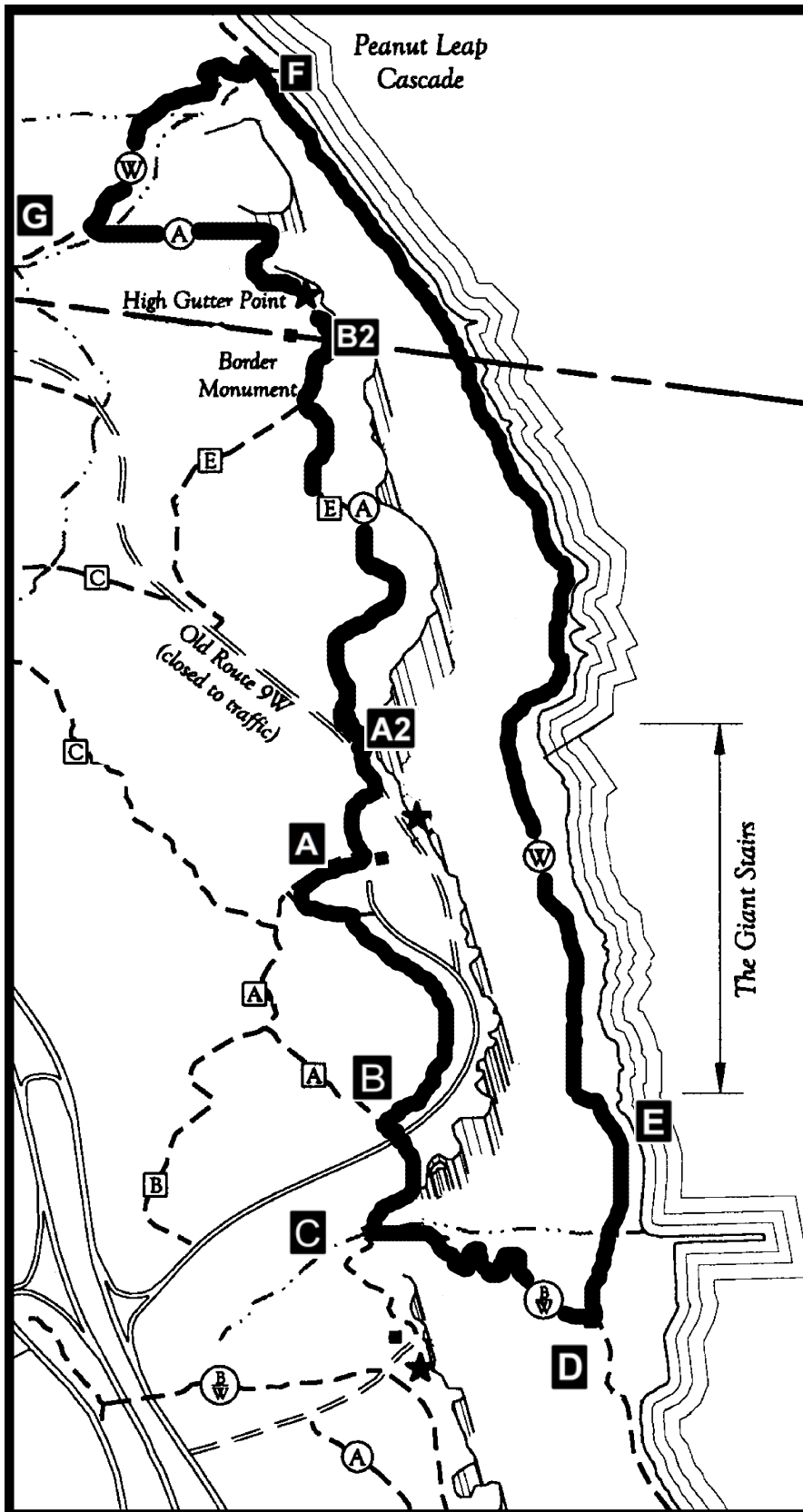


THE GIANT STAIRS

Palisades Interstate Park ♦ NJ Section



Area: State Line

Length: 3 miles (includes steep descent, mile-long rock scramble, and a steep climb)

Time: 2+ hours

Parking: State Line Lookout

Bus Access: See "Point Lookout" hike description on our "Public Transportation" page

TIPS FOR HIKERS

- *Always tell someone where you're going and when you expect to be back.* This is just good hiking sense, no matter where you go.
- *Wear sturdy, comfortable shoes that are not brand new.* Ankle support is crucial, especially on the Giant Stairs. Shoes not broken in will likely cause blisters.
- *Take care of your body.* Bring plenty of water (and drink it up as you go). Some basic first aid supplies are always a good idea, too, as are some snacks.
- *Dress or pack for all possible weather conditions predicted for that day.* Layers are the wisest way to dress for the outdoors—you can add or subtract as you go. We also strongly recommend long-sleeved clothing, even in warmer weather. Poison ivy thrives on the Palisades; ticks are common. Long clothing with a spray of repellent at the cuffs is your best defense.
- *Look out for poisonous snakes.* The copperhead snake is relatively common here, if seldom seen. Snakes tend to be shy, so simply watch your step—and don't reach up into stones you cannot see...

GIANT STAIRS HIKE DESCRIPTION

Begin this loop hike at Lookout Inn at State Line Lookout. From here, you can begin by going either south or north.

To begin south: Begin at Lookout Inn and head south along Old Route 9W, following the aqua blazes of the Long Path [A] as they follow Old Route 9W (once you pass the barrier stones, you are on the active roadway on which you drove into the Lookout, so use caution here). About 100 yards along, you will see where the aqua blazes leave the road through a gap in the parapet stones, and the trail enters the woods [B]. The trail goes down a ravine on stone steps. At the base of the Ravine, the aqua trail intersects the blue-and-white-blazed Forest View Trail [C]; here you will turn left (east) on the Forest View Trail, taking it down to the river, where it will end at the white-blazed Shore Trail [D] (this descent is very steep). Take white north about a quarter mile to the beginning of the Giant Stairs [E], a formation created by thousands of rockslides over the eons. You'll scramble over the rocks for about a mile, following the white blazes all the way (some of these, you'll notice, are in the shape of half-moons—don't let this throw you). The Shore Trail finally levels off along the river, and goes to Peanut Leap Cascade [F]. After a steep ascent on white, turn left (south) on the aqua-blazed Long Path [G], cross the stream, and follow the Long Path back to start.

To begin north: Head north along Old Route 9W [A2], noting the aqua blazes of the Long Path along the way—you'll be following these markers for the first part of this hike. About 100 yards along, the Long Path leaves the old cement road and goes into the woods, more or less following the cliff edge (and for a while overlapping Ski Trail E). About 1 mile along, you come to the State Line Monument and a chain link fence [B2]; here the trail jogs right (east) to go around the fence, and begins to descend a series of stone steps, with excellent vistas north toward the Tappan Zee. At the base of the steps, the trail jogs to the left, to bear northwest for a time and so headed away from the river. In less than 0.5 miles, you'll cross a stream on wooden bridges [G]. Across this stream, turn right (east), at the start of the white-blazed Shore Trail that follows the stream toward the river. Just before the river, this trail gets quite steep and is prone to erosion—use caution. You will arrive at river level at the base of Peanut Leap Cascade [F]. Continue on the white-blazed Shore Trail as it heads south along the Hudson, then follow it over the Giant Stairs [E], finally to the trailhead of the blue-and-white-blazed Forest View Trail [D]. This will lead you steeply back up to the aqua-blazed Long Path. Here, turn right (north), still going up, and follow the Long Path back to the starting point [A].

Phone: 201 768-1360

In case of emergency call Park Police:

201 768-6001



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