

Overlook Mountain elev. 3,150

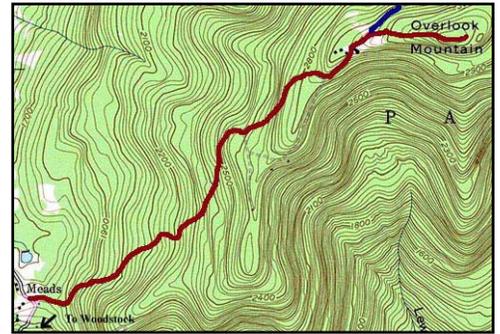
Distance: 5 miles round trip

Elevation Gain: 1400 ft

Hike Time: 3 hours

Difficulty: Moderate

Trail Condition: Fire road/pavement



Overlook Mountain is surely one of the most interesting in all of the Catskills. Its close proximity to Woodstock has made it a popular destination for tourists. Although the Overlook Mountain Wild Forest only covers 590 acres, its rocky slopes make for a very interesting day hike. The open ledges around Overlook's summit and exposed bedrock along the trail offer many clues about the geologic history of the Catskills. An open, south-facing rock ledge just prior to reaching the tower, offers some of the most spectacular views of how the Hudson Valley abruptly changes into the Catskill Mountains. One trip up Overlook and you will realize why this mountain was the focus of many works by famous Hudson River School painters in the 1800s.

Overlook Mountain gives us the Hudson Valley of lore and literature, and the quaintness of the Catskills. It's an easy climb if steadily upward, so it refreshes the heart and the leg muscles – and it's a quick five miles too. The clean white, red and gold trim of the Tibetan Buddhist Monastery at the trailhead is always sort of a shock! The hiker is summarily disinterested – we want beauty of unspoiled nature. Two-thirds the way up, though, is the enigma -- the gray stone carcass of the



Overlook Mountain House. This was once a splendid mountain villa offering the highest party house of an era when the Catskills were the joy of weekend getaways and magnificent parties, way back since 1871. It is lonely and



naked and sad now ... yet it's not the only monument of an earlier time on Overlook .

The fire observation tower has recently been reopened, looking handsome with a relatively new coat of silver paint. But – notice, too, the sandstone beds, building up a plateau of quiet, "rippling" sandstone layers, onto which the tall fire tower is bolted to. These broken tablets of time plainly show criss-cross trace of an ancient rushing water, perhaps an underwater current of deep oceans roaring on.

Originally located on Gallis Hill near Kingston, NY in 1927, the Overlook Mountain Fire Tower was moved to its present location in the Catskill Forest Preserve in 1950. The 60' Aermotor steel tower with 7'x7' metal cab was active through 1988. It was reactivated briefly in 1990 during a period of dry weather.

Directions to Trailhead :

From Hunter, Take Rt 23A East to Rt 214 South. Take Rt 28 East to Rt 212 to Woodstock. From the center of Woodstock, take right on Rock City Road. This road becomes Mead Mountain Road after crossing Glasco Turnpike. The parking area is on the right across from the Buddhist Temple - about 1.5 miles from Rte 212 .