

DONE IN A DAY

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Walk the Line

Part the waters of America on these dayhikes across continental divides. BY LAURA LANCASTER

ALSO ON OUR LIST

Continental Divide, Glacier National Park, Montana
In terms of sheer grandeur, you simply can't beat the Continental Divide, which stretches across North America, splitting the watersheds of the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. For a king-of-the-world view from the divide, hike to Glacier's Garden Wall near the midpoint of an 11.3-mile shuttle hike from Logan Pass to Going-To-The-Sun Road (take an \$8 shuttle back to your car). **Contact** nps.gov/glac

Great Basin Divide

MT. SAN JACINTO STATE PARK, CALIFORNIA

Fly high above the arid Coachella Valley on this 11-mile out-and-back up 10,834-foot San Jacinto Peak. In addition to the *au naturel* A/C, you'll get hundred-mile views from the Great Basin Divide, where snowmelt and rainwater flow west to the Pacific and east to the Salton Sea. First, take the Palm Spring Aerial Tramway (\$25 round-trip), then hop on the Round Valley Trail. (The ultrafit can hike the 4.6 miles, gaining some 6,000 feet, to this point.) Head 3.1 miles through wetlands to Wellman Divide, where you can pinpoint the art deco architecture of the Palomar Observatory—"the cathedral of astronomy"—30 miles southwest. Next, follow the Peak Trail 2.4 miles to the short summit spur. From the top, straddle the Great Basin Divide and savor the vertigo-inducing 10,000-foot drop-off to the desert floor and, on a clear day, ocean views. **Contact** bit.do/mtsanjacintosp

Laurentian Divide

LAURENTIAN DIVIDE RECREATION AREA, MINNESOTA

This hike through Middle America's 500-foot-tall Mesabi Range may be the closest you ever come to dipping your toes in the Arctic Ocean. The host of the Laurentian Divide, these mountains separate the watersheds of the Atlantic (1,300 miles east) and the Arctic (2,000 miles north). Explore it on the recreation area's southernmost trail, a 6-mile unnamed loop. Travel counterclockwise past ancient, striated granite to the Laurentian Divide at mile 2.5. Cross the ridge and descend into the drainage (that ultimately feeds the Arctic Ocean) before looping 3 miles back. Extra credit: Bag 1,840-foot Lookout Mountain via a .5-mile spur at signpost F to see the "Hill of Three Waters," a forested ridge where the Laurentian and St. Lawrence Divides intersect to create a rare triple continental divide. **Contact** bit.do/laurentian-divide

Eastern Divide

BLACK ROCK MOUNTAIN STATE PARK, GEORGIA

Summit Black Rock Mountain in Georgia's highest-elevation state park and not only will you get some of the best views in the Southeast, but you'll straddle the divide that separates the watersheds of the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Ocean—not too shabby for a 2.2-mile walk. Take the yellow-blaze Tennessee Rock Loop 1.4 miles beneath a canopy of mature hardwoods and Eastern white pines to the crest of the Eastern Divide atop the 3,640-footer. From there, head .5 mile along the ridge to the overlook at Tennessee Rock for views of 4,783-foot Brasstown Bald (Georgia's high point) and endless rows of green peaks. Loop .3 mile back to the trailhead. For some geologic history, check out the boulderfield—Ice Age remnants—on Tennessee Rock via a short spur near mile. **Contact** bit.do/black-rock-mountain

FIRST TRACKS

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Be a trailblazer.

Good things come to those who wait. Pieced together over the course of nearly 50 years, Southern California's 67-mile Backbone Trail is finally complete. The footpath splits the coastal Santa Monica Mountains through a super-biodiverse Mediterranean ecosystem of chaparral shrublands. Take a week to do the whole path or sample it on the 8-mile section from the terminus in Will Rogers State Park to Eagle Rock in Topanga State Park. Do this easternmost stretch in a day or overnight at the quiet, eucalyptus-lined Musch Trail Camp about 1.5 miles past Eagle Rock. **Contact** bit.do/backbone-trail