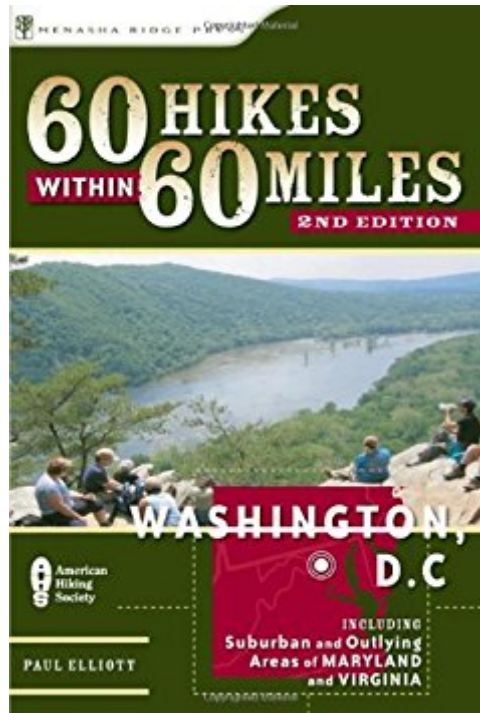


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60 Hikes Within 60 Miles: Washington, D.C.



Customer Reviews

I've tried to like this guide, I really have. The author seems a nice fellow. The hikes are diverse and interesting. The writeups include a nice dollop of history. And it's got 60 hikes -- that's a lot of hikes. But it is not 'above average.' Why? First, it's occasionally unreliable. Take hike #7, on and near Catholic University. The author sends you behind the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center to 'savor the view' from a grassy knoll. A parking lot and air compressors are what you savor. (Related warning: the depiction of the trails in the northeast section of the hike #35 map, Mason Neck, is seriously flawed.) Second, I have a dog. Can I take my dog on these hikes? I can't tell. You won't find the words 'pet', 'dog', 'leash' anywhere. Finally, the directions are just a little sloppy at times. For instance, hike #14 (Black Hill Regional Park) tells you to go "right" at an orange pole that has a number of trails emanating from it. It took me half a mile to realize I was heading too far south for it to be the right trail. The best guides often organize hikes around mileage - they mark notable features always starting with the mileage the hiker has gone from the start and then describe what you should do or what you will find there. "60 Hikes" is written up more as a travel log. The mileage is often there, but its thrown in at different spots. Sometimes the directions have too much detail and other times not enough. In short, it's just harder to follow if you are trying to use it on the trail. Are these big problems? Not really, but that's what separates the good guides from the great guides.

This is a great book for the beginner hiker to know what's out there. However my main gripe is that in the front of the book he lists which hikes are metro accessible. But when you go to the hike, no where does it actually say which metro to get off at. Also some of the "hikes" in DC are made up. I don't consider walking on city blocks an actual hike. Some color pictures would have been nice, but there are plenty of nice b&w pictures though.

I like this book a lot, but it has strengths and weaknesses. As a previous reviewer said, sometimes the descriptions are inconsistent, vacillating between lots of detail and micromanaging the turns, then a will switch to long intervals with no description. So, honestly, prepare for a wrong turn or backtracking; I've had to do that more than once using this book. As the book suggests, you should NOT use this guide as your only map. If you really want to make sure you stay on the hikes as suggested, get the 'official' map for the area and mark out the trail described in advance. However, what this book offers is really a great way to discover DC and some surrounding areas. I actually love the idea that the writer uses the idea of 'hike' loosely, to include some areas that are urban, and even suggested paddles and bikes as part of the experience. Even on well-used trails like Rock

Creek Park, the writer tends to lead you on some of the less-well-beaten side trails, with interesting descriptions of the flora and views. It's true, as writers have said, that some additional info you might want is not in there, but in this day and age, don't you have the metro stops on your phone, anyway? And the thing about pets: pet rules in parks tend to change, sometimes quickly, so I'm not sure you would want that info in a book, you should probably plan to be looking up that info in a more current place, anyway. Still, I understand the gripes. Finally, it's true some of the "best known hikes" in the area aren't in the book. To which I say "exactly". Do you really need another mention of Old Rag? I think this book is a curated selection of hikes for all levels. I own about a dozen hiking books, 3 of which cover the same region as this book, but this one is still my favorite, I go to it time and time again and am never disappointed.

I don't feel like writing an extensive review, but I will say this: This book is great for people who have no clue about hikes or trails in the DC area...but for someone who's been on or at least heard of many of these...it's very limited. In fact, there are several trails/hikes I know of WELL inside of this book's geographic range that are not included. Long story short: good for beginners/older folks/people new to the area...not so much for outdoorsy people who have lived in the DC area for a while.

I first spotted an earlier print version of this guide at my friend's place. I was amazed how clear and comprehensive it was! I used to spend a few hours before going on a hike researching the best options online, and I never thought that a book can replace that extensive research. Now all my ideas come first from the book. I search for additional tips online here and there, but it is not necessary. So far I tried 8 out of the hikes and experience been nothing but positive.

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