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7 Best Hiking Boots of 2024

By [Amanda Capritto](#)



Reviewed by [Marlo Jappen Porto](#)

Updated: May 16, 2024



Save

Your boots make or break your hike. They can be the reason why you finish a 10-miler feeling triumphant, or they can prompt you to turn around just miles into the trail.

While what constitutes hiking boots may be entirely subjective to the hiker, there are certainly factors that differentiate an OK boot from an excellent one. The writer of this piece, Amanda Capritto, an ardent hiker with years of experience, shares her top picks – all pairs she has worn on trails. While she recommends the Merrell Moab 3 Mid Hiking Boots as the best overall hiking boot, she also details other options for hikers of different budgets, experience levels, and terrain preferences.

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Best Overall

Merrell Moab 3 Mid Hiking Boots »



PROS:

✓ Breathable and water

CONS:

✗ Not waterproof

resistant

- ✓ Available in wide sizes
- ✓ Made partially of recycled materials

✗ Heel-to-toe drop is significant (11.5 mm)

[Buy From Merrell](#)

The Merrell Moab 3 Mid Hiking Boots are a popular choice among novice and expert hikers alike thanks to their mid-range price point, comfortable midsole, and excellent outsole traction.

The durable upper (the part that covers the foot and ankle), which is constructed from suede and mesh, is patterned to be water-resistant yet breathable enough to keep your feet dry in warm weather. With a rubber toe cap and heel counter, plus 5-millimeter-deep outsole lugs, these Moab 3 hiking boots prove successful on rocky or gravelly trails.

Eco-conscious hikers will like how the Moab 3 is made partially from recycled materials; specifically, the laces, webbing, and mesh lining are 100% recycled.

Since these are more rigid boots, some hikers may find them uncomfortably stiff, at least until broken in. Additionally, the stark 11.5-millimeter heel-to-toe drop may come as a shock if you're used to a milder drop. Running shoes, including trail running shoes, typically feature a lesser drop of 6 to 10 millimeters.

Customer reviews indicate that the Moab Mid 3 may run a smidge small, so consider sizing up by a half or full size. Note that there's also a waterproof version of these shoes, available for \$150, and a Gore-Tex model, available for \$170. There are also several Merrell Moab collaboration models, such as with Jeep and Unlikely Hiker. Some models are available in wide sizes, too.

Specs

Price:

\$130

Material: Recycled mesh, suede, rubber, Merrell Air Cushion (Merrell proprietary midsole material)

Weight: 13.57 oz per shoe (women's size 9)

[Buy From Merrell »](#)

Best Budget

Columbia Trailstorm Mid Waterproof Hiking Bo...



(Photo by Amanda Capritto)

PROS:

- ✓ Affordable
- ✓ Water-repellent
- ✓ Great ankle support
- ✓ Available in wide sizes

CONS:

- ✗ Runs a bit narrow
- ✗ Waterproof design isn't the most breathable

[Buy From Amazon](#)

If you're looking for a pair of reliable hiking boots for a fair price, the Columbia Trailstorm Ascend Hiking Boot should be high on your list. The writer of this guide, Amanda Capritto, has worn the Trailstorms for years and recommends them to anyone who is on the hunt for a beginner-friendly hiking boot at a budget-friendly price point.

The Columbia Trailstorm hiking boots are a fantastic pick for individuals who may not be sure yet if they're going to stick with hiking for the long term. Their palatable price point of just \$100 — quite inexpensive for hiking boots — doesn't induce sticker shock, yet the boots bring a lot of ideal features to the trail.

For one, they're highly water-repellent. Capritto has taken them on coastal hikes through California and Oregon, as well as on marshy trails in South Louisiana, all without suffering one bit of trench foot.

Built with a reinforced rubber toe cap and heel counter, the Trailstorm boots perform well in rocky conditions. Although they're waterproof, Columbia utilized a pattern of mesh and leather overlays with a waterproof membrane to allow the feet to breathe a bit(though not as well as with non-waterproof boots).

Columbia's TechLite midsole provides a great deal of shock absorption without making the wearer feel like they're bouncing along the trail. This is ideal when control is needed to maintain your footing. Additionally, the multi-angled lugs of Columbia's Omni-Grip outsole dig into the earth at every point in your stride, keeping you sure-footed even on slippery surfaces.

Capritto found that the Trailstorm boots run a bit narrow. She didn't find them uncomfortable — proven by the fact that she wore them for more than 300 miles on trail — but would've appreciated a tad more wiggle room in the midfoot.

Ultimately, the Columbia Trailstorm Ascend boots are a solid budget pick, offering comfort, durability, and longevity at a very reasonable price point.

Specs

Price:

\$100

Materials:

Mixed leather and mesh upper, rubber outsole, waterproof membrane, TechLite (Columbia proprietary midsole material)

Weight:

14.7 oz per shoe (men's size 9)

[Buy From Amazon »](#)**Best for Winter****Columbia Ice Maiden II Winter Hiking Boot »**

(Photo by Amanda Capritto)

PROS:

- ✓ Warm, insulated interior
- ✓ Rated for temperatures down to negative 25 degrees Fahrenheit

CONS:

- ✗ Faux fur at the rim gets matted quite easily
- ✗ Sole feels stiff at first

[Buy From Amazon](#)

- ✓ Hits at the low calf to keep snow and debris out

For winter hiking boots, Capritto recommends the Columbia Ice Maiden II boots, which are grippy and waterproof yet flexible enough to allow for a full range of motion in the ankle.

The author has the original version of the Ice Maiden boots and has been wearing them for cold-weather hiking since she bought them for a trip to Yellowstone National Park in the winter of 2021. Since then, she has taken them on snowy hikes through various wintry locations. Though the new model comes with some changes, the Capritto can still speak to the performance.

Insulated to keep your feet warm in temperatures down to negative 25 degrees Fahrenheit, you can take these boots to high altitudes in frigid weather without worry. Most recently, the reviewer wore the Ice Maiden boots to summit the highest point in Texas, Guadalupe Peak (8,751 feet). She met a temperature of 13 degrees Fahrenheit at the summit and – even in all-day high winds – the boots kept her feet toasty.

On Capritto, the standard height collar sits just below the widest part of her calf, a height that's high enough to keep snow and ice-cold water out but low enough for her to remain comfortable and feel flexible. Featuring a leather upper and reinforced toe box, the design keeps moisture at bay even when slogging through ankle-deep snow.

Given the boots' waterproof and insulated design, they're not breathable and sweat can get trapped inside. With good socks that wick moisture well, you can mitigate some of that. Despite their durable, waterproof construction, the Ice Maiden boots weigh just over 1 pound per shoe –not ultra-light, but certainly not very heavy for a winter hiking boot.

Specs

Price: \$100

Material: Leather, TechLite (Columbia proprietary sole), rubber

Weight: 16.8 oz per shoe (women's size 7) midsole

[Buy From Amazon »](#)

Best for Trail Running

Brooks Cascadia Trail Runner »



(Photo by Amanda Capritto)

PROS:

- ✓ Low-top height allows for full ankle range of motion
- ✓ Flexible, breathable mesh upper

CONS:

- ✗ Bit of a narrow toe box
- ✗ Not available in wide sizes

[Buy From Amazon](#)

- ✓ Deep, angled outsole lugs provide great traction

Looking for something lightweight that offers a complete range of motion in the ankle, feels light and flighty, yet protects your feet from sharp rocks and jagged terrain? Consider the Brooks Cascadia Trail Running Shoe, a favorite among hikers and trail runners alike.

Capritto owns and loves the Cascadia 16, but Brooks has since released the 17th iteration of this widely beloved trail running shoe. The updates include even better traction on the 17s and updated rock plates, but the models are more or less the same.

A neutral running shoe, the Cascadia lacks medial or lateral support shanks that might be required for individuals who overpronate (placing excess stress on the inner side of your foot) or oversupinate (placing excess stress on the outer side of your foot).

That being said, the shoes still offer an element of support: Brooks' Trail Adapt System combines "responsive cushioning, adaptable plate, and outsole pods that adapt to uneven ground."

The Cascadias feature Brooks' DNA Loft v2 cushioning, a midsole material known for providing soft landings yet offering energy return for a lightly bouncy stride. Underfoot rock plates protect your feet from pebbles, sharp points in terrain, and debris like sticks as you run.

At 11 ounces per shoe, the Brooks Cascadia trail runners are not the lightest-weight option, but far from the heaviest. The reviewer finds that they offer durability and protection without weighing you down like heavier trail runners might.

Specs

Price:

\$130

Material: Woven mesh, textile, rubber, EVA (ethylene-vinyl acetate) foam

Weight: 10.5 oz per shoe (men's size 9)

[Buy From Amazon »](#)

Best for Long Distance

HOKA Anacapa 2 Mid GTX Boot »



PROS:

- ✓ Thick EVA midsole provides superb cushioning and shock absorption
- ✓ Nubuck leather and Gore-Tex membrane provide ultimate water repellency

CONS:

- ✗ Maximal cushioning may feel unstable or overly plush for some hikers
- ✗ Outsole could use more grip

[Buy From REI](#)

- ✓ Mid-top height provides ample ankle support

The HOKA Anacapa 2 Mid GTX Boot earns the spot for the best long-distance hiking boot because of its supreme shock absorption, lightweight feel, and water resistance.

HOKA has become well-known for its ability to craft cloud-like running shoes that may have an inch or more of cushioning, yet don't feel clunky or awkward. That rings true for the Anacapa boot, which features a thick stack height and 7-millimeter heel-to-toe drop with a midsole made of sugarcane EVA foam.

The upper is constructed with nubuck leather, mesh, and a Gore-Tex waterproof membrane to keep water out of your shoes. Reviewers praise the lacing system and mid-top height for providing ankle support and keeping debris out of the footbed. These shoes also come in a low-top option.

Specs

Price: \$195

Material: Polyester, sugarcane EVA, nubuck leather, Gore-Tex, mesh, rubber

Weight: 1 lb. 2 oz per shoe (men's size 9)

[Buy From REI »](#)

Best Lightweight

Teva Original Universal Sandal »



(Photo by Amanda Capritto)

PROS:

- ✓ Extremely lightweight and flexible
- ✓ Ideal for wet conditions, including water crossings
- ✓ Adjustable for a tight, secure fit

CONS:

- ✗ Thin outsole
- ✗ Not intended for intense hikes on slippery terrain

[Buy From Amazon](#)

Though technically sandals – not boots – Capritto, the writer of this piece, has taken the Teva Original Universal Sandals on many a hike and will make a strong case for them as the best lightweight hiking shoes.

Designed for warm-weather outdoor activities and all-day wear, the Teva Original Universal Sandals feature a compact but comfortable EVA midsole that is molded to shadow the natural shape of the foot. The insole is studded to prevent your feet from slipping around even when wet or muddy.

Additional security is added via the hook-and-loop closures; you can adjust the fit to be as loose or as tight as you'd like.

For Capritto, these sandals are her go-to pair of hiking shoes for summer hikes with multiple water crossings. However, as is clear from the thin rubber outsole with minimal lugs, these sandals aren't designed for arduous hikes on slippery, treacherous terrain such as shale or slate. In cases where the hike includes such terrain and several water crossings, the writer clips her Teva Original Universal Sandals to her hiking backpack to change into for the crossings, preventing her boots from getting wet.

Still, she maintains that the sandals are a stellar choice for easy, warm-weather hiking during which the hiker wants a pair of lightweight shoes. It doesn't get much lighter than 5.5 ounces per shoe!

Although they're lightweight, these shoes don't skimp on durability. Capritto has hiked more than 100 miles in her Teva Original Universal Sandals and has worn them for other activities such as paddleboarding and running errands, and they're still holding up wonderfully.

Specs

Price:	\$55
Material:	Rubber, recycled polyester, EVA foam
Weight:	5.5 oz per shoe (women's size 7)

[Buy From Amazon »](#)

Best for Wide Feet

Altra Lone Peak Hiker 2 »



(Photo by Amanda Capritto)

PROS:

- ✓ Wide, roomy toe box
- ✓ Breathable
- ✓ Minimalist design allows you to feel and work with the trail

CONS:

- ✗ Zero-drop shoes aren't for everyone and can require an adjustment period
- ✗ Ankle support could be better

[Buy From Amazon](#)

The reviewer has put nearly 300 miles of hiking on her Altra Lone Peak hiking boots and has no plans of stopping soon. She has worn these boots on all types of hikes from easy, 3-mile jaunts to grueling 15-mile hikes through varied terrain.

Ideal for those with wide feet, this pair stands out for its roomy toe box. A proponent of minimal footwear that better suits the natural shape of the human foot, Altra Running designs its shoes with more space so your feet can sit naturally.

This fit, plus the 0-millimeter heel-to-toe drop, can feel like a bit of a shock upon first wear. Most people will find that they need an adjustment period to feel at home in the Altra Lone Peaks. This is because typical hiking boots, and most closed-toe shoes in general, have a much narrower toe box that tends to scrunch the toes together. Many hikers feel, at first, that the Lone Peaks run large when in reality they just run true-to-anatomy.

With a 25-millimeter stack height and zero-drop sole, the Altra Lone Peaks allow the wearer to more acutely feel the terrain beneath their feet. The shoes bend and flex with your feet, allowing you to secure better foot positioning on jagged or slippery terrain.

Additionally, these boots are the most breathable hiking boots that the author has tried. The trade-off? They aren't waterproof in the slightest, but they do drain water exceptionally well and dry out quickly.

Specs

Price:	\$150
Material:	Suede, rubber, Altra EGO (Altra proprietary midsole)
Weight:	10.6 oz per shoe (men's size 9)

[Buy From Amazon »](#)

The Bottom Line

The best hiking boots will depend on your foot anatomy, shoe preferences, and the type of terrain that you plan to cover. While no pair will satisfy the unique needs of every hiker, we chose the Merrell Moab Mid 3 Hiking Boots as our best overall pick because it's breathable, durable, and affordable.

Things To Consider When Buying Hiking Boots

With the breadth and depth of options available to hikers today, choosing a pair of hiking boots isn't as simple as it once was. Prospective buyers should consider a range of factors when shopping for new hiking boots.

Upper Material: The upper of a hiking boot is the fabric part that covers the top of your foot and connects to the rubber outsole. If you want a waterproof hiking boot, you'll need to look for a pair made from a waterproof fabric, like full-grain or nubuck leather, or a synthetic membrane material like the ever-popular Gore-Tex. For additional waterproofing, hiking boots may be treated with a durable water repellent (DWR) coating, although that is something that requires upkeep on the consumer's end to maintain after purchase.

For a breathable boot that drains water well and dries quickly, consider a woven material such as mesh. Non-waterproof boots allow sweat to escape more easily than waterproof boots do, which is ideal in warm conditions. Many hikers prefer non-waterproof boots because of their supreme breathability and will either take them off for water crossings or deal with the dampness while they dry.

Midsole Material: The midsole is the part of the hiking boot that provides cushion and arch support. Most commonly, hiking boot midsoles are made of EVA, the same material found in most running shoes. The other common option is polyurethane, which is a bit denser and more rigid than EVA.

EVA midsoles are ideal for those who want lightweight shoes that provide a good amount of shock absorption and feedback while polyurethane midsoles are better for hikers who prefer something more heavy-duty and firm. Often, hikers who carry heavy packs for one reason or another – such as backcountry hunters – choose polyurethane hiking boots for the additional support. Polyurethane midsoles also tend to keep their shape for longer, making them the more durable option. The sacrifice, for those who like the bounce of EVA, is comfort.

When talking about the midsole of hiking boots, one must also cover shanks. Shanks are thin, rigid pieces of material – often strips of metal – situated in between the outsole and insole, on the lateral (outer) part of the shoe, and sometimes on the

medial (inner) part of the shoe. Shanks provide extra support and are often necessary for people who overpronate (roll the foot inward) or oversupinate (roll the foot outward) at the ankle while walking.

Size Range: Most hiking boots are available in at least a 5 to 11 in women's sizes and a 7 to 13 in men's sizes. Individuals with larger feet may find that their options are much more limited. Additionally, not many hiking shoes come in true wide sizes (E, 2E, and 4E), although wide hiking shoes are becoming increasingly available as manufacturers recognize the market need.

Weight: Hiking shoes range from as little as 10 ounces per shoe to more than 2 pounds per shoe. Lightweight shoes fend off fatigue and are more flexible but don't offer as much support as heavyweight boots.

The heaviest of boots are designed primarily for mountaineering expeditions and are compatible with snow trekking accessories like step-in crampons or ice cleats. The lightest of boots flex with the foot and allow the hiker to more acutely sense the earth beneath their feet.

There are also plenty of options that fall in the middle and offer a blend of support and rigidity with flexibility and breathability.

Height: Hiking boots can have a low height like a regular running shoe, a mid height, which is the most popular option, or a high (also called standard) height, which extends further above the ankle than a mid-height boot.

The ideal height for a hiking boot will largely depend on your preferences. Many hikers favor mid-height boots because they offer additional ankle support but don't feel as restrictive or warm as a standard-height boot. It's more common to see standard-height boots for winter hiking, however, because they're warmer and do a better job of keeping snow out.

Low-top hiking shoes are more like trail running shoes. They're ideal for situations in which you want more ankle flexibility, and can be a more comfortable option in very hot weather. However, low hiking shoes allow more debris into the bed of the shoe.

Outsole Traction: Good traction is essential on all hiking shoes, even if you intend to stick to easy trails. The harder the trails you want to hike, the more critical traction becomes. Look for hiking boots with a strong but flexible rubber outsole featuring

deep, angular lugs. The best outsoles have multi-patterned lugs that dig into the earth at different angles.

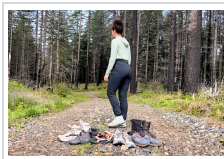
Technical boots designed for advanced hikers and extremely varied, tough terrain may have outsole lugs as deep as 10 millimeters; a lug depth of 4 to 8 millimeters is more common, though. Even on hiking sandals, be on the lookout for a patterned rubber outsole.

How We Chose the Best Hiking Boots

This guide to the best hiking boots began with a list of hiking boots I've personally worn, both for personal use and for gear reviews. I've been hiking for years, so I had many pairs to consider. Once I had a shortlist of my own picks, I reached out to hiker friends to find out which pairs they loved, too.

At that point, I had a list of about 15 pairs of hiking shoes, which I then judged against a set of criteria specific to this category of footwear. I considered factors like price and company policies – such as try-on guarantees, returns, and warranties – and specifications including midsole material and thickness, outsole tread pattern and lug depth, ankle collar, closure systems, waterproofness or drainage capabilities, sizing accuracy, and toe box shape and width.

For the pairs that I tried myself (nearly every pair on the list), I tested for traction on various surfaces and performance in different weather conditions and on varying terrain, as well as comfort, support, and shock absorption and energy return.

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Our contributors and editors have years of experience researching, testing, and reviewing products. [Amanda Capritto](#), the author, is a seasoned hiker who contributed original photography to this piece. She is a certified personal trainer, a sports nutrition coach, and the founder of Smarter Sweat, a fitness coaching business where she focuses on helping individuals reach their full potential in the outdoors. Capritto has written about health and fitness products for publications, including Health Magazine, Shape Magazine, Verywell Fit, and more.

FAQ

Are hiking boots waterproof?



What type of hiking boots are the most breathable?



How do I determine the right size and fit for hiking boots?



How long do hiking boots last?



About Our Team



Amanda Capritto

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Amanda Capritto is a content writer and journalist with extensive experience covering health, fitness, outdoors, and nutrition. She is a certified personal trainer, a sports nutrition coach, and the founder of Smarter Sweat, a fitness coaching business where she focuses on helping individuals reach their full potential in the outdoors.

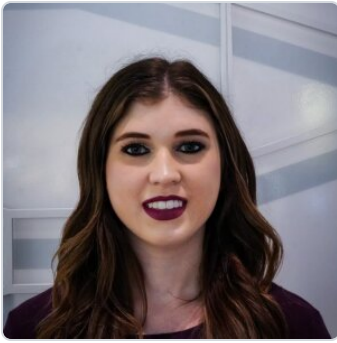
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Marlo Jappen Porto is a former editor for U.S. News 360 Reviews, focusing on home goods. Prior to joining the team,



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