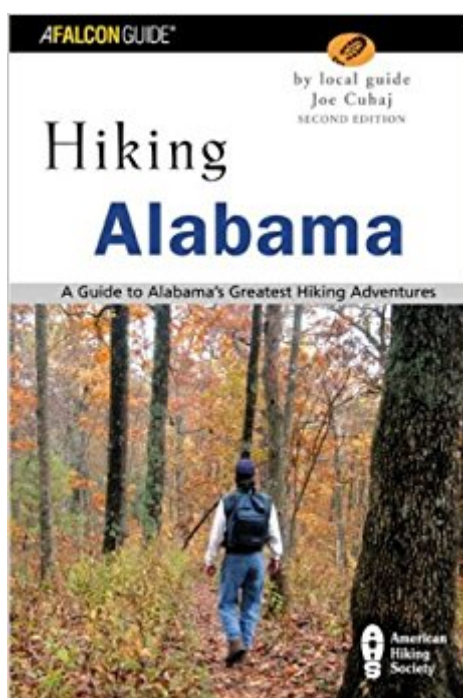




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# Hiking Alabama, 2nd: A Guide To Alabama's Greatest Hiking Adventures (State Hiking Guides Series)



## Synopsis

The premier guide to over 48 of the greatest hikes in the state. This one-of-a-kind guide to the "State of Surprises" takes hikers to the summits of the last of the Appalachian Mountain chain, the deep and wild canyons and rivers of Central Alabama, and the pristine white beaches of the Gulf of Mexico. Walk along the beaches of Gulf Shores with a variety of endangered species of wildlife, visit towering waterfalls at the Sipsey Wilderness, climb the rocky cliffs of the highest mountain in the state, Cheaha Mountain. Hiking Alabama takes readers to these and many more of the state's hidden hiking destinations, giving them a most unique look into the state's history, culture, and its incredible beauty. Inside hikers will find: detailed maps, accurate route profiles showing the ups and downs of each hike, tips on equipment, trip planning, hiking with dogs and children, accurate directions, difficulty ratings, trail contacts, and more.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Lace up your boots and sample more than fifty trails throughout Alabama. Walk along the beaches of Gulf Shores, an area filled with a variety of endangered species and wildlife, visit towering waterfalls in the Sipsey Wilderness, or climb the rocky cliffs of the highest mountain in the state, Cheaha Mountain. Outdoor enthusiast Joe Cuhaj takes you to these and many more of the state's hiking destinations, giving you a unique look into the state's history, culture, and incredible beauty. From easy one-hour outings ideal for beginning hikers to more challenging backpacking treks in the backcountry, Hiking Alabama offers memorable routes for hikers of every stripe. Inside you'll find:

up-to-date trail information; accurate directions from major access points; difficulty ratings for each hike; detailed trail maps; tips on navigation, equipment, first aid, and hiking with your dog. Whether you are a day-tripper or long-distance hiker, old hand or novice, you'll find trails suited to every ability and interest throughout Alabama.

Joe Cuhaj is a full-time systems programmer for a local company, but finds frequent visits to area wildlife refuges, wetlands, and Oak Mountain State Park solace from the keyboard. In addition, he is the author of *Paddling Alabama* (Falcon, 2002). He lives in Daphne, Alabama with his wife Maggie, and daughter Kellie.

Having now hiked several of the trails described in this book, my wife and I have found the book lacking in accurate details more than once. At points on several different trails as well as driving directions to trailheads we have had to make notes in the book to add or even correct information. While realizing that trails change and even back roads to trailheads change, at some points we found details to be completely different than reality (such as the details of a cemetery in the Sipsey Wilderness that proved quite different than what was described in the book.) While the book does prove to be useful (we continue to use it) a real trail map and a detailed road map must be consulted especially for the more remote trails.

I work at Monte Sano State Park and when I compared the section about the "Plateau Loop Trail" (also known as the North Plateau Loop and South Plateau Loop) with our trail map (which is not, as is stated in the book, 50 cents, but \$2.00 because it is a very detailed and excellent map) I saw numerous mistakes. Firstly, only a very fast and experienced hiker could do the entire trail in an hour. I can do the North Plateau Loop in 40 minutes, but that is at a fast pace, and it is only 1.2 miles, whereas the entire loop is about 4.8 miles. Also, hiking is not free at the park. There is an admission fee for all hikers, bikers and picnickers. One of the "ruins" the author describes is the site of a lodge built several years ago, which is used for meetings and events. Some of the landmarks and cross-trails he describes are not correct, and he doesn't even mention where the North Plateau Loop crosses the road that leads into the park! Someone unfamiliar with that trail would have difficulty picking it up on the other side of the road, as it is not easy to see. He also has the Bog Trail meet up with the South Plateau Loop twice before it meets with the Mountain Mist Trail, where it actually meets it the second time after the intersection of the Mountain Mist Trail. There are so many mistakes in this one trail description that I wonder how many other trail descriptions are in error. As

far as Monte Sano State Park goes, we have twenty miles of hiking and/or biking trails, and your best bet would be to come to the park and purchase one of our trail maps, and if possible talk to one of the rangers, who are extremely knowledgeable about the park trails. And a \$2.00 accurate map is certainly better than an inaccurate \$13.00 book.

I used this book when backpacking on a trail in Mt. Cheaha State Park, and found it to be drastically lacking in accuracy. The time the author estimated it would take to hike the trail was vastly underestimated, and the dirt roads he said we would cross were not where they ought to be based on his description. I wondered if the author had even hiked the trail in the last four years. Given that my trouble interpreting the author's book appears to mirror that of other users, I think people should be very hesitant to rely on this book for serious backcountry hiking. That said, the author does at least describe a lot of great trails in Alabama, and he explains how to get to the trailheads. If you want a book to explain where you could go hike, this will be useful. If you want a great guide to the trails themselves... Well, this book may leave you hiking for hours in the cold dark of night wondering why you are not yet at a destination the author claims should take only a fraction of that time to reach. I feel that I should add that because this book is ambitious and the author appears sincere in his effort to describe the beauty of Alabama trails, I don't want to be too negative towards him. Nevertheless, I am still reluctant to rely on (or recommend) this book for specific details about backcountry trails. Finally, I suggest that were the author to add gps coordinates to his trail descriptions, then anyone using his book would be able to determine for certain whether any apparent inconsistency between the trail and the book was due to a miscalculation on their part or on the author's.

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