



HUT TO HUT USA

THE COMPLETE GUIDE FOR HIKERS, BIKERS, AND SKIERS

LAUREL BRADLEY
& SAM DEMAS



MOUNTAINEERS BOOKS

HUT TO HUT USA



HUT TO HUT USA

THE COMPLETE GUIDE FOR HIKERS, BIKERS, AND SKIERS

**LAUREL BRADLEY
& SAM DEMAS**



**MOUNTAINEERS
BOOKS**

To conservation pioneers and pilgrims: hut users, owners, and operators;
and to the nascent US Hut Alliance



MOUNTAINEERS BOOKS is dedicated to the exploration, preservation, and enjoyment of outdoor and wilderness areas.

1001 SW Klickitat Way, Suite 201, Seattle, WA 98134
800-553-4453, www.mountaineersbooks.org

Copyright © 2021 by Laurel Bradley and Sam Demas

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form, or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Mountaineers Books and its colophon are registered trademarks of The Mountaineers organization.

Printed in China

Distributed in the United Kingdom by Cordee, www.cordee.co.uk

First edition, 2021

Copyeditor: Jennifer Zaczek Kepler

Design and layout: McKenzie Long

Cartographer: Lohnes+Wright

All photographs by the authors unless credited otherwise

Photograph and woodcut on page 18 copyright © Curt Carpenter

Front cover photographs, clockwise from upper left: *Trail through lush Maine woods, Maine Huts and Trails; Friends Hut at sunset in the American Prairie Reserve* (Photo by Reid Morth); *On the trail in the Three Sisters Backcountry* (Photo by Jonas Tarlen); *Juneau Lake Cabin on Resurrection Pass Trail*

Back cover photographs, left to right: *Mom biking with baby in tow toward Trout Lake on Resurrection Pass Trail in Alaska; The Rendezvous Hut in Washington's Methow Valley has sweeping views; Paddling Browns Tract near Raquette Lake in Adirondack Park* (Photo by John DiGiacomo)

Frontispiece: *Huts, like this Southwest Nordic Center yurt, offer comfort and solitude in the wilderness.*

Disclaimer: The authors acknowledge the emergence of the novel coronavirus during the final stages of research and writing. This guide is a snapshot of the hut systems' pre-pandemic policies and practices. Readers should be aware that many of the huts' policies, prices, and features may have changed. Always check the specific hut system website for the latest information, and call ahead before making plans.

The background maps for this book were produced using the online map viewer CalTopo, caltopo.com.

Library of Congress record is available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2021008628>, and ebook record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2021008629>.

Printed on FSC-certified materials

ISBN (paperback): 978-1-68051-268-7

ISBN (ebook): 978-1-68051-269-4

An independent nonprofit publisher since 1960

CONTENTS

<i>US Hut Systems</i>	8
<i>An Invitation to Dream</i>	11
<i>Introduction: Huts for the Body and Soul</i>	13

PART I: HUT CULTURE

The Origins of Huts	21
Hut Systems around the World.....	27
Hut Systems in the US.....	41

PART II: PLANNING A HUT-TO-HUT ADVENTURE

Typical Hut Experiences.....	75
How to Use This Guide	81

PART III: FEATURED HUT SYSTEMS

Featured Huts at a Glance.....	102
--------------------------------	-----

NORTHEAST

Maine Huts and Trails, Maine	105
Appalachian Mountain Club Huts, New Hampshire	120
Adirondack Hamlets to Huts, New York.....	140

MIDWEST

Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park, Michigan.....	155
Boundary Country Trekking, Minnesota	168

COLORADO

Never Summer Nordic.....	175
Tenth Mountain Division Hut System	183
Southwest Nordic Center	200
San Juan Huts.....	210

WEST AND ALASKA

American Prairie Reserve, Montana.....	229
Sun Valley Mountain Huts, Idaho.....	239
Rendezvous Huts, Washington.....	249
Mount Tahoma Trails, Washington	259
Three Sisters Backcountry, Oregon	270
Yosemite High Sierra Camps, California.....	279
Resurrection Pass Trail, Alaska.....	294

Bonus Hut Opportunities 307

Sam's Hut Dream 321

Acknowledgments 325

Resources 327

Index 330

*As the cricket's soft autumn hum
is to us,
so are we to the trees
as are they
to the rocks and the hills.*

—Gary Snyder, excerpt from “Little
Poems for Gaia,” *Axe Handles*

US HUT SYSTEMS





AN INVITATION TO DREAM

MY HUT DREAMS BEGAN DURING a life-changing, forty-two-day, hut-to-hut walk in the European Alps. Years later, beginning a deep dive into where huts are located and how they operate, I was corresponding with Swiss hut specialist, mountain guide, writer, and photographer Marco Volken and wrote about how much we in America had to learn from the Swiss about huts. Marco replied, “Sure, if you want to study how huts developed in the nineteenth century, come to the Alps. But we Europeans can’t wait for Americans to get into huts and show us what twenty-first-century huts will look like.”

As my partner, Laurel, and I started seriously hiking, skiing, and biking US hut systems, Marco’s words suddenly turned into an epiphany. We began to see disconnected US hut initiatives as a series of creative impulses. Americans are indeed beginning to think broadly and act imaginatively about huts as local, educational, affordable, and environmentally sensitive infrastructure for building community and engaging young people with conservation. *Hut to Hut USA:*

The Complete Guide for Hikers, Bikers, and Skiers is an invitation to sample the variety, pleasures, and creativity of American huts—in your armchair and on the trail. We also hope it will stimulate you to envision your own hut dreams, and to join the emerging conversation about huts in the US.

Desperate to connect with nature, we hike, bike, ski, and paddle to the far corners of the earth in search of adventure and authenticity. Meanwhile, a rising tide of overnighters

OPPOSITE: A unique hut can draw you into high wild places, like this one on the Bomber Traverse in Alaska’s Talkeetna Mountains. (Photo by Seth K. Hughes)





Aurora borealis over a backyard hut in Fairbanks, Alaska (Photo by Ken Tape)

in the wild threatens to overwhelm trails, campsites, and beloved biomes; we are steadily loving wild places to death. Are huts and hut systems perhaps part of the solution?

US hut systems, still few in number, are extremely popular. Grassroots hut initiatives are springing up, and huts seem poised for significant growth. As hut-to-hut travel gains popularity, land managers and recreation professionals are beginning to pay attention. Should the US have more huts? Where are existing huts, and where might we build more in the future? Are simple

huts compatible with American culture and values, or will we commercialize them as glamping? Can we use huts to expand access to nature while reducing human impact, to cultivate a sense of reciprocity with the natural world, and to help protect and restore ecosystems through conservation endeavors?

Join us in imagining possible futures for hut-to-hut travel in America. Plan, trek, question, dream . . . and share your hut dreams. How can US hut systems continue as simple and sustainable forces for the greater good?



**MOUNTAINEERS
BOOKS**

**Want to read more?
Get *Hut to Hut USA* [here](#).**