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# FORT TICONDEROGA

## NEW YORK



When you arrive at Fort Ticonderoga, you step back in time. Fort Ticonderoga has been restored back to its original condition when the French first built the fort in 1755. To add to the realism, there are people dressed in period costume. There are also firing demonstrations and performances on the parade ground. There is always something going on to make a visit even more memorable.

In the fort's museum, you will find personal possessions of many of the major players, such as Ethan Allen and John Brown. For example, there is Ethan Allen's gun with his name engraved on the stock that he lent to Benedict Arnold. There are also many maps, three-dimensional models, historical documents and revolutionary war art.



### Historic New York

### Fort Ticonderoga

During the 18th century, when nations fought to control the strategic route between



**the St. Lawrence River in Canada and the Hudson River to the south, the fortification overlooking the outlet of Lake George into Lake Champlain was called "a key to continent."**

**The French constructed here in 1755 the stronghold they named Carillon and made it a base to attack their English rivals. In 1758, Carillon, under Marquis de Montcalm, withstood assault by superior British Forces. The next year, Jeffery Amherst's troops captured Carillon and forced the French to retreat from the Lake Champlain. The British renamed the fortress Fort Ticonderoga.**



**During the American Revolution, Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain Boys captured Ticonderoga in a surprise attack, May 10, 1775. Cannon hauled from Ticonderoga to Boston helped George Washington drive the British from that city. In July 1777, General Burgoyne's invading army overwhelmed the American fort and Ticonderoga became British. Americans unsuccessfully attacked the fort in September 1777; later the British abandoned it.**



**In 1816, William Ferris Pell acquired the fort. His descendants began its restoration and in 1909 opened Ticonderoga to the public. Now the Fort Ticonderoga Association maintains the historic fort and its military museum.**

Near the visitor's entrance to Fort Ticonderoga, there is a welcoming marker. Missing from the marker is the incredible uniqueness of Fort Ticonderoga. No fort in the world has had such an active, yet short history. In two decades, Fort Ticonderoga was the center of attack by great nations as many as six times, four times during the American Revolution.

YEAR	HELD BY	BESET BY	RESULT
1758	French	British	French
1759	French	British	British
1775	British	Americans	Americans
1776	Americans	British	Americans
1777	Americans	British	British
1777	British	Americans	British

**1775 Attack** – In the early morning hours of May 10, 1775, Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold advanced upon Fort Ticonderoga with only half of their small army of about 200 due to a shortage of crossing space. The boats that were supposed to be captured from Skenesborough had not arrived in time. The group approached the fort that was being held by a small British company of about twenty men under the command of Captain Delaplace.

They marched on the fort in column, three abreast. A sentry on guard at the entrance attempted to fire at the intruders, but his gun misfired (a common problem even today — firing demonstrations held at the fort often misfire). The Americans stormed into the fort and Ethan Allen demanded surrender. When Captain Delaplace asked under whose authority, Allen responded, "the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress." Delaplace surrendered and Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold had taken the fort without firing a shot.



The surrender of Fort Ticonderoga marked the first overt military action by Americans against the British in their quest for American independence. It was no doubt a daring and courageous act.

**1776 Attack** – In October of 1776, the British, led by Sir Guy Carleton, advanced against the Americans at Fort Ticonderoga. Under the command of General Horatio Gates and the support and leadership of Philip Schuyler, the Americans were well dug-in and prepared for the British. After scouting the area and observing the impressive state of readiness at both Ticonderoga and Mount Independence, the British changed their minds. With a coming winter and not enough time to mount a major and timely offensive, the British retreated back to Canada. They would have arrived earlier, but they were delayed by Benedict Arnold's annoying American Navy on Lake Champlain. So, after just a few minor skirmishes, the two armies disengaged until next year.



**First 1777 Attack** – In 1777, the British, led by General John Burgoyne, arrived plenty early enough on July 2nd and, this time, the American fortifications were not nearly as impressive. George Washington had turned his attention



to Pennsylvania and did not expect the British to launch another major offensive against Fort Ticonderoga. It was the Americans who were not ready for a major offensive this time.

On July 4, 1777, British forces were observed moving cannons up the side of Mount Defiance, an action that the Americans were not prepared for. From Mount Defiance, the defenses of both Fort Ticonderoga and Mount Independence were considered relatively easy targets. So, it was decided in a council of war on July 5th that General Arthur St. Clair would lead the Americans in retreat under the cover of darkness down the military road to Castleton.

When the British discovered the American retreat, Burgoyne sent a detachment to pursue the Americans, but they were stopped at Hubbardton.

**Second 1777 Attack** – Burgoyne continued down Lake Champlain toward Albany leaving behind a detachment of about 200 men at Fort Ticonderoga. In September of 1777, Americans marched back to Fort Ticonderoga under the command of Colonel John Brown (the same John Brown who helped plan the capture of Ticonderoga in 1775 at Castleton). Despite outnumbering the British five-to-one and essentially surrounding the fort and even targeting Fort Ticonderoga with cannon from the top of Mount Defiance, the British forces did not retreat or surrender. The Americans had no desire to storm the walls of Fort Ticonderoga. As a result, the British held Fort Ticonderoga and controlled Lake Champlain for the remainder of the war.

**Log House Restaurant** – Before you leave Fort Ticonderoga, be sure to get lunch at the Log House Restaurant. It is a rustic restaurant with windows that have as picturesque a view of Lake Champlain as the fort does. The Log House Restaurant has a couple specialty sandwiches on the menu that you might want to consider:



- The Burgoyne – Grilled chicken, ham, Swiss cheese, Dijon mustard, lettuce and tomato on a roll.
- The Ethan Allen – Grilled chicken, Swiss cheese, bacon, lettuce and tomato on a roll.

If it's a really nice day, you may want to get the sandwiches to-go and take them to the top of Mount Defiance, the next stop on your Revolutionary Day.

## Enroute to Mount Defiance

**Village of Ticonderoga.**





As you approach the Village of Ticonderoga, look to your right and you will see a park and a waterfall. This drop is the last part of a 230-foot drop that the two-mile, LaChute River makes from Lake George to Lake Champlain. The French originally named Fort Ticonderoga, Fort Carillon due to the waterfalls on this river. They sounded like a [carillon as the water gurgled](#) its way to Lake Champlain. Watch for the “grand carry” marker on the left.



### Mount Hope Cemetery.



**These defenses were built by American troops in 1776 and occupied by General Burgoyne in 1777 controlling the portage and lower landing place.**

**TAKE "A REVOLUTIONARY DAY" ON YOUR ROAD TRIP**

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[Back to a Revolutionary Day](#)