

Backcountry Camping Trip Guide

Four Nights

National Park Service
U. S. Department of the Interior
Shenandoah National Park
Emergency: 1-800-732-0911



AT: Swift Run Gap to Wildcat Ridge - Cabin Trip

AT - One way

Level: Beginner or Strenuous Beginner

Total Length: 33 miles

Trip Description: Mountaintop trek along the AT with excellent views; also a good winter trip

Entry: 66 MP - Swift Run Gap (south)

Exit: 92 MP - Wildcat Ridge Parking

Map(s): PATC #11 South District

Day One

Campsite: AT (3A) Swift Run - Simmons Gap * - backcountry

3.5 miles

Park before or after the entrance station.

Hike up the hill and find the Appalachian Trail (AT) on your right (to the south).

Hike south 3.4 miles on the AT.

Turn right toward Hightop Hut, hiking 0.1 mile; camp at the hut or designated campsites.

Day Two

Campsite: AT (3B) Simmons Gap - Loft Mt. * - backcountry

8.4 miles

Return to the AT, 0.1 mile.

Turn right onto the AT, hiking south 8.2 miles .

Turn left to Pinefield Hut, hiking 0.1 mile; camp at the hut or designated campsites.

Day Three

Campsite: South District developed areas - campground or cabin

8.5 miles

Return to the AT, 0.1 mile.

Turn right, hiking south on the AT for 8 miles.

Turn left onto Doyles River Trail and hike 0.3 mile.

Turn left up to Doyles River Cabin, 0.1 mile.

Day Four

Campsite: AT (3D) Doyles River - Blackrock Gap* - backcountry

6.1 miles

Return to the AT (0.4 mile).

Turn right onto the AT, hiking south about 5.2 miles.

Turn left to Blackrock Hut, hiking 0.2 mile; camp at the hut or designated campsites.

Day Five

Day five – 6.6 miles (If Skyline Drive is closed, hike down Trayfoot Mountain Trail, Furnace Mountain Trail, and Madison Run Fire Road.)

Return to the AT, 0.2 mile.

Turn left onto the AT, hiking south 6.3 miles.

Turn left onto Wildcat Ridge Trail, hiking 0.1 mile to the parking area.

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Notes

Doyles River Cabin is available for rent from the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (www.patc.net). You must make your reservation prior to your trip.

Do not plan your trip from mid-May through mid-July! While the AT is always busy, this is when the north-bound thru-hikers come through Shenandoah and there will not be any camping available at the huts.

Options

To make this a winter trip when Skyline Drive is closed, you'll need to use the cabin (the campground will be closed) then exit at Madison Run Fire Road Boundary (State Route 663). On your last day leave the hut, hike north a short distance on the AT, then take Trayfoot Mountain Trail, Furnace Mountain Trail, and Madison Run Fire Road to reach the boundary. Be sure you have a good map along if you might take this route.