

Shenandoah National Park

Backcountry Camping Trip Guide



Trip Name: AT through SNP, average 8 miles per day

Description: Advanced-level Appalachian Trail hike - Difficulty finding camping and water

Entry: 10 MP - Compton Gap

Exit: 105 MP - Rockfish Gap/South Entrance

Map(s): PATC #9 - 11 All Districts

Level: Advanced

Total Length: 105.3 miles

Day One

Campsite: AT (1B) Gravel Spr - Elkwallow Gap * - backcountry

7.7 miles

Hike south on the Appalachian Trail (AT) 7.5 miles.

Turn left toward Gravel Springs Hut, hiking 0.2 mile.

Camp in the hut or at the designated campsites.

Day Two

Campsite: AT (1C) Elkwallow Gap - Beahms Gap - backcountry

6.7 miles

Return to the AT, 0.2 mile.

Turn left, hiking south on the AT for 6.4 miles.

You will see a marked spring near the Jeremys Run Trail intersection.

From the cement post, head northeast, following the contour of the mountain (staying level):

You'll find some level areas to camp in this area. Be sure to stay well away from the developed

Elkwallow Picnic Area.

Day Three

Campsite: AT (1D) Beahms Gap - Rt 211 * - backcountry

6.4 miles

Return to the AT (about 0.1 mile) and hike south 6.1 miles.

Turn left to Pass Mountain Hut, hiking 0.2 mile.

Camp in the hut or at the designated campsites.

Day Four

Campsite: AT (2B) Pinnacles - Hawksbill Gap - backcountry

9.9 miles

Return to the AT (0.2 miles) and turn left.

Hike south on the AT 6.6 miles to Pinnacles Picnic Area (water available seasonally).

Continue south on the AT 1.6 miles to the Crusher Ridge Trail.

Turn right on Crusher Ridge Trail and find a place to camp in the next 1/4 mile.

Day Five

Campsite: AT (2C) Hawksbill Gap - Lewis Spr * - backcountry

6.4 miles

Return to the AT (0.3 mile) and hike south 7.1 miles.

Turn right into Rock Spring Hut, hiking 0.2 mile.

Camp in the hut or at the designated campsites.

Day Six

Campsite: AT (2D) Lewis Spr-Bearfence Mtn - backcountry

8.4 miles

Return to the AT (0.2 mile) and hike south 8.1 miles.

Find a place to dry-camp on Hazeltop Mountain.

Day Seven

Campsite: AT (2E) Bearfence Mtn- Swift Run * - backcountry

7.4 miles

Return to the AT and hike south 7.4 miles.

Find a place to dry-camp on Bald Face Mountain.

Day Eight

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

8.5 miles

Return to the AT and hike south 8.4 miles.

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

Day Nine

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

8.4 miles

Return to the AT, 0.1 mile, and hike south 8.2 miles.

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

Day Ten

Campsite: South District developed areas - campground or cabin

7.0 miles

Return to the AT, 0.1 mile, and hike south on the AT 6.4 miles.

Turn right toward Loft Mountain Campground, 0.1 mile to campground, up to 0.5 mile to register for the tent sites available throughout Loft Mountain Campground.

Day Eleven

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

7.5 miles

Take a spur trail to the AT (0.1 to 0.5 mile from campsite).

Turn right onto the AT, hiking south 6.8 miles.

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

Day Twelve

Campsite: AT (3E) Blackrock Gap - Jarman Gap - backcountry

7.1 miles

Return to the AT bringing plenty of water, 0.2 mile, and hike south 6.8 miles.

Find a place to dry-camp on Sawlog Ridge. You reach Sawlog Ridge after crossing to the east side of Skyline Drive between mileposts 92 and 93.

Day Thirteen

Campsite: AT (3F) Jarman Gap - Rockfish Gap * - backcountry

6.6 miles

Return to the AT and hike south 6.2 miles.

Turn right to Calf Mountain Hut, hiking 0.3 mile.

Camp at the hut.

Day Fourteen

7.3 miles

Return to the AT (0.3 mile) and hike south 7 miles.

Exit the park at MP 105.4; there is a parking area just south of the Skyline Drive/Blue Ridge Parkway intersection.

Notes

This trip is considered advanced-level due to the difficulty of finding places to legally camp and get water.

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

Please plan your access to water carefully. You will find the Appalachian Trail Guide to Shenandoah NP (with side trails) most helpful. You can purchase the guide and all three maps together at a discount (over purchasing them separately) (www.patc.net or www.snpbooks.org).

While the mileage may be relatively low, this is definitely an advanced-level trip. You will need to be skilled in dry-camping, off-trail navigation, and finding pristine campsites.