

Backcountry Camping Trip Guide

Three Nights

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



Furnace, Paine, Jones, and Big Run from the boundary

Standard - Circuit

Level: Experienced

Total Length: 36.1 to 44.8 miles

Trip Description: Spectacular mountains, three waterfalls, wilderness valley, and geology

Entry: Madison Run Boundary
South District; West side; Route # 663

Exit: Madison Run Boundary
South District; West side; Route # 663

Map(s): PATC #11 South District

Day One

Campsite: Paine Run - backcountry

8.5 to 10.5 miles

From the gate at the boundary, hike up Madison Run Fire Road 0.1 mile.

Turn right onto Furnace Mountain Trail and hike 3.4 miles.

(At 1.6 miles, reach junction with trail to summit of Furnace Mountain. Add 1 mile roundtrip to see excellent views from summit.)

Turn right onto Trayfoot Mountain Trail, hiking 4 miles.

Turn left onto Paine Run Trail and find a place to camp within the next two miles.

Day Two

Campsite: Jones Run Trail - backcountry

6.5 to 8.5 miles

Continue up Paine Run Trail for a total of 3.4 miles.

Cross Skyline Drive and turn left onto the Appalachian Trail (AT).

Hike north on AT for 2.6 miles and turn right on Jones Run Trail.

At 1.7 miles, a short side trail provides a good view of falls.

At 2.5 miles, reach junction of Jones Run and Doyles River (trail becomes Doyles River Trail at this point). Find a place to camp downstream from the confluence of Jones Run and Doyles River.

Day Three

Campsite: Big Run Portal/Loop Trails - backcountry

6.4 to 8.4 miles

Hike up Doyles River Trail for 2.2 miles.

Cross Skyline Drive to Big Run Overlook.

Hike down Big Run Loop Trail 2.2 miles.

Turn right onto Big Run Portal, hiking 2 to 4 miles, looking for a place to camp.

(Be sure to use a pre-existing campsite if you want to hike the optional dayhike.)

Day Four

9.4 to 11.4 miles

Hike downstream on Big Run Portal Trail another 0.2 mile to 2.2 miles.

Turn left and hike up Rockytop Trail 5.3 miles.

Turn right onto Austin Mountain Trail, hiking 3.2 miles.

Turn right on Madison Run Fire Road, hiking 0.7 mile to return to the park boundary.

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Notes

You will need to get an early start on the first day.

The multiple stream crossings on Big Run Portal can be knee to waist high when the water is up. Beware in the spring and after heavy rains!

Options

Optional extra day camping on Big Run – Circuit dayhike – 8.7 miles

Leave your camp set up with permit on tent, properly store your food items, and take valuables with you.

Hike upstream on Big Run Portal Trail.

Turn left onto Rocky Mountain Run Trail, hiking 2.7 miles.

Turn left onto Brown Mountain Trail, hiking 4.6 miles.

Turn left and return to your campsite on Big Run Portal Trail.