

Backcountry Camping Trip Guide

Three Nights

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



Jones Run, Big Run, Austin, and Furnace

Standard - circuit

Level: Experienced

Total Length: 30 miles

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

Entry: 83 MP - Browns Gap

Exit: 83 MP - Browns Gap

Map(s): PATC #11 South District

Day One

Campsite: Doyles River Trail - backcountry

4 miles

Park at Browns Gap.

Hike south on the Appalachian Trail (AT) 1.3 miles.

Turn left onto Jones Run Trail and hike 2.5 miles down to junction with Doyles River Trail.

Find a place to camp downstream from the confluence of Doyles River and Jones Run.

Day Two

Campsite: Big Run Portal/Loop Trails - backcountry

About 7.9 to 8.4 miles

Hike up Doyles River Trail 2.2 miles and cross Skyline Drive.

Take Big Run Loop Trail out of Big Run Overlook to Big Run Portal Trail, 2.2 miles.

Hike downstream on Big Run Portal Trail, between 3.5 and 4 miles.

Find a place to camp.

Day Three

Campsite: Madison Run Road - backcountry

9 to 9.5 miles

Continue on Big Run Portal Trail to Rockytop Trail (4.2 miles from junction with Big Run Loop Trail).

Turn left onto Rockytop Trail and hike 5.3 miles.

Turn RIGHT onto Austin Mountain Trail, hiking 3.2 miles.

Turn left and hike up Madison Run fire Road a short distance, then cross the stream and find a place to camp on the south side of the stream. There may be pre-existing sites (but make sure they are legal) across from the Austin-Madison intersection; there are legal, level places to camp as you continue to

Day Four

8.5 miles

Hike down Madison Run fire Road to Furnace Mountain Trail (about 1 mile).

Hike up Furnace Mountain Trail 3.4 miles+ roundtrip to and from the summit.

Turn left onto Trayfoot Mt. Trail, hiking 0.5 mile.

Turn LEFT onto Blackrock Spur Trail and hike 0.1 mile.

Turn right, hiking north on AT 2.6 miles to car at Browns Gap.

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Notes

Jones and Doyles have three excellent waterfalls. Big Run is a beautiful wilderness valley with plentiful camping, swimming holes, and fishing. Rockytop, Austin, and Furnace have some excellent views, and the Blackrock area on the AT is an interesting geologic area.

There is limited water on days three and four, so load up when you have the chance!

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!

Thanks to IL for corrections to this trip! (3/24/15)