

Backcountry Camping Trip Guide

Three Nights

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



Pocosin, Dry Run, and Saddleback

Standard - Circuit

Level: Experienced

Total Length: 10.1 to 15 miles

Trip Description: Waterfalls (83'high), Lost Cliffs, early spring wildflowers, early fall color

Entry: 63 MP - South River Picnic Area

Exit: 63 MP - South River Picnic Area

Map(s): PATC #10 Central District

Day One

Campsite: Pocosin Horse Trail - backcountry

2.8 to 3.8 miles

Hike South River Falls Trail, 1.2 miles (viewpoint for 83' waterfall at 1 mile).

Turn left toward South River Road, hiking 0.4 mile.

Turn right onto South River Road and hike less than one mile.

Turn left onto Pocosin Trail and look for a dry campsite within the next mile (bring water).

Day Two

Campsite: Dry Run Falls Road - backcountry

2.7 to 5.1 miles

Hike back up Pocosin Trail the way you came (0.3 to 1 mile).

Turn right onto South River Road, still retracing your steps, less than one mile.

Turn right, staying on South River Road and hike 1.1 miles, crossing Skyline Drive.

Hike down Dry Run Falls Road and find a place to camp (0.3 mile to 2 miles).

Day Three

Campsite: Saddleback Mtn Trail - backcountry

2.7 to 5.3 miles

Hike back up Dry Run Falls Road (0.3 mile to 2 miles).

Cross Skyline Drive and hike down South River Fire Road 0.3 mile.

Turn right onto the AT and hike south 2 miles.

Turn left onto Saddleback Trail and find a place to dry-camp anywhere in the next mile.

However, note that you may not camp within 100 yards of the maintenance hut.

Day Four

0.9 mile to 1.9 miles

Continue around on Saddleback Trail past the trail maintenance hut.

(Total distance on Saddleback Trail is 1.4 miles.)

Turn right onto the AT and hike north to South River Picnic Area 0.5 mile.

Notes

Wear blaze orange during hunting season, as you will pass through a small area of Rapidan Wildlife Management Area where hunting is allowed (see topographic map).

You will enter and exit at the South River Picnic Area. The trailhead is on the east side of the loop.

There are relatively few steep areas on this hike, making it a good trip for small children.

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Options

You could hike a similar route from Swift Run Gap:

Hike north on the AT to South River Picnic Area on Day One.

Day One – about 6 miles to Pocosin Trail

Day Two – about 3 to 5 to Dry Run Falls Road

Day Three – about 4 miles

Day Four – Hike south on the AT about 2 to 4 miles to Swift Run Gap.