

Backcountry Camping Trip Guide

Four Nights

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



Winter Trip from Simmons Gap

Standard - Circuit

Level: Experienced or Advanced

Total Length: 30.2 miles

Trip Description: Use the AT to access the Big Run wilderness area while staying dry.

Entry: Simmons Gap Road Boundary
South District; East side; Route # 628

Exit: Simmons Gap Road Boundary
South District; East side; Route # 628

Map(s): PATC #11 South District

Day One

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

3.2 miles

Hike up Simmons Gap Fire Road, 1 mile and look for cement post indicated the AT.
Cross Skyline Drive turning left onto the Appalachian Trail (AT) and hike south 2.1 miles.
Turn left into Pinefield Hut (0.1 mile) and camp in the hut or on a designated campsite.

Day Two

Campsite: Big Run Portal/Loop Trails - backcountry

7.3 miles

Follow the Pinefield Hut dirt road to Skyline Drive (about 0.3 mile).
Turn left onto Skyline Drive and walk south 1.7 miles.
Turn right into Brown Mountain Overlook and find Brown Mountain Trail.
Hike Brown Mountain Trail, 5.3 miles.
Find a place to camp at the bottom of Brown Mountain Trail, or on Big Run Portal Trail.

Day Three

Campsite: Big Run Portal/Loop Trails - backcountry

7 miles (plus 2 if you need to get more water)

Cross the bridge on Big Run Portal Trail and hike up to Rockytop Trail (0.5 mile).
Turn left onto Rockytop Trail and hike 5.7 miles.
Continue straight onto Big Run Loop Trail, hiking up to 0.7 mile to find a place to dry-camp.
You can get water by taking a steep hike down into Big Run.

Day Four

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

9.6 miles

Finish Big Run Loop Trail if necessary.
Turn left, hiking north on the AT for 9.5 miles.
(You can get water at Doyles River spring or Ivy Creek spring on your way.)
Turn right into Pinefield Hut (0.1 mile) and camp in the hut or on a designated campsite.

Day Five

3.2 miles

Hike out of Pinefield Hut, 0.1 mile.
Turn right onto the AT and hike north 2.1 miles.
Turn right onto Simmons Gap Fire Road, 1 mile to vehicle.

Notes

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Options

For a three-night trip, make day four a total of 12.8 miles, continuing to Simmons Gap that day.

Be aware that parking is very limited at the Simmons Gap Fire Road Boundary Access. Be sure to pull your car all the way off the road.