

Shenandoah National Park

Backcountry Camping Trip Guide



Trip Name: Furnace, Jones, Big Run, Brown Mountain from boundary

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

Level: Experienced

Total Length: 35.3 to 26.6 miles

Day One

Campsite: Jones Run Trail - backcountry

8.8 miles

From the gate at the boundary, hike up Madison Run 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 left onto Trayfoot Trail, hiking 0.5 mile.

Turn left onto Blackrock Spur Trail and hike 0.1 mile.

Turn left onto the Appalachian Trail (AT) and hike north 1.2 miles.

Turn right onto Jones Run Trail, hiking 2.5 miles.

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

Day Two

Campsite: Big Run Portal/Loop Trails - backcountry

7.4 to 8.4 miles

Hike upstream on Doyles River Trail 2.2 miles.

Cross Skyline Drive to Big Run Overlook and access Big Run Loop Trail.

Hike down Big Run Loop Trail, 2.2 miles.

Turn right and hike down Big Run Portal Trail 3 to 4 miles, looking for a pre-existing campsite.

Day Three

Campsite: Big Run Portal/Loop Trails - backcountry

8.7 miles (circuit day hike)

Leave your camp set up with permit on tent; remember to 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.

Day Four

9.4 to 10.4 miles

Continue hiking down Big Run Portal Trail another 0.2 mile to 1.2 miles.

Turn left onto Rockytop and hike 5.3 miles.

Turn right onto Austin Mountain, hiking 3.2 miles.

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

Notes

Group camping at pre-existing sites is available at the lower end of Big Run Portal. Follow the Portal Trail until you reach Brown Mountain Trail, then leave the Brown Mountain Trail, following social trails downstream while looking for a place to camp. Experienced-level groups may be able to find other areas to pristine site-camp on Big Run, though you should not spend two nights in a pristine campsite to avoid irreversible campsite impacts from developing.

To take this trip you'll 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

To shorten this to a two-night trip, skip day three.