

Shenandoah National Park

Backcountry Camping Trip Guide



Trip Name: Furnace, Jones, and Big Run from the 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: 26.6 to 35.3 miles

Day One

Campsite: Doyles River Trail - backcountry

8.8 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 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 mile.s

Look for a place to camp downstream of the Jones Run and Doyles River confluence.

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, then look for a campsite.

Day Three

9.4 to 10.4

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

Turn left onto Rockytop Trail and hike 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.

Notes

To take this trip you'll need to get an early start on the first day.

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.

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!

Group camping at pre-existing sites is available at the lower end of Big Run Portal. Follow the trail until you reach Brown Mountain Trail, then leave the park trail and follow social trails leading 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.

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 such as wallet.

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.