

Shenandoah National Park

Backcountry Camping Trip Guide



Trip Name: Whiteoak Canyon and Cedar Run, short option

Description: Popular waterfall circuit, beautiful, but avoid on weekends

Entry: 45 MP - Hawksbill Gap

Exit: 45 MP - Hawksbill Gap

Map(s): PATC #10 Central District

Level: Strenuous Beginner

Total Length: 8 to 14 miles

Day One

Campsite: Whiteoak Canyon Trail - backcountry

3.3 to 3.8 miles

Start at MP 45.6, Hawksbill Gap Parking.

Cedar Run Trail starts on the east side of Skyline Drive.

Hike down Cedar Run Trail

At 2.7 miles pass the Whiteoak/Cedar Run Link Trail

Begin looking for a place to camp on your left 1/4 mile beyond the Whiteoak/Cedar Run Link Trail.

OR

Continue 0.4 mile beyond the Whiteoak/Cedar Run Link Trail and turn left onto Whiteoak Canyon Trail.

Follow the Whiteoak Canyon Trail 0.2 mile crossing Whiteoak Run.

Look for a place to camp either just before crossing Whiteoak Run, upstream on your left, or another 1/4 mile beyond this crossing on your right. You may not camp on the Whiteoak Canyon Trail above the intersection with the Whiteoak/Cedar Run Link Trail.

Day Two

4.2 to 4.7 miles

Continue hiking up Whiteoak Canyon Trail another 2.1 to 2.6 miles.

Cross footbridge, turn left, and follow Whiteoak Canyon Fire Road/SBMH 1.8 miles.

When Whiteoak Canyon Fire Road and Skyland-Big Meadows Horse Trail (SMBH) split, stay left on SBMH for 0.3 miles.

Turn right on Cedar Run Trail 0.1 mile to return to Hawksbill Gap Parking.

Notes

Whiteoak Canyon is a beautiful place, but it is currently receiving extraordinarily high use on weekends. Not only does this make for unpleasantly crowded camping, it damages the natural resource as increasingly large areas are impacted. Beginner and Intermediate level backcountry campers need to plan overnight stays on a Monday – Thursday night. Due to the difficulty in finding legal campsites once the pre-existing campsites are occupied, this is an Advanced Level route on weekends (Friday night – Sunday night).

Options

Please note that for weekend trips, there are many other beautiful and less crowded options at Shenandoah National Park!
