



Austin/Furnace Mountains - SNP, Virginia

Length	Difficulty	Streams	Views	Solitude	Camping
13.3 mls	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆
Hiking Time: Elev. Gain: Parking:	7.0 hours with a half hour for lunch 3,045 ft There are three parking locations along Skyline Drive, with parking also available at the end of Browns Gap Rd/VA663. This circuit starts at the northern most parking on Skyline Drive at Browns Gap.				

The Austin and Furnace Mountains loop is one of the most strenuous day hikes in the Shenandoah National Park. Not only is the hike long, at over 13 miles, but the steep descent down the Austin Mountain ridge, and long climb up the exposed Furnace Mountain trail, make the 3000+ vertical feet of gain seem even that much harder.

From the Browns Gap parking area pass the closed gate, and start down the yellow blazed Madison Run Fire Road (FR). In 0.8 miles look for the yellow blazed Big Run Spur Trail where the FR makes a right bend. Turn right and follow the Big Run Spur Trail uphill for 0.3 miles to the ridge, and intersection of the blue blazed Rockytop Trail.

Turn left on the Rockytop Trail for 0.4 miles to the intersection of the blue blazed Austin Mountain Trail. Stay left on the Austin Mountain Trail as it follows the ridge, then gradually begins to descend. Pass several vistas of the Furnace Mountain summit, before passing through four rock slide areas. In three miles from the Rockytop Trail, the Austin Mountain Trail will make a sharp left turn, and descend the mountain very steeply for the remaining 0.3 miles to the valley, and ending at the Madison Run FR.

Turn right on the yellow blazed Madison Run FR for 0.8 miles. 200 yards before reaching the closed gate, and SNP boundary, turn left onto the Furnace Mountain Trail. Immediately cross Madison Run, then start the ascent of Furnace Mountain. This section of the trail is very exposed, so make sure to have a good hat. In 1.8 miles arrive at a small saddle where the Furnace Mountain Summit Trail turns left. Follow the Furnace Mountain Summit Trail for 0.5 miles, passing a nice camping spot at the summit, before descending for 50 yards to the overlook.

Return the 0.5 miles to the Furnace Mountain Trail, and turn left uphill. In 2.1 miles the Furnace Mountain Trail ends at the intersection of the blue blazed Trayfoot Mountain Trail. Stay left, on the Trayfoot Mountain Trail as it descends, then climbs to the intersection of the AT/Blackrock Connector Trail in 0.6 miles. Stay left towards the Blackrock Summit, and in 0.2 miles pass through the lower section of the Blackrock area, before arriving at the intersection of the white blazed Appalachian Trail AT and Blackrock Summit.

Turn left on the white blazed AT. In 0.3 miles pass the Blackrock parking area, before crossing Skyline Drive on the AT in another 0.6 miles. After crossing Skyline Drive, pass the Jones Run parking area in 0.2 miles, and stay on the AT for the remaining 1.2 miles back to the Browns Gap parking area.