



Bear Church Rock - Central SNP, Virginia

Length	Difficulty	Streams	Views	Solitude	Camping
8.5 mls					
Hiking Time: 4.5 hours plus a half hour for lunch					
Elev. Gain: 2,210 ft					
Parking: Parking is at the end of VA662 in the Graves Mill parking area.					

Unlike many of the other picturesque hikes in the Shenandoah National Park, the Bear Church Rock circuit is not nearly as well known. This hike starts along the beautiful Rapidan River, then heads up alongside Staunton River with small falls and pools, before making a steep climb to the panoramic outcropping of views at Bear Church Rock.

The hike posted here also does a short 0.6 mile out and back detour to the magnificent Jones Mountain Cabin. The cabin sits next to a stream that runs most times of the year, and is maintained and available for rent from the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club.

From the Graves Mill parking area on VA662 start up the yellow blazed Graves Mill Trail as it stays on the left of the Rapidan River for 0.5 miles to the intersection of the Staunton River Trail.

Turn left on the blue blazed Staunton River Trail, and in 0.5 miles look for a small side trail to a set of falls and pool. Continue along the Staunton River Trail another 1.7 miles to the intersection of the Jones Mountain Trail. Turn left on the steeper Jones Mountain Trail for 0.5 miles to the next junction, where the Jones Mountain Trail turns left, and the McDaniel Hollow Trail turns right.

Turn left staying on the Jones Mountain Trail as it winds around the mountain and passes through a canopy of Mountain Laurel before reaching an intersection where a side trail leads down to the Jones Mountain Cabin. The side trip to the cabin is 0.6 miles out and back, and well worth the extra distance.

After returning from the side hike to the cabin turn left uphill on the Jones Mountain Trail as it heads around the eastern side of the ridge for another 0.5 miles to the Bear Church Rock rock overlook. The Jones Mountain Trail continues past Bear Church Rock, so make sure not to miss the unmarked short side trail to Bear Church Rock on the right.

From high point of the hike retrace your steps back down Jones Mountain to the starting point and parking area.