



Harpers Ferry - Harpers Ferry, West Virginia

Length	Difficulty	Streams	Views	Solitude	Camping
6.8 mls	2	5	4	1	N/A
Hiking Time:	4 hours with 1/2 hour for lunch				
Elev. Gain:	1,490 ft				
Parking:	N39 19.161 W77 42.907				
Directions from DC: Go 1.9 miles west of Leesburg on VA7, Exit right on VA9 towards Charles Town for 9.8 miles (passing through Hillsboro), Right on VA671 towards Harpers Ferry for 7.6 miles, Left at the light on US340 for 0.1 miles, and park on the left in the large parking area.					

In historic Harpers Ferry WV, this circuit hike passes through Virginia, West Virginia and Maryland. There is a great view of Harpers Ferry from the Split Rocks Overlook in Virginia, as well as an pleasant walk along the C&O Canal towpath on the Maryland side of the Potomac River.

CAVEAT: The major downside to this hike is the first quarter mile, and last mile, that requires walking along US340. The traffic is heavy, and US340 has a very narrow shoulder. Use extreme caution in these sections.

From the parking area continue west on US340 walking on the left side of the road next to the guardrail. 60 yards past the end of the guardrail, and 0.2 miles from the parking area, turn left uphill on the blue blazed Loudoun Heights Trail. This is the steepest section of the hike, with the trail making several switchbacks for 0.4 miles before arriving at Split Rocks Overlook.

From Split Rocks Overlook continue up the blue blazed trail reaching the intersection of the white blazed Appalachian Trail (AT) in another 1.5 miles. Turn right downhill on the AT for 0.2 miles to the junction of an orange blazed trail. Turn left, remaining on the white blazed AT for 0.2 miles and cross Chestnut Hill Road. In another 0.5 miles follow the AT as it passes under the western US340 bridge. Cross the bridge, then cross the access road following the white blazed AT markers. Do not follow the access road down to the river.

After re-entering the woods the white blazed AT will come to the first of several small trail intersections in 0.2 miles. Remain straight on the AT for another 0.4 miles to Jefferson Rock. From this point, the AT is paved as it enters historic Harpers Ferry. Pass St. Peters Church and descend the stairs to cobbled High Street. If you turn left here, there are several outdoor restaurants within two blocks. To continue the hike, follow the AT signs to the Potomac River and pedestrian bridge. Cross the Potomac River to Maryland on the footbridge, then turn right downstream on the C&O Canal towpath.

Follow the towpath for 1.1 miles, then turn left onto a small unmarked trail just before the eastern US340 bridge pylon. The trail crosses the train tracks and ends at Sandy Hook Road in 60 yards.

From this point the hike follows several busy roads. Use caution.

Cross over to the other side of Sandy Hook Road and follow it to right uphill. Pass under the bridge where the road makes a sharp turn to the left. Be very careful as there is no shoulder here. 50 yards after the corner turn left over a guardrail onto a closed access road. There were trail direction signs here for 'American Youth Hostel' with blue dashes as of 2006. Follow the closed road uphill for 200 yards where it ends at the eastern US340 bridge.

Cross US340 and make the 0.4 miles bridge crossing on a narrow walkway on the bridges right/upstream side. After reaching the other end of the bridge continue on the right side of US340 the remaining 0.3 miles back to the parking area. Again, use extreme caution crossing US340 to return to the parking area.