



The Peak - SNP, Virginia

Length	Difficulty	Streams	Views	Solitude	Camping
16.8 mls					N/A
Hiking Time:	7.5 hours plus a half hour for lunch				
Elev. Gain:	3,255 ft				
Parking:	Park at the Gravel Springs Gap parking area. Alternately you can park at the north end of the loop on Skyline Drive at Jenkins Gap				

One of the toughest day hikes in the entire SNP. The Peak circuit has spectacular views along the AT and Marshall Mountain, and a grueling straight up and down climb of The Peak two thirds along the hike. You also have the option of making this significantly easier and shorter by 3.0 miles, and not doing The Peak out/back to the summit.

If you are looking for a good workout with plenty of views this may be the hike for you! Also, if you plan on doing The Peak out/back make sure to start early, as this makes the total hike time over 7 hours. It's a steep climb. Check out the profile at mile 11.

From the parking area at Gravel Springs Gap, cross Skyline Drive and turn right on the white blazed Appalachian Trail (AT). In 0.9 miles arrive at the first good overlook towards the west, and of the south fork of the Shenandoah River. In another 0.8 miles re-cross Skyline Drive and shortly pass a parking area on the left. In 0.2 miles the trail will make a turn to the right and climb to a rock outcropping where the AT turns back to the left. Climb up the rocky outcrop for the best view of the hike. Continue along the AT crossing Skyline Drive once again in 1.9 miles, then in another 1.5 miles the AT will begin to descend and arrive at the yellow blazed Jenkins Gap Trail.

Turn right on the Jenkins Gap Trail, pass through the parking area, and cross Skyline Drive. Turn right and continue next to Skyline Drive (no trail) for 0.2 miles to the Mount Marshall trailhead. Turn left down the yellow blazed Mount Marshall Trail as it winds around the mountain crossing Waterfall Branch, and Sprucepine Branch before arriving at the intersection of the Bluff Trail in 3.5 miles.

The Peak now is directly in front of you :) Again, there are no views at the summit, but it's a great workout. If you decide NOT to do The Peak out/back turn right here onto the Bluff Trail.

For The Peak out/back continue straight on the Mount Marshall Trail for another 0.4 miles to Thoroughfare Gap and intersection of the Jordan River Trail. The abandoned blue blazed Peak Trail is directly ahead going straight up the ridge. The trail is hard to locate for the first 100 yards, then climbs the ridge steeply for 0.3 miles where there is a small rock cairn indicating the turn left. Pick up the trail again and continue along the ridge for the remaining 0.5 miles to the tree covered summit. Return by following your path back to Thoroughfare Gap, then back to the intersection of the Bluff Trail.

Turn left on the yellow blazed Bluff Trail as it winds around the mountain for 2.3 miles to the intersection of the blue blazed Big Devils Stairs Trail. Stay straight on the Bluff Trail for another 1.4 miles arriving at the next intersection where the Bluff Trail turns left. Turn right uphill for 0.1 miles to the intersection of the horse trail and turn right again for 0.1 miles to the yellow blazed fire road. Turn right uphill on the fire road for the remaining 0.3 miles back to the Gravel Springs parking area.