



Beards Mountain / Douthat State Park - Clifton Forge, Virginia

Length	Difficulty	Streams	Views	Solitude	Camping
7.0 mls	★	★	★	★	N/A
Hiking Time:	3.5 hours with a half hour for lunch				
Elev. Gain:	1,455 ft				
Parking:	Park at the visitors center.				

Douthat State Park is one of Virginia's jewels. Voted as one of the nations 10 best, the park has over 43 miles of trails. Beards Mountain has just as many beautiful vistas as the Blue Suck Falls Hike, the other circuit hike in Douthat State Park. Both hikes also have an abundance of Mountain laurel that blooms in early June.

The blue blazed Beards Gap Trail starts up right side of the Visitor Center, and initially passes over a wooden footpath. Follow the blue blazed trail as it heads up the gap. The trail will make several switchbacks before arriving at the ridge, and intersection of the Bushy Hollow and Mountain Top trails in 1.1 miles.

Turn left on the yellow blazed Mountain Top Trail as it continues to climb along the ridge. In 0.2 miles the trail will make a sharp turn to the right. To the left is a closed overlook trail. In 200 yards reach the 4-way intersection of the Buck Hollow and Mountain Side trails. Stay straight on the yellow blazed Mountain Top Trail and in 0.1 miles the trail will make a sharp turn to the right and pass the first vista of Douthat Lake. From this point, the trail will climb more steeply before leveling off and arriving at the circuit high point.

There is a marker for the GWNF here, and what appears to be a trail continuing straight. Stay left downward on the yellow blazed trail as it follows the ridge, before descending more steeply and passing the best vista of Lake Douthat. The trail will now turn back to the left and in another 0.4 miles reach the intersection of the Ross Camp and Mountain Side trails.

Turn left on the white blazed Mountain Side Trail and reach the third vista in 0.9 miles. From this vista the trail will gradually begin to climb back to the ridge and reach the 4-way intersection of the Mountain Top and Buck Hollow trails in 0.4 miles.

Turn right downhill on the blue blazed Buck Hollow Trail as it steeply descends the mountain reaching an Overlook Trail in 0.5 miles. The Overlook Trail is a 0.5 miles out/back that takes you to a panoramic vista of the park. Continue down on the Buck Hollow Trail for 0.4 miles to the next 4-way intersection with the Ross Camp and Wilson Creek trails.

Turn left on the white blazed Wilson Creek Trail, immediately crossing a small footbridge. The white blazed trail will pass a water tower in 0.1 miles, then turn left into the woods. DO NOT continue straight on the gravel road. Follow the white blazed trail for 0.3 miles where it crosses a camp road then ends at an stone chimney and The Lodge.

Pass around The Lodge, back to the Visitors Center and parking.