



Great Falls Park Visitor Center

Great Falls Tavern Visitor Center

MATILDAVILLE (ruins)

GREAT FALLS PARK

C & O CANAL NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

- Horse and Hiking trail
- Hiking trail
- Hiker/Biker/Horse trail

- Lock ruins on Patowmack Canal
- Parking
- Picnic area

To 7
193

603

738

193

676

To 495
Exit 13

Difficult Run- Great Falls, Virginia

Length	Difficulty	Streams	Views	Solitude	Camping
5.1 mls	2	5	5	1	N/A
Hiking Time:	2.5 hours				
Elev. Gain:	260 ft				

With fifty percent of the Difficult Run hike following the Potomac River at one of its most scenic spots, it's easy to see why so many people make Great Falls Park one of their favorites. Just 2.8 miles from the Scott's Run Nature Preserve, this is one of two scenic loop hikes just outside the Capital Beltway.

From the end of the parking area, take the Difficult Run Trail as it follows the run bank before passing under Georgetown Pike in 0.3 miles. Just after passing under Georgetown Pike, the trail will become wider as it continues along Difficult Run for another 0.9 miles and past the junction of the Ridge Trail on your left. Continue downhill past the Ridge Trail, where the Difficult Run Trail ends at the confluence of the Potomac River.

Return to the intersection of the Ridge Trail and turn right. Follow the trail to the top of the rise and turn left following the ridge. In 0.5 miles turn right downhill on the blue blazed River Trail as it steeply descends toward the Potomac River.

The trail is hard to spot in places because of blow downs, just follow the blue blazes. The trail passes over a small footbridge and a paved road, then continues just to the right on the other side.

Continue on the blue blazed trail as it follows the river before arriving at Patowmack Canal ruins. In 50 yards, turn right over the footbridge then left following the green blazed River Trail. The trail will descend over a large footbridge before arriving at the main picnic area of Great Falls Park. Stay right and pass the two main scenic overlooks at Great Falls Park.

Just past the second overlook, cross the footbridge turning left back through the picnic area. Stay right, then at the fork, bear left towards the bathroom facilities (right is a parking area). After passing the bathrooms, turn right onto the Old Carriage Road.

In 0.5 miles, turn right on the Swamp Trail. Follow the Swamp Trail for 0.4 miles where it ends at the next trail junction. Turn right climbing over the hill and in 0.3 miles the trail ends at the junction of the Ridge Trail.

Turn left, and in 60 yards, at the bottom of the depression, a small trail marked only by a single split rail post turns right downhill. Turn right on the trail as it heads down the ravine for the remaining 0.2 miles back to Georgetown Pike and the parking area. BE CAREFUL crossing Georgetown Pike, there's a lot of fast-moving traffic on the road.