



Harpers Ferry/Loudoun Heights - Harpers Ferry, WV

Length	Difficulty	Streams	Views	Solitude	Camping
8.5 mls					
Hiking Time: 4.5 hours plus a half hour for lunch Elev. Gain: 1,880 ft Parking: Parking is available at the Harpers Ferry Train Station for a fee. Complete the NPS envelope/form, and deposit the envelope with fee in the steel tube at the parking entrance. You'll need to get here early to get one of the limited spots. Secondary parking is available at the intersection of US340 and Shenandoah Street.					

With Maryland Heights and C&O Canal/Weaverton Cliff, this is one of three beautiful vista hikes that start in the Harpers Ferry area. Significantly less crowded than the other two hikes, the Loudoun Heights hike also has several beautiful views of the Potomac River and Harpers Ferry.

The first 1 mile is also steeped with history, climbing a flight of steps hand hewn in the 1800's, passing St. Peters Roman Catholic Church, the ruins of St John's Episcopal Church, Jefferson Rock, and Harper Cemetery. All before reaching the secondary parking area where the hike crosses the US340 bridge and Shenandoah River.

- ▶ **Mile 0.0** – From the parking area at the Harpers Ferry train station, walk a short distance down Potomac Street, then make the right up Hog Alley. At the top of Hog Alley turn left, then in 50 yards turn right up the hand-hewn steps that lead to the most prominent landmark in Harpers Ferry, St. Peters Roman Catholic Church. The church was completed in 1833 to accommodate the influx of Irish laborers that supported the construction of the C&O Canal. During the Civil War Father Costello flew the British Union Jack to symbolize the church's neutrality, which sustained minimal damage during the war. The church was remodeled in 1869 to today's appearance.
- ▶ **Mile 0.2** - Now follow the white blazes of the Appalachian Trail (A.T.) passing the ruins of St. Johns Episcopal Church on the right. This church was used as a hospital and barracks during the Civil War, and sustained considerable damage. The church was abandoned in 1895 when a new church was built in the upper town. From St. John's continue a short distance to Jefferson Rock on the A.T.
- ▶ **Mile 0.3** - In 1733 Thomas Jefferson on visiting this spot proclaimed: *"On your right comes up the Shenandoah, having ranged along the foot of the mountain a hundred miles to seek a vent. On your left approaches the Patowmac [Potomac], in quest of a passage also. In the moment of their junction they rush together against the mountain, rend it asunder, and pass off to the sea ... This scene is worth a voyage across the Atlantic."* Around 1860, the US Armory Superintendent ordered red sandstone supports placed under Jefferson Rock because it was *"endangering the lives and properties of the villagers below."* From Jefferson Rock it is a short distance along the A.T. to Harper Cemetery. The 4-acre cemetery was set aside by John Harper, a Pennsylvania architect who passed through the area in 1747 then settled there, founding Harpers Ferry. Continue along the A.T passing a turn off to the Appalachian Trail Visitors Center on the right, then stay right on the A.T. where the trail splits, and continue to US340.
- ▶ **Mile 1.1** - Pass above the secondary parking area on the A.T., crossing the Shenandoah River on US340. At the opposite end of the bridge the A.T. descends down and under the bridge, then begins its ascent of Loudoun Heights. As the A.T. climbs the mountain pass over a small creek that can run nicely in the Springtime.
- ▶ **Mile 2.2** - After ascending for 0.5 miles cross Chestnut Hill Road. From Chestnut Hill Rd. it's 0.3 miles to the intersection of the orange blazed trail you will return on later in the hike. Continue upward on the A.T. for 0.2 miles to the ridge and intersection with the blue blazed Loudoun Heights Trail.
- ▶ **Mile 2.7** - Turn left on the blue blazed Loudoun Heights Trail following the ridgeline north and passing the foundations of a stone fort before reaching the intersection of the orange blazed trail.
- ▶ **Mile 3.2** - Continue on the Loudoun Heights Trail north passing a view of the Potomac River at a power line clear-cut. The trail then descends to the right and passes around the mountain.
- ▶ **Mile 4.1** - Arrive at Loudoun Heights Overlook where the Loudoun Heights Trail ends. The overlook has beautiful views of Harpers Ferry and Maryland Heights. Now start your return by retracing your steps uphill back to the orange blazed trail intersection.
- ▶ **Mile 5.0** - Turn right downhill on the orange blazed trail as it winds down passing through the power line clear-cut before arriving back at the intersection of the A.T. you passed on the way up.
- ▶ **Mile 6.0** - Turn right downhill on the A.T. retracing your steps down the mountain, re-crossing the Shenandoah River over US340, and back through historic Harpers Ferry.
- ▶ **Mile 8.5** - Arrive back a the train station parking area.