



Hogback Mountain - Northern SNP, Virginia

Length	Difficulty	Streams	Views	Solitude	Camping
7.5 mls	★	★	★	★	★
Hiking Time: 3.5 hours plus a half hour for lunch Elev. Gain: 1,225 ft Parking: Park 80 yards off Skyline Drive at the Piney Branch trailhead just south of Rattlesnake Point.					

The Hogback Mountain hike, with its spectacular views west towards the Massanutten ranges, is located in an area of the SNP that has several beautiful hikes including Piney Branch and Little Devil Stairs. With just over 1,200ft of vertical gain and 7.5 miles, this is a pleasant moderate day hike.

- ▶ **Mile 0.0** – From the parking area (located 75 yards off Skyline Drive) walk back towards Skyline Drive and the Piney Branch trailhead. From the kiosk trailhead, start down the blue blazed Piney Branch Trail as it passes through Mountain Laurel before reaching the 4-way intersection with the Appalachian Trail (A.T.).
- ▶ **Mile 0.2** – Cross over the A.T. and continue down the Piney Branch Trail as it continues its descent. The Piney Branch Trail will cross the upper portion of Piney River then reach the intersection of the Pole Bridge Link Trail.
- ▶ **Mile 1.7** – Turn left on the blue blazed Pole Bridge Link Trail for 0.4 miles and arrive at the intersection of the Sugarloaf Trail.
- ▶ **Mile 2.2** – Continue straight on the Pole Bridge Link Trail continuing around the mountain where the trail ends at the intersection of the Keyser Fire Road and Little Devil Stairs Trail.
- ▶ **Mile 3.0** – Turn left uphill on the yellow blazed Keyser Fire Road as it gradually ascends to Skyline Drive where the road ends at the Keyser Fire Road parking area.
- ▶ **Mile 4.0** – Cross Skyline Drive and follow the connector Trail for 60 yards to the intersection of the white blazed Appalachian Trail (A.T.).
- ▶ **Mile 4.1** – Turn left on the A.T. climbing Little Hogback Mountain. As the A.T. levels off look for the vista point directly ahead with beautiful views to the north and west. The knob to the south is Hogback Mountain.
- ▶ **Mile 4.4** – Continue on the AT descending towards the Skyline Drive Overlook. Just before the overlook parking area turn right remaining on the A.T. and passing through a clear cut. At this point the A.T. makes its steepest climb of the hike gaining over 300ft with several switchbacks on the way to the ridge. After reaching the ridge, the A.T. levels off and passes a small connector trail that leads to a Spring. Pass a nice view, then in 40 yards reach the main vista on Hogback Mountain.
- ▶ **Mile 5.4** – From the main Hogback Mountain vista continue on the Appalachian Trail as it winds around the back of the mountain, through a stand of Mountain Laurel, then crosses Skyline Drive and passes the intersection of the Sugarloaf Trail.
- ▶ **Mile 5.7** – From the Sugarloaf Trail intersection the A.T. will climb for a short time where the last good view point of the hike overlooks the Hogback Mountain Skyline Drive overlook area. Now continue downhill and shortly the A.T will again cross Skyline Drive and pass a parking area
- ▶ **Mile 6.0** – After passing the parking area the A.T. will cross over a small rise, pass another trail intersection, then cross Skyline Drive for the last time. Continue downhill on the A.T. and in 0.2 miles from crossing Skyline Drive arrive back at the intersection of the Piney Branch Trail.
- ▶ **Mile 7.2** – Turn right uphill on the Piney Branch Trail for 0.2 miles back to the trailhead and kiosk.
- ▶ **Mile 7.5** – Arrive back at the Piney Branch Trail parking area.