



Saddleback Mountain - Shenandoah National Park , VA

Length	Difficulty	Streams	Views	Solitude	Camping
5.9 mls	★	★	★	★	★
Hiking Time: 3.0 hours including 30 minutes for breaks Elev. Gain: 1,079 ft Parking: Park on Skyline Drive where the A.T. crosses the road. 38.35742, -78.54542					

[Click Here For Detailed Location](#)



By Trail Contributors: Christine and Adam Anderson

While this hike doesn't offer any grand views or beautiful streams, it does offer solitude and great opportunities to spot wildlife. In spring, this area is lush with wildflowers. It's also a great choice for a snowy-day hike when Skyline Drive is closed. You can park outside the Swift Run Gap entry station, and walk 100 yards to the trailhead.

- ▶ **Mile 0.0** – Find the cement Appalachian Trail marker post on the eastern side of Skyline Drive. There is parking here for several cars. Ascend uphill, heading north on the white blazed Appalachian Trail.
- ▶ **Mile .25** – Look for a faint, unmarked side trail on right. It leads to small historic cemetery that is worth exploring.
- ▶ **Mile .31** – Arrive at the cemetery - some graves date to 1800s. The cemetery is full of thorns, so take care exploring. Do not disturb the headstones.
- ▶ **Mile .37** – Return the way you came back to the Appalachian Trail, turn right and continue north.
- ▶ **Mile .45** – Pass under powerlines. The trail will continue to ascend gradually.
- ▶ **Mile 1.5** – Reach the junction of Appalachian Trail and Saddleback Mountain Trail. Turn right and follow the blue blazed Saddleback Mountain Trail. The Saddleback Mountain trail is very lightly traveled and follows rolling terrain through a quiet section of forest.
- ▶ **Mile 3.1** – Reach South River PATC maintenance hut. There are picnic tables, a bear pole, a privy, and two spring-fed water sources nearby. No camping is allowed at the hut.
- ▶ **Mile 3.15** – Spring fed water source to right of trail.
- ▶ **Mile 3.2** – Spring fed water source to left of trail. Saddleback Mountain Trail ends and turns into a wide fire road. Follow the fire road.
- ▶ **Mile 3.4** – Reach junction of fire road and Appalachian Trail. Turn left and follow the Appalachian Trail south. Follow the Appalachian Trail for 0.7 miles. You will ascend for several tenths of a mile before reaching a ridge and descending for the remainder of the hike.
- ▶ **Mile 4.1** – Pass the junction of Appalachian Trail and Saddleback Mountain Trail on the left and continue south on AT.
- ▶ **Mile 5.6** – Cross back under powerlines
- ▶ **Mile 5.9** – Return to vehicle