

# Shenandoah National Park

## Backcountry Camping Trip Guide



**Trip Name:** Laurel Prong and Hazeltop

**Description:** Mountain heights, cascading streams, waterfalls, Rapidan Camp historic site

**Entry:** 53 MP - Milam Gap

**Exit:** 53 MP - Milam Gap

**Map(s):** PATC #10 Central District

**Level:** Beginner

**Total Length:** 7.4 miles

---

### Day One

Campsite: Laurel Prong Trail - backcountry

4.1 to 4.6 miles

Find the white-blazed Appalachian Trail (AT) on the south side of Milam Gap parking.

Hike south on the AT 2.6 miles (crossing Skyline Drive almost immediately).

Sites may be found at the junction of Cat Knob Trail, however, insure that tents are erected the legal distance from the trail.

Turn left onto Laurel Prong Trail, hike 1.5 to 2 miles, and find a place to camp.

---

### Day Two

2.6 to 3.1 miles

Continue hiking north on Laurel Prong Trail to Rapidan Camp (0.8 to 1.3 additional miles; Laurel Prong totals 2.8 miles).

Explore the area, then find Mill Prong Trail at the northern end of the camp.

Hike up Mill Prong Trail to Milam Gap 1.8 miles (It will be a yellow-blazed horse trail for the first 0.8 mile, then stay left on the blue-blazed trail for the remaining 1.0 mile.)

---

### Notes

"The Laurels" is an area that is too dense with vegetation and steep in which to camp. The nearby spring is often dry, which means planning ahead for drinking water is necessary.

Find a place to camp before crossing Fork Mountain Trail, as camping is not permitted within 1/2 mile of Rapidan Camp.

---

### Options

If you prefer a short first day, hike this loop in reverse. Legal campsites exist before the first stream crossing, on the right hand side of the trail.

For a very short first day, you can follow the original plan by hiking north on the AT at least .25 mile to find a place to dry-camp, then hike the circuit the next day. Several legal campsites with wonderful views can be found near the summit of Hazeltop, a little over 2 miles from the trailhead.

---