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HIKING / TRAIL RUNNING

HIGHTOP MOUNTAIN

Located in Shenandoah National Park

If you've ever wanted to explore the iconic Appalachian Trail, the Hightop Mountain Trail is a more accessible and moderate section that will give you a taste of this 2,200 mile trek. The rocky viewpoint stands at 3,296 feet, making it the highest peak in the South District of Shenandoah National Park.

DIRECTIONS & PARKING

GOOGLE: *Hightop Mountain Parking Area*



Driving: 35-40 minutes east of Harrisonburg, 10 minutes east of Elkton



Signs and Marking: White blazes follow the Appalachian Trail



Parking: A fee will be collected at the Swift Run Gap Entrance Station of Shenandoah National Park on Route 33. One mile south of the entrance station, a paved parking lot will appear on the west side of Skyline Drive. The lot has only 8 parking spots.

MORE INFORMATION

TALES OF EXPLORATION

John Lederer, German explorer, credited himself as being the first European to cross the Blue Ridge Mountains in 1669. He crossed the mountain range with the help of four indigenous guides. Historians are not sure where he crossed the mountain range, but Hightop Mountain is one of the possible places that match his written description.

PRACTICAL PLANNING INFORMATION



Services Along Trail: None



Food & Water: None



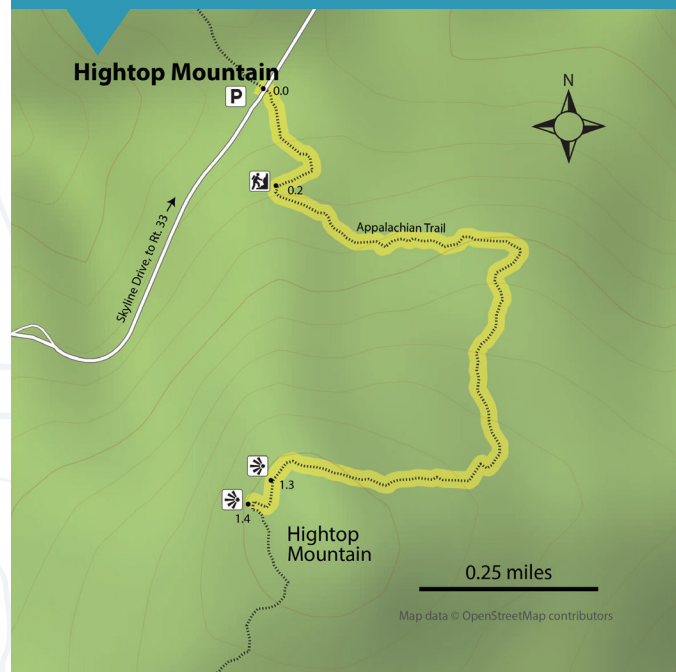
Phone Service: Signal at parking lot and along higher elevations.

TRAIL INFORMATION



Time: 2-3 hours
Distance: 2.8 mile
Elevation: +/- 900 ft.

Terrain: Hiking trail with some sections having rocks and roots. Grades are moderate and steady.
Preferred direction: Out and back



NAVIGATING THE TRAIL

From the parking area, cross the road to access the trail. The trail is well-defined and marked with white blazes and a cement marker with the AT symbol. It ascends gradually through the forest and passes large boulder pileups. The young and young-at-heart will have fun clambering about these rocks. The trail will then become steeper near the top, with several switchbacks. Then, it will follow along the ridge with a series of lookout areas, the first being more obscured and the last offering dramatic, 180 degree views to the south and west (1.4 miles). Enjoy the views before retracing your steps back to the parking area. If you continue downhill after the lookout (2.4 miles), you can visit an Appalachian Trail shelter.

