

Visit Madison County and Old Rag Mountain



Photo by Pierre Poussand/The Piedmont Magazine

For more information, visit <http://www.nps.gov/shen/planyourvisit/old-rag-hike-prep.htm>

Planning Your Visit

The most important step to a great hiking experience in Shenandoah National Park is good planning. Many of the points below are applicable to any hike, but there are a few special considerations for Old Rag.

- Be sure that you are physically able to complete this hike. The circuit hike is about 9 miles. There is a significant elevation change and a strenuous rock scramble that requires good upper body strength. Often, children and shorter adults need assistance navigating the scramble.
- Take at least 2 quarts of water per person. Dehydration is one of the most prevalent issues.
- Wear sturdy shoes that will support your ankles and allow you to get a foothold without slipping.
- Allow 7 or 8 hours. Yes, people do it in less time but, like all types of travel, you may experience unanticipated delays. It's always a good idea to have a headlamp in case you don't complete your hike before dark.
- Be sure you know the forecast and never attempt this hike in wet or icy conditions.
- Stay with your group and stay on the trail. Do not allow children to run ahead.
- Although you need to be sure you have plenty of water and food, it is a good idea to pack as lightly as possible. Most hikers prefer fanny packs to backpacks which can be difficult to maneuver through the rock scramble.
- Planning your hike on a weekday will enhance your experience. Old Rag can become very crowded on weekends. At times, the parking lot will be full and there will be long lines and substantial waits at some of the narrow passages. For current conditions follow us on Twitter: ShenandoahNPS.
- Pets are strictly forbidden on Old Rag for their own and hikers' safety.

SOURCE: National Park Service

