



## *A Visitor's Guide to Short Day Hikes near Damascus, VA*



*View from the Appalachian Trail just north of  
Damascus*

**1. Loop hike on Appalachian and Iron Mtn. trails (4 mi., moderate):**

Beginning in Damascus, walk east on E. 4<sup>th</sup> St. to reach the Iron Mtn. Trail. Follow yellow blazes for about 2 miles. Trail crosses a few small streams on stepstones, winds uphill, then turns left. At sign, turn right on short blue-blazed connecting trail, then right again onto the Appalachian Trail (white blazes). For the next 2 miles, the AT crosses a ridge overlooking Damascus, descends, turns left, and reaches a set of steps, crossing Rte. 58 to join the VA Creeper Trail and return to Damascus.



**2. Loop hike on the Appalachian and VA Creeper trails (8 mi. easy to moderate):**

Beginning in Damascus, walk east on the Appalachian and VA Creeper Trails (white blazes). At the "Appalachian Trail" sign, turn left, cross Rte. 58/91 and ascend a set of steps, following the white blazed A.T. four miles, across ridges with views. Cross a small log bridge and turn right on the Beech Grove Trail (unblazed woods road) to reach Rte. 58 in ¼ mile. Cross and descend to the Straight Branch VA Creeper Trail parking lot. Turn right on the Creeper and walk four miles, with views of the creek, to return to Damascus.

**3. Loop hike on the Iron Mtn. and Feathercamp trails (6 mi., moderate):**

Park at the upper Straight Branch parking lot above the VA Creeper Trail, about 5 miles east of Damascus on Rte. 58. Cross 58 and hike north on the Beech Grove Trail (woods road), ascending 1 mile. At the sign at the top, turn right to the Iron Mtn. Trail (which begins as a woods road for about ¼ mile, then turns right on yellow blazes into the woods). After about 2 miles, continue through a signed trail intersection and hike another mile to a hiker trail on the right to Sandy Flats. (Optional side trip: continue on the I.M.T. ¼ mile farther to

Sandy Flats Shelter and back.) Turn right at Sandy Flats onto the blue-blazed Feathercamp Trail. Descend 2 miles to Rte. 58. (The last ½ mile has several crossings of Feathercamp Creek on stepstones.) At 58, turn right and walk ¼ mile to your car.

**4. Appalachian Trail to TN/VA state line and Backbone Rock (7 mi., moderate):**

Beginning at the Damascus Town Park, follow white blazes south. Cross Beaverdam Rd. at Water St. and ascend on the AT between two houses. Trail ascends on switchbacks, reaching a woods road in about ¾ mile. Continue past a campsite with a blue-blazed spring trail at 2 miles; then ascend 1 ½ more miles to the sign at the TN/VA state line. Retrace back to Damascus, or if a car has been left at the Backbone Rock parking lot on Rte. 133, just under the tunnel on the right, hike just over a mile farther past the state line to the Backbone Rock Trail and descend 2 miles to the parking lot.



**5. Loop hike on Appalachian and VA Creeper trails from Straight Branch (4 mi., easy):**

Park at the pull-off at the Appalachian Trail sign at the Straight Branch Bridge about 5 1/4 miles east of Damascus on Rte. 58. Follow the AT north across the bridge and through a rhododendron forest, ascending slightly with views to the right over Whitetop Laurel Creek and the VA Creeper Trail. After 2 miles, go straight on a blue-blazed side trail at a sign where the AT turns left. Reach the VA Creeper Trail on the blue blazed trail in 1/3 mile. Turn right and follow the Creeper along the creek and over several trestles 2 miles to the Straight Branch Creeper Trail parking lot. Ascend the parking lot road, turn right, and walk up Rte. 58 ¼ mile to reach the car at the Straight Branch Bridge.

*Recommended map for these and other hikes in this area: National Geographic map #786 of the Mt. Rogers National Recreation Area. This map is available for sale at the following outfitters in Damascus: Mt. Rogers Outfitters, Adventure Damascus, and Sundog Outfitters.*