



## House Mountain - Lexington, Virginia

Length	Difficulty	Streams	Views	Solitude	Camping
8.2 mls	★	N/A	★	★	★
<p><b>Hiking Time:</b> 5.5 hours plus a half hour for lunch  <b>Elev. Gain:</b> 2,850 ft  <b>Parking:</b> The parking area on Saddle Ridge Rd/VA643 is located between the parking signs before the information kiosk.                      37.8116, -79.53266  <b>Note:</b> The 0.5 miles to the trail head is located on private property, and no vehicle traffic of any kind is allowed on the that portion of the road. Please respect private property.</p>					

The House Mountain hike near Lexington Virginia is really two out-and-back hikes in one. Big House Mountain, with great views to the west from Goat Point Overlook, and Little House Mountain, with its spectacular views of the Shenandoah Valley to the northeast. A major draw to Big House Mountain over the last several years is to spend time with the friendly goat. She took up residence on the ridge of Big House Mountain around 2011, and is known to join hikers up the last section to Goat Point Overlook, then asks for a toll tax of food ... which she normally receives.

Little House and Big House Mountains appear to tower out of the plains as they stand by themselves, separate from any other mountain range. The 950 acre House Mountain Preserve was purchased in 1989 through the efforts of the Rockbridge Area Conservation Council, the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, and many local residents, including Bill Stubbs a leader in conservation causes in the Rockbridge area for many years. The area is now owned by the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, and managed locally by the House Mountain Management Committee representing RACC, W&L University, VMI, and VOF.

The saddle between Big House and Little House Mountains was originally a homestead, and more recently a orchard and pasture. With camping space for multiple tents, as well as a seasonal spring just past the shelter on Big House Mountain, this is a perfect place to take an overnight backpack.

From the parking area continue up unpaved VA643 and in 50 yards stay right uphill (private drive is left). Continue up VA643 for another 0.3 miles (please respect private property) to the closed gate and trailhead.

From the trailhead and closed gate, start up the unblazed House Mountain Trail. The trail passes private property on the left for the first 0.5 miles. The remaining hike to the saddle becomes steeper and more rutted.

### Big House Mountain

Out/Back - 1.7mls - 740ft gain - Moderate+

Continue to the west uphill on the unblazed Big House Mountain trail and in 100 yards pass a shelter and privy on the right. Just past the shelter the trail will split, remain right uphill as it becomes steeper then makes a hairpin turn to the right in 0.5 miles. At the hairpin turn, stay straight on the blue blazed trail where it becomes narrow, steep and rocky for the short 90 yard climb to the Big House Mountain ridgeline. Turn left at the ridge line following the faint trail for 30 yards to passing a small campsite, then arriving at the first vista to the west. Continue for another 25 yards to the main panoramic view at Goat Point Overlook on Big House Mountain.

Return along the ridge to where the trail begins to descend, but continue to bushwack along the ridgeline for 100 yards where there is a boulder canyon. Just inside the boulders is Tabletop Rock. Return to the intersection down with the blue blazed trail and retrace your steps back to the saddle between Big House and Little House Mountains.

Return to the saddle by retracing your route.

### Little House Mountain

Out/Back - 2.6mls - 940ft gain - Moderate

The new Little House Mountain trail is now fully marked with standard vertical blue blazes from the saddle (just behind the two signs) all the way to the incredible overlook. This new trail was the solution to the very strenuous, straight up trail before. This trail is not mountain bike/horse friendly.

From the saddle the Little House Mountain trail starts from behind the signs. Follow the blue blazes as it gradually ascends the south-west side of the ridge, before making several switchbacks and climbing the last half mile to the ridgeline.

At the ridge follow the trail through a thick section of Mountain Laurel before turning left back to the north. In 0.2 miles the trail passes to the left of the main summit before beginning its descent to the overlook in another 0.7 miles.

Once passing around the main summit, the trail descends passing through a rock scree, then shortly afterward reach a small campsite. The blue blazed trail continues downwards and ends at the panoramic Little House Mountain overlook. Return to the saddle by retracing your route.