

Heartbreak Ridge Trail



To Do in the future....

Heartbreak Ridge Trail is a 9.7 mile lightly trafficked out and back trail located near Old Fort, North Carolina that offers scenic views.

From the the Old Fort Picnic area and the base of Kitsuma, access Star Gap (TR 209) by taking Mill Creek Road approximately 2.5 miles north to Graphite Road. Veer right here just past the Brookside Baptist Church, and turn right on the doubletrack (unmarked) trail approximately .2 mi. past that. This will meet railroad tracks. Cross the tracks to start the Star Gap Trail.

Just into the woods, the trail gains elevation immediately. Continue on Star Gap to get to the bottom of Heartbreak Ridge. Turn up Heartbreak Ridge Trail for the climb or continue straight and start a descent from there to Jarrett Creek Road - FS 4030.

Star Gap has roughly the same elevation gain/loss from the railroad tracks to Jarrett Creek Road. The big change from climbing to descending will be at the intersection with Heartbreak Ridge, ~1.2 mi. up at 2720 ft. You'll find about the same amount of switchbacks on either side of this point also.

Most of the Heartbreak Ridge Trail itself, as its name suggests, runs along a ridge, but little of it on the actual ridge top; most of the trail is wooded and not exposed (though parts of it along cliff tops can seem treacherous). The downside of this condition, however, is that there exist few take-your-breath-away viewpoints. Still referring to the Heartbreak Ridge Trail itself, though its elevation gain is substantial (2,000ft) it is mostly gradual. Moreover, our plan offers the added advantage of hiking mostly uphill first, and mostly downhill on the way back.

Said another way...

The Star Gap Trailhead can be found on Graphite Road, which veers off of Mill Creek Road which, in turn, veers off of Old US Highway 70 West on the west side of Old Fort (very close to the first I-40 exit on the eastern side of the Eastern Continental Divide). This short drive is a bit interesting as much of it parallels the Southern Railroad tracks, with its many trestles and tunnels. The trailhead itself is unmarked and can be found across Graphite Road from the SUWS of the Carolinas camp.

Note: Hillman Beer operates an outpost in Old Fort.