

Blue Ridge Mountains & Great Smoky Nat'l Park

Day 1 Arrival:-

If you are arriving by public transportation we offer the following pick up schedule:

FROM AIRPORTS:-

Asheville Airport at 4:30 p.m. (Delta ticket counter).

We can **return hikers to the airport by 2:30 p.m.** on the last day of the trip

FROM BUSES:-

Greyhound offers service to Asheville, where we can meet you. Please contact us for times.

(Additional travel information as well as pre & post trip lodging can be found under the heading of TRAVEL listed below)

HIKING DAYS:-

Day 2 - Monday

(3.0 miles) We head to Dupont State Forest in Transylvania County, known as the Land Of Waterfalls. Three of the best, Hooker Falls, Triple Falls and High Falls await us on this easy-going hike. It will be steep in places, but the footing is good and wooden steps at Triple Falls will get us close to the water.

Two options are available after lunch at Caesar's Head State Park, just across the border in South Carolina.

HARDER (4.4 miles) We'll hike to an overlook with a view of the highest falls in South Carolina, Raven Cliff Falls, and return along the same trail through rich Southern Appalachian forest.

EASIER (3.0 miles) At the Ceasar's Head State Park visitor center is a short but spectacular trail along the edge of the Blue Ridge Escarpment overlooking the piedmont, (don't worry, there are railings!) We'll then take a 2.0-mile round trip hike to a nearby waterfall.

Day 3 - Tuesday

EASIER (4.0 miles) A visit to "Connemara", the Poet Carl Sandburg's farm, is always interesting. The house and furnishings have been preserved as they were when the Sandburg's lived there. The farm still raises goats descended from the Sandburg's prize herd. A network of trails leads to a viewpoint on Glassy Mountain.

(1.2 miles) Devil's Courthouse - A steep paved trail takes us to a dramatic rocky perch high on the Blue Ridge. A low rock wall keeps us safely away from the edge but allows us to take in the spectacular mountain views.

(1.5 miles) Richland Bald - This trail takes up through the high altitude evergreen forest that cloaks the higher mountains of the Southern Appalachians. We reach the highest

point of the Pisgah National Forest on 6410' Richland Bald. Along the way we'll get some nice views.

HARDER (4.0 miles) John Rock - We will hike to the top of a gigantic granite outcrop with magnificent views towards the Blue Ridge and Looking Glass Mt, an even bigger granite outcrop. We'll have a picnic lunch at the Pisgah Center for Wildlife Education where you can tour the exhibits and the fish hatchery.

(3.0 miles) Sam Knob - After approaching through meadows to the base of Sam Knob, a steady climb with occasional views takes us to the two peaks of Sam Knob, both with outstanding views of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Day 4 - Wednesday

EASIER (4.2 miles) Upper Falls and Second Falls - This high valley known as Graveyard Fields provides a dramatic setting for the two waterfalls. Devastating fires in the distant past caused the unusual scrub forest and open meadows that surround us.

HARDER (4.0 – 8.0) Black Balsam Loop - This very rugged trail takes us above 6000' across some of the highest southern Appalachian "Balds" which are grassy or shrubby summits free of trees. We will enjoy unobstructed views of this incredible landscape throughout the hike.

Day 5 - Thursday

We spend the day in the easternmost edge of Great Smoky Mountain National Park. The isolated Cataloochee Valley is a relatively quiet corner of the most visited national park in the country. Its recent human history is evident in the various old homesteads in various states of deterioration or restoration, while the recently introduced elk herd and the frequent bears testify to the current wild character of the valley.

EASIER (5.4 miles) Little Cataloochee Trail - This delightful and historic trail takes us through a pretty valley that was an isolated mountain community before the creation of the Park. Two cabins and a church have been beautifully restored and are now open for hikers to investigate. We'll also visit two old graveyards where the valley's history is literally written in stone.

HARDER (5.4 miles) We climb steeply through a magnificent forest to an historic 60 ft fire tower on the summit of 5842' Mt. Sterling. It's worth scaling the tower for the fantastic views of the Smoky Mountains and other North Carolina and Tennessee mountains ranges. The summit is cloaked in the Frasier Fir, endemic to the Southern Appalachians.

Day 6 - Friday

(up to 4.0 miles) The North Carolina State Arboretum is a state of the art showplace for native and non-native North Carolina trees and plants. A network of gorgeous trails gives us many options for our half-day hike, or one can relax and enjoy the many gardens including a fine Bonsai tree exhibit. We'll have a picnic lunch on the grounds.

NORTH CAROLINA – THE INNS

DAY ONE & TWO (Sunday & Monday)

Highland Lake Inn
86 Lilly Pad Lane
Flat Rock, NC 28731
Reservations: (800) 635 5101
Guests: (828) 693 6812
www.hlinn.com
e mail: Cjordan@hlinn.com

DAY THREE, FOUR & FIVE (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday)

The Waynesville Inn Golf Resort & Spa
176 Country Club Dr
Waynesville, NC 28786
Reservations: (800) 627 6250
Guests: (828) 456 3551
www.thewaynesvilleinn.com
e mail: reservations@thewaynesvilleinn.com

We will be dining at the restaurants at both of these inns and they both have liquor licenses.

TRAVEL:-

If you are driving to our starting point the Highland Lake Inn, Flat Rock, NC please visit the Inns web site at www.hlinn.com

If you are arriving by public transportation we offer the following pick up schedule:-

FROM AIRPORTS:-

Asheville Airport - 4:30 p.m. (Delta ticket counter)

If you need a place to stay in Asheville on Saturday night we recommend the following:-
Doubletree Inn (828) 274 1800 (was the Quality Inn - 115 Hendersonville Rd.)

Abbingdon Green B & B (828) 251 2454 (both these are near The Biltmore House)

or: Ramada Inn (828) 298 9141 (was the Comfort Inn)
(We can pick up from these hotels or others in Asheville around 3:30 to 4 on the first day of the trip. Please advise if you need this service).

In the downtown Asheville area we recommend the following:-

Renaissance Asheville Hotel (828) 252 8211

1 Thomas Wolfe Plaza

or:

Best Western Asheville (828) 253 1851

22 Woodfin St.

or:

Haywood Park Hotel (828) 252 2522 or 800 228 2522

1 Battery Park Ave.

e mail: hotel@haywoodpark.com

(All are well situated for travel by foot to shops, cafes, art galleries, the Thomas Wolf Memorial and more. Unfortunately none of the locations offer airport shuttle, an average taxi ride (approx. 11 miles) runs about \$30 to \$40. If you choose to stay downtown you will need to return to the Asheville Airport for our 4:30 p.m. pickup).

We can return hikers to the airport by 2:30 p.m. on the last day of the trip

FROM BUSES:- Greyhound offers service to Asheville, where we can meet you. Please notify us in advance of your travel plans.

FOR TRIPS THAT BEGIN SUNDAY YOU SHOULD BE AWARE THAT FLIGHTS ARE OFTEN CHEAPER IF YOU ARRIVE ON SATURDAY.

YOU CAN THEN EITHER FIND YOUR OWN WAY TO THE STARTING INN OR STAY IN THE AIRPORT TOWN UNTIL OUR PICK UP ON SUNDAY.

IT IS VITAL THAT YOU LET US KNOW YOUR TRAVEL PLANS (FLIGHT TIMES AND NUMBERS OR BUS ARRIVAL TIMES) IN ORDER FOR US TO MEET YOU. YOU SHOULD ARRANGE A FLIGHT TIME THAT ARRIVES BEFORE OUR PICK UP TIME AND E MAIL OR CALL WITH THE INFORMATION. MAKE SURE YOU HAVE RECEIVED PICK UP CONFIRMATION BEFORE YOU LEAVE ON YOUR TRIP!

BETTER TRAVEL AT (800) 331 6996 CAN HELP YOU WITH YOUR PLANS.