



Trip Summary

Appalachian Trail Section Backpack

TRIP AT-A-GLANCE

Dates: June 20 – 27, 2010
Location: Damascus, VA
Cost: \$ *1150
Rating: 4
Activities: Backpacking, camping
Meeting Place: Richmond Airport (RIC) or our hotel in Buena Vista, VA
Arrive: 5 pm at our motel or 2pm at RIC on June 20th
Depart: anytime after breakfast on June 27th; after 1 pm from RIC

* Deduct 5 % for being one of the first 5 to register (by dd/mm/yy) and 3% of the entire trip fee when the balance is paid by check.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- experienced guides
- two nights double occupancy lodging and five nights camping
- dinners and breakfasts from dinner Sunday to breakfast the following Sunday
- group camping, cooking, and safety equipment

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- transportation to/ from trip start/end.
- Transportation to/from the Richmond airport is available for \$75
- Lunches and snacks
- Guide gratuities

Trip Highlights

- Beautiful 360 degree views every day
- Summitting at least one 4,000 footer a day
- Lush forests, beautiful streams, river, campsites and shelters, Cold Mountain and Spy Rock
- Refining our lightweight backpacking techniques so our packs stay under 30 lbs

Trip Overview

The Appalachian Trail, while often rugged and remote, is designed to accommodate both people who want to hike the entire trail and those who choose to section hike it; that is, hike a new section every year. This year we continue our tradition of offering a new section hike. We will be hiking in southern Virginia, beginning on the Blue Ridge and continuing to the edge of the Shenendoahs. The terrain is a wonderful mix of rugged, rocky hiking, climbing summits, beautiful vistas, ridge walking, rolling forest trails and cool, spring fed streams and rivers. Come join us and enjoy another great section of this historic trail.

Our Itinerary

Itinerary:

We've designed the itinerary to take advantage of shelters that are located along the trail. However, since we carry lightweight tents, we have a little flexibility in our actual mileage. Minor itinerary changes may be made due to weather and/or trail conditions. Keep in mind that hiking a trail such as the Appalachian Trail is, indeed, not flat and mileage is quite deceiving. What may look like long mileage can go quite quickly if it is flatter and/or ridge walking while often shorter mileage takes more time because of the elevation gains and losses.

Sunday: Meet at 5 p.m. at our motel in Buena Vista, Va. If you are flying in, the closest airport is Richmond, Va. and we can pick you up there at 2 pm. We will start with a discussion of what to leave behind and then go into town for dinner and

CANCELLATION POLICY

In the unfortunate event that you must cancel your trip, your refund will be determined by the following formula:

Days Prior to Trip	Refund
90 + days	All but \$50
90 – 61 days	50% of deposit
60 – 30 days	50% of trip fee
29 days or less	No refund

Adventures in Good Company reserves the right to cancel or alter a trip due to unforeseen weather, unsafe conditions, low registrations or other circumstances.

On the rare occasion when Adventures in Good Company must cancel a trip, all payments received to date will be refunded, including the non-refundable portion of your deposit.

Adventures in Good Company is not responsible for expenses incurred in preparation for any canceled trips, including airplane tickets.

TIPPING GUIDELINES

Tipping at the end of the trip is optional. If you feel your guide(s) did an outstanding job and would like to reward them for their efforts, a suggested rule of thumb is US \$5 to \$10 per person, per day.

Oftentimes, trip members organize a group envelope (this makes it anonymous) and present it at the last shared meal.

Our Itinerary Continued

introductions. We spend the rest of our evening getting ready for our adventure.

Monday: 3.8 miles. Our mileage is relatively short today to accommodate our pre-trail activities. We will continue packing for our trip after an early breakfast and after loading our gear we will be shuttled to our put in point. Don't be fooled by the short mileage, this will be an afternoon to remember with almost the entire hike going up with some great glimpses of beautiful vistas and also some spots to walk out to for even better viewing. After making the summit of Bald Knob we will begin descending to our first shelter/campsite, Cow Camp Shelter, where there are no cows but some great history. In the early 1900s there was actually a hotel in this area and many would ride their horses and mules to spend some time in the Wilderness.

Tuesday: 10.2 miles. From Cow Camp Shelter we will hike to Seely-Woodworth Shelter. Today the mileage is a bit hefty but one of the most beautiful days on the trail. We spend the day hiking up and down from about 3100 feet to 4000 feet and crossing some of the more beautiful summits this section has to offer. Our first treat will be the summit of Cold Mountain with its beautiful bald, covered with wild flowers and offering an amazing 360 degree view of the surrounding countryside and mountains. It will be hard to leave this spot but many other equally beautiful summits await! Even though the entire day is spent ascending and descending the hiking is comfortable and rewarding. Our shelter will be very welcome at the end of this day.

Wednesday: 6.9 miles. Today our destination is Priest Shelter. Our hike will begin with a relatively flat section to get us warmed up for our climb up to 4,000 feet, where we will encounter a beautiful rock formation named Spy Rock. We will take a break here, drop our packs and scramble up to the top for an amazing view from the top of this huge, bare rock formation, definitely one of those Sound of Music moments. From Spy Rock we continue toward our shelter, hiking through a section with beautiful Sentinel Pine as well as vistas at every turn. Priest Shelter, our destination, has one of the most beautiful streams of this trip, a great opportunity to cool off the feet and the body!

Thursday: 7.0 miles. Continuing our journey we leave Priest Shelter, starting off with a climb to the top of Priest Mountain. Even though your legs may be protesting about climbing that early in the morning, after summiting we will descend from 4,000 feet to 1,000 ft to the Tye River. You will be very happy to be descending this side of The Priest rather than ascending. Upon getting to the Tye River we will cross a beautiful suspension walkway bridge. Below are wonderful

Our Itinerary Continued

places to take a much needed break for lunch and dangle the feet in the Tye River. If the weather is nice this is a great spot to spend a bit of extra time just relaxing and enjoying the fruits of your efforts thus far. After lunch we will continue to our next shelter/campsite, Harpers Creek Shelter with another really nice spring running right beside of the shelter.

Friday: 6.2 miles. Today we will actually be a bit lazy and enjoy our morning at the shelter a bit before leaving for our hike. We will be spending the rest of our morning and part of our afternoon going up from our shelter at 2,000 feet to the top of Three Ridges at 4,000 feet. Yes, it is a bit of an up but beautiful. The Three Ridges winds us around both sides of the mountain so we get great vistas on both sides. We will see Chimney Rock, hike the Three Ridges and enjoy a great vista from Hanging Rock. After all that climbing we can enjoy the fruits of our labors with wonderful views and nice breezes at the top. Then we will descend to Maupin Shelter for our last night on trail together. Our terrain today is definitely rugged with lots of rocks and certainly a lot of up but the return for our effort in views and satisfaction is amazing. Weather permitting our last night will be spent under a beautiful starry sky and comforting campfire.

Saturday: 6.6 miles This morning starts out with a wake up call of its own: a quick little up followed by a steep down then pretty mellow for the rest of our time left on the trail before we meet our shuttle. This will be a welcome and relaxing way to end our trip and give us the opportunity to continue to enjoy the views without having to work quite so hard for them. We will meet our shuttle at Dipping Rock Parking Area on the Blue Ridge Parkway. From there we will shuttle back to our vehicles and then caravan into Lexington, Va. for a much anticipated shower. After enjoying the luxury and comfort of civilization at the hotel we will gather for a farewell dinner and savor our experience. Returning to the hotel we can continue to marvel at pillows, sheets, mattresses and just general things we tend to take for granted even though part of us may still yearn to be back on trail!

Sunday: Sadly we say goodbye but hope to see you all on the next section trip of the Appalachian Trail next year. You are free to leave anytime after breakfast. If you flew in, we will have you back to the Richmond, Va. Airport by 11:30 am and you can plan to fly out after 1 pm.

Packing List

FOOTWEAR

- 1 pair midweight hiking boots (Gore-tex, cordura, or leather). They should fit comfortably, without constriction, when you are wearing your socks and should be well-broken in.
- 1 pair lightweight camp shoes (sandals, clogs) to wear in camp.
- 2 pair thin liner socks; silk or synthetic equivalent. Not everyone uses liner socks.
- 2-3 pair hiking socks: wool or synthetic equivalent (Thorlo, Ultimax, or Smartwool)

CLOTHING (including what you are wearing)

- 1 pair comfortable, lightweight, synthetic hiking pants/zip-offs/capris (Supplex, or nylon/polyester/spandex blend)
OR 1 pair nylon/supplex shorts /hiking skirt (w/long underwear for warmth)
- 1 lightweight long sleeved fleece or lightweight long sleeved wool shirt. A wool/fleece vest is also a good option.
- 1 pair **lightweight** long underwear top and bottoms: wool or synthetic equivalent (Capilene, MTS, or polypropylene)
- 1 T-shirt made of synthetic material or lightweight wool
- 1 wide-brimmed or duck bill hat, or baseball cap for sun, rain and high fashion.
- 1 stocking cap, wool or fleece or a buff
- 1 pair gloves: wool, Capilene, or Polartec
- 1 rain parka and rain pants: a waterproof/breathable fabric like Gore-tex. Partial or full-length leg zippers are great for easily putting your pants on over your shoes or boots. Can be a poncho and rain pants.
- underwear
- a fresh change of clothes for the ride home

EQUIPMENT

- 1 backpack: internal frame of at least 3900-4600cu in capacity OR external frame of at least 4200 cu in.
- 1 sleeping bag; synthetic fill or down fill, warm to 20 degrees F
- 1 **lightweight** sleeping pad: "closed cell" foam pad, Thermarest® self-inflating pad, or Ridge Rest® pad
- 3 or 4 stuff sacks or Ziploc bags for organizing your gear in your pack
- 1 heavy-duty, extra-large garbage bag
- 2 tall kitchen bags
- 1 rain cover for your backpack
- Hydrations system or 2 one-quart water bottles
- Trekking poles

ESSENTIALS

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> small headlamp with fresh batteries | <input type="checkbox"/> Small bowl, cup and utensils, non-metal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> lip block with SPF of at least 15 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 bandanas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sunglasses (100% UV blocking) | <input type="checkbox"/> Small pocket knife (please, no leatherman tools or large swiss army knives) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small pack towel | |

****We provide sunscreen and insect repellent as part of the group gear unless you need something specific.**

TOILETRIES (small everything)

- toothbrush, small toothpaste, dental floss, moist towelettes (1 per day), sanitary supplies and a zip-lock plastic bag, contact lens paraphernalia, glasses
- personal "patch kit": 3 bandaids, 1 safety pin, 1 pkg moleskin, 3 compeed (if not available increase bandaids), ibuprofen, personal medications, if any. **Individuals allergic to insect stings must bring an epi-pen.** Please consult your physician and tell your guide.

OPTIONAL

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> small journal and pen | <input type="checkbox"/> camera and film/memory card |
| <input type="checkbox"/> short gaiters | <input type="checkbox"/> orienteering style compass (e.g. Silva, Brunton or Suunto) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> compression sacks for your sleeping bag and clothing will give you more packing space in your backpack. | |

Notes on the Packing List

Adventures in Good Company's packing list covers what we have found to be essential for your safety and comfort. Because of weight considerations, please use discretion when adding to the list. For a five day backpacking trip, your pack may weigh up to 35 pounds. Your share of the group equipment may initially weigh 8-12 pounds. Weigh your pack at home and check to make sure everything fits in the pack, with room to spare for group food and equipment

Backpack: You want to bring a backpack that has 3900 - 4600 cu. in. capacity for an internal frame OR external frame of at least 4000 cu in. It is essential to have a backpack that fits correctly, as an ill-fitting pack can ruin your trip. While we understand wanting to borrow a pack, do not try to get by with someone else's pack that doesn't quite fit. Be sure to have your backpack fitted to you by your local outfitter whether it is a new one you purchase for the trip or one that you already have. Need help deciding on a backpack? Ask for our information guide on buying a backpack.

Boots: Well-fitting, sturdy boots that come above your ankle are very important to your safety and enjoyment. If you plan to buy new boots, break them in by wearing them around town and taking some short hikes *before* your trip. Leather boots may be waterproofed in various simple ways, and cordura boots will be waterproof if they're lined with Gore-Tex. If you have weak ankles or are recovering from an ankle injury, get leather boots – you'll find that this will give you more support in uneven or slippery terrain.

Sleeping bag: Bring a sleeping bag with down or synthetic insulation, wrapped in a heavy plastic bag (trash compactor bags work well) inside its stuff sack. Weight and bulk are some of the factors to consider in sleeping bags. Down bags are lightweight and compact, but they need to be kept dry in order to keep you warm. Synthetic bags are usually heavier and bulkier, yet they still keep you warm if they are wet. Consider packing your sleeping bag in a compression stuff sack. This will decrease the amount of space your sleeping bag takes up in your pack. Air out your bag frequently on a trip. Bring a bag rated to 20 degrees F.

Fabrics: Synthetic fabrics are often specified on this equipment list: Capilene, Thermastat, Polartec and Gore-Tex. In addition, there are many other patented brand names used by different manufacturers, which can make it all seem even more complicated. Basically, they all have one thing in common: The synthetics do not absorb much water compared to cotton—thus, they continue to provide warmth when wet. The specific fabric name is not as important as having material with these qualities and having a variety of weights available to you as your layering system. They really *are* miracle fabrics. Wool is also a very good choice, especially some of the new clothing made by Ibex or Smartwool. It is 100% merino wool, keeps you warm and dry and is not itchy. It also doesn't absorb the odors the way many synthetic materials do. You can also buy less expensive wool clothes at a second hand or Army/Navy store. Cotton is not a good choice! **Wet cotton (even heavyweight sweats) will rob you of your body heat faster than if you were wearing no clothing at all.**

How to pack: Several small stuff sacks (rather than one large one) are a great way to organize your gear. Line your backpack with a heavy-duty, extra large garbage bag for waterproofness. This is essential if you don't have a raincover for your pack and useful even if you do. Internal frame packs should be large enough for the bag to fit inside, and they are usually lashed to the outside of external frames.

Hydration: For backpacking trips it is very important to your safety and enjoyment to have an *independent* ability for accessing your water. As you are backpacking you will need to be able to drink water frequently without having to remove your pack. One method is to have a water bottle attached to your waist strap. Another option is to use a HYDRATION SYSTEM such as CamelBak, Platypus, and Gregory bladder bags, which are simply a collapsible water bag with a hose attachment that you drink from. These fit inside your pack with the hose positioned over your shoulder where you can access your water without the use of your hands. Bladder bags can hold 40-100oz. of water. Instead of carrying 2 one-quart water bottles you could carry one 70 oz. bladder bag.

Items on your packing list can be purchased through a number of outdoor outfitters including:

Recreational Equip. Inc (REI)
800-426-4840
www.rei.com

Eastern Mountain Sports (EMS)
603-924-7231
www.ems.com

Sierra Trading Post
800-713-4534
www.SierraTradingPost.com

Also check out the websites on the Affiliate page of our website (under Resources)

Additional Trip Preparations

HELPFUL WEBSITES

Appalachian Trail Conference:
www.appalachiantrail.org

The Appalachian Trail Conference is a private, volunteer-based nonprofit organization, dedicated since 1925 to building, protecting, and managing the Appalachian Trail for the public. This is a comprehensive and useful web site.

Appalachian Long Distance Hikers' Association: www.aldha.org.

A non-profit open to those who have hiked the AT, and anyone else. This site has lots of very useful information and links.

WEATHER

The weather at this time of year is typically lovely summer weather, but it can vary based on where we are in the mountains. Typically it is in the mid-70s during the day and in the 50s at night. But rain and cool winds are not uncommon. Bringing the proper equipment will add greatly to your enjoyment and your safety.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

The first night we will be staying at the Buena Vista Motel 540) 261-2138. People can also call the Adventures in Good Company office and we will do our best to pass on a message. The last night we will stay at the in Manchester Center, VT. Cell reception may be spotty. Once we begin the trail there is no reliable cell reception. Be sure to inform those at home that you will be out of communication for those days.

CONDITIONING

The object of our backpacking trips is to go as lightweight as possible. Ideally, no one will go out with more than a 30-pound pack. Training for this trip should anticipate the possibility of carrying more than 30 pounds since it is often difficult to achieve the goal on the first try. Training with a 40 pound pack will prepare you very well for the trip. This trip also involves hiking with significant elevation changes while carrying your pack. Assuming that you are already in reasonably good aerobic condition, the single most important preparation you can make is to spend time hiking with your backpack on and loaded. If you don't have time for a weekend trip, take your backpack to the nearest park after work twice a week and walk up and down hills. Start 6 to 8 weeks before the trip with an hour and work up to two, and gradually increase the weight in your pack. If you live in the flatlands, find some stadium stairs or a tall office building. This should be in addition to your regular aerobic exercise (Stairmasters or Stepmills are great).

If you don't exercise regularly now, we advise you to start an exercise program *at least* three months before your trip. For example, you might start walking 4 or 5 times a week for half an hour, at a pace that is fast enough to make you breathe deeply. Hills are good for this. Gradually add time until you are comfortable hiking for two hours. Other options are working out at a health club on a Stairmaster or treadmill, aerobics classes, cross country skiing or any activity that makes you breathe harder. The key is to exercise at a rate that makes you work, but not so hard that you are unable to talk or gasping for breath. Alternate longer days with shorter days. Two months before the trip also incorporate day hikes as suggested above. **Mall walking is not sufficient preparation for this trip.**

RECOMMENDED PRE-TRIP READING

Bryson, B. *A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail*. This book is both informative about the trail and very entertaining, at least the first part. It tends to peter out towards the end but the first part will have you laughing and groaning..

Winters, Kelly. *Walking Home: A Woman's Pilgrimage on the Appalachian Trail*. After a painful breakup with a boyfriend, Kelly decided to clear her head and reconnect with her self while fulfilling a lifelong dream. While some readers may find it occasionally tedious in it's detail, others will find it a great description of life on the trail.

Jardine, Ray: *Beyond Backpacking; Ray Jardine's Guide to Lightweight Hiking*. This book is often credited with starting the lightweight revolution. This book is full of great tips for both beginning and experienced backpackers, and is a great read.

TRIP PREPARATIONS CONTINUED

OUR TRAVEL AGENT

If you need assistance with making your travel plans, call Sara Schuitemaker at Scan East West Travel. Her toll-free number is 800-727-2157 and her email is sara@scaneastwest.com.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We highly recommend travel insurance. We know that women never want to cancel their trips, and the reasons for doing so are always excellent. Occasionally it's a sudden illness; even more frequently it's the illness of someone they care about. Trip insurance at least minimizes the disappointment and expense during what is often a difficult time. In addition insurance covers the cost of lost baggage; medical expenses during your trip, including emergencies, repatriation, and evacuation; and trip delay. If you decide to purchase insurance, you can secure a policy through your own insurance company or enroll with the company we use, Travelex Insurance. Call 1-800-228-9792 or visit www.travelexinsurance.com. The location code is 20-0016.

MORE SUGGESTED PRE TRIP READING

Hugo, Beverly. *Women and Thru-Hiking on the Appalachian Trail*. Beverly was a 48-year old single mom when she thru hiked the AT. She has taken the responses of experienced women long-distance hikers from surveys and questionnaires and skillfully woven them into a narrative form that gives answers to all the questions a prospective female hiker might have

Adkins, Leonard. *The Appalachian Trail: A Visitor's Companion*. If you're interested in natural history, this is definitely the book to buy. It contains all the essential information about the AT - from the trail's fascinating history to detailed information on the geology, trees, flowers, birds, amphibians, reptiles, and mammals of the Appalachian Mountains.

Bruce, Dan *The Thru-hikers Handbook 2002; Guide to the Appalachian Trail*. This is a helpful how-to for people planning or on a thru-hike. Some people think it's limited, others think it's the purest purveyor of thru-hiker values.

Frazier, Charles. *Cold Mountain*. The extraordinary story of a soldier's perilous journey back to his beloved at the end of the Civil War, at once an enthralling adventure, a stirring love story, and a luminous evocation of a vanished land. Winner of the National Book Award.

Getting There

TRAVEL

If you are flying:

The closest airport to this section of the trail is the Richmond International Airport (**RIC**) It is serviced by many of the major airline carriers, including Delta (800-221-1212), American Airlines (800-433-7300), Continental (800-525-0280)and United (800-241-6522). It is also serviced by a couple lower-cost carriers like Air Tran (800-247-8726) and Jet Blue (800-538-2583).

The pick-up time at the airport is 2pm; please make sure you arrive on a flight no later than 1:30pm. You can depart anytime after 1pm on the 27th.

If you are driving:

Take I-81 into Virginia. From I-81: Exit 188 A on Route 60 EAST, go 4 miles and the hotel is after the Hardee's Restaurant and next to

Getting There Continued

the B.P. gas station. The address is here in case you want to mapquest it: 447 E 29th St Buena Vista, VA 24416.

LODGING

Depending on your connections, you may be able to fly into RIC the morning of the trip. If not, here are some possible lodging options. Prices were current at the time, but may have changed, and do not include taxes. AAA rates may be lower. Let us know if you're interested in finding someone on the trip to share a room with and we'll try to hook you up.

If you have a gambling spirit, the cheapest way to find a hotel room is to go through Priceline (www.priceline.com). When you have a choice of area, choose the airport area. All, or almost all, of the hotels in this area offer an airport shuttle. Our guides have stayed at very nice places for \$25 or \$30 a night, a bit more with service fees and taxes but still a bargain).

If you prefer to know what you're getting into, the following are a sample of the possibilities:

Best Western Richmond Airport (804) 222-8200

5300 Airport Square Lane

Nightly rate avg: \$65-\$95

Amenities include: Airport Shuttle, cable with HBO, fitness center, high speed internet, free breakfast

Holiday Inn Express Richmond Airport (804) 222-1499

491 International Center Dr.

Sandston, VA US 23150

Average nightly rate: \$85-\$99

Amenities include: free airport shuttle, heated, indoor swimming pool, fitness center and a complimentary hot breakfast bar.