



Trip Summary

Hiking Lodge to Lodge on the Appalachian Trail

TRIP AT-A-GLANCE

Dates: May 22 – 27th 2011
Location: Shenandoah National Park, VA
Cost: \$ *1425
Rating: 3
Activities: Hiking
Meeting Place: Dulles airport (IAD) or Luray Motel
Arrive: 3pm IAD or by 5pm Luray Motel
Depart: 1pm at IAD, or at Luray Motel 11:30am

* Deduct 5% for being one of the first 5 to register (by 2/22/11) and 3% of the entire trip fee when the balance is paid by check.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- experienced guides
- five nights double occupancy accommodation
- all transportation during the trip, starting and ending at Dulles Airport (IAD)
- all meals from dinner on Sunday through breakfast on Friday
- entrance fees to Shenandoah National Park and Luray Caverns

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Travel from home to/from IAD or Luray
- Alcoholic beverages
- Guide gratuities
- One single available for \$200

Trip Highlights

- Hiking the Appalachian Trail through Shenandoah National Park without having to carry a big backpack
- Enjoying the May wildflowers in this beautiful mountain forest
- Staying at beautifully situated lodges every night
- Being surprised at just how cool Luray Caverns really are
- Having our luggage transported for us

Trip Overview

Shenandoah National Park straddles the crest of the Blue Ridge Mountains as they run north and south for over 100 miles. Embracing rolling hills, quiet hollows, abrupt hillsides, and verdant forests, the Park contains over 450 miles of hiking trails. The Appalachian Trail is the best known of these and this section of the trail is absolutely gorgeous in May. Because Skyline Drive follows this crest, the AT feels a little less remote here than in other sections, but that is more than made up for by the presence of well-spaced lodges along the way, offering warm beds and hot food at the end of every day. The human history of the Park is also very interesting and we'll learn about the people who inhabited this area for years as we go lodge to lodge on the Appalachian Trail.

Our Itinerary

Sunday: If you are flying in, plan to arrive Dulles Airport by 3 pm. We will pick you up there and make the hour and a half drive to the town of Luray. If you are driving, you can meet us at our lodging (Luray Caverns inn) at 5 pm. We will gather for introductions and begin our trip orientation. We will have dinner in town and then finish up any topics not yet covered.

Monday: After a hearty breakfast we will pack up and head for the South River Falls Picnic Area. We will start our hike while the shuttle carries our luggage to Lewis Mountain Cabins. The hike today is a lovely section with great overhead canopy. It is one of the easier parts of the trail, fairly level with just enough up and down to be interesting, so it makes a good place to start. The

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 \$7 to \$12 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

Lewis Mountain Cabins are historic rustic cabins (yes, they all have indoor plumbing) and since we will be occupying most of them, we will enjoy the solitude of the area. Mileage today: 5.3 miles

Tuesday: Our destination today is Big Meadows. Our trail is a bit more up and down as we start with a gentle ascent of Bearfence Mountain via the scenic Bearfence Scramble Loop. We will continue to Booten Gap before starting up Hazletop Mountain (about a 600 foot climb); at 3800 feet is the highest peak on the AT within Shenandoah National Park. The next mile is along the ridge through a "green tunnel" that the AT is known for, before descending to Milam Gap where we will meet our shuttle. We will shuttle to Big Meadows Lodge (the origin of the name quickly becomes apparent), check in, and before dinner take the path behind our rooms up to Blackrock for a beautiful last view of the surrounding countryside before sunset. The area around our rooms is open grasslands and gives us the opportunity to possibly see some wildlife tonight. Mileage today: 6.8 miles

Wednesday: Before continuing our hiking today we will pay a visit to the Visitor's Center at Big Meadows where we can tour the exhibits, watch the park movie, and buy those 'souvenirs'. We will then continue on the AT to Skyland Lodge - but it would be a shame not to take a couple of the blue-blazed trails that detour to panoramic overlooks. Tonight's dinner will be in the dining room at Skyland which has one of the most amazing views you will ever see. This time of year there is often entertainment during the dinner hours as well. Mileage today: 5.7 miles

Thursday: This is our last hiking day today and we hike to as many beautiful vistas as possible in one day. We will start with a detour off the AT on a blue-blazed trail, the Stony Man Nature Trail. This gentle trail leads to the top of Stony Man with a view over the valley. We will descend to the Stony Man parking area where we shuttle north to Meadow Spring Trail. We will ascend to the AT again and continue to another amazing spot---Mary's Rock with its delightful testament to married love. Our trail ends today at Thornton Gap where we meet the van for the short drive into Luray. After a chance to clean up, we will go into town for a final dinner in celebration of our week! Mileage today: 5.5 miles

Friday: But wait, there's more! If you grew up on the East Coast you have undoubtedly heard of Luray Caverns, which is advertised by countless ugly billboards. So you know it is a tourist trap, but what you may not know is that the Caverns are really cool and definitely worth a visit. We will take the hour-long tour before driving back to the airport. We will have you back there by 1:00 and you can plan to fly out anytime after 2:30. If you drove you can plan to be on the road by 11:30am.

Packing List

Weather in the mountains can be quite variable. It may be warm and sunny, cool and drizzly, or both. It is essential that you have the rain gear and clothes to stay warm during the day when you are out on the trail.

- 1 pair of lightweight hiking boots: boots need to be well broken in, comfortable and come above the ankle.
- 1 pair of comfortable shoes (crocs, athletic shoes, sandals) for wearing after hiking
- 2-3 pairs of hiking socks (wool or synthetic – Thorlo, Smartwool, Teko, FoxRiver, etc)
- 1-2 pair synthetic sock liners (optional: some women prefer not to wear them)

CLOTHING

- 2 pairs of comfortable long pants: one nylon/supplex for hiking and one for wearing other times. Zip-offs work well
- 1 pairs of shorts or hiking skirt
- 1 lightweight, light-colored, long-sleeved shirt to protect you from the sun (button up front-style works well)
- 3 T-shirts or short-sleeved shirts (synthetic or lightweight wool)
- 1 pair lightweight long underwear top and bottoms: silk or synthetic equivalent (Capilene, Thermastat, MTS, Polartec, or polypropylene)
- 1 medium-weight top layer: wool shirt/pull-over or synthetic equivalent (“expedition weight”long underwear, microfleece). A fleece vest can work for this layer as well.
- 1 mid-weight fleece jacket
- 1 rain parka and rain pants: coated nylon or a **waterproof**/breathable fabric like Gore-tex.
- Underwear/nightwear
- 1 pair wool, Capilene, or Polartec gloves and a lightweight wool or fleece hat
- 1 wide-brimmed hat with a strap that will keep it on your head
- whatever clothes you like to wear around the lodges

TOILETRIES (small everything)

- Toothbrush, toothpaste, dental floss, shampoo, contact lens paraphernalia, and sanitary supplies
- Sunscreen and lip protection with sunblock of at least SPF 15
- personal “patch kit”: Band-Aids, 1 safety pin, moleskin, compeed (or blister bandages), ibuprofen, personal medications, if any. Individuals allergic to insect bites must bring an anaphylactic kit. Please consult your doctor.

ESSENTIALS

- Sunglasses (100% UV protection)
- insect repellent
- Croakies or other sunglasses retainer
- 1 daypack large enough to hold your supplies for the day (water, snacks, sunscreen, insect repellent, raingear, fleece jacket, wool hat and gloves, personal patch kit, etc.)
- capacity to carry 2 quarts of water: 2 one-quart water bottles, water in plastic bottles that you buy in a grocery store, or a hydration system that fits in your pack
- trekking poles (strongly recommended)

OPTIONAL

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Camera (extra battery) and film/memory card | <input type="checkbox"/> Your favorite snack |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Book, notebook, journal, pencil/pen | <input type="checkbox"/> Playing cards, games |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Binoculars | <input type="checkbox"/> wrist watch with an alarm or travel clock |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ear plugs (for a good night’s sleep!) | <input type="checkbox"/> bandana (multi-useful) |

Notes on the Packing List

Adventures in Good Company's packing list covers everything you need to assure your safety and comfort. Because we stay indoors every night, you may be tempted to skimp on the warm clothes. Don't. It is essential that you have the rain gear and clothes to stay warm during the day when you are out on the trail. You may not use everything you bring; however, you need to come prepared for all possible weather conditions. Packing in a duffel bag or soft-sided suitcase, rather than a hard-sided suitcase, will make packing our van easier. **Please do not bring more than one duffel or suitcase.**

Daypacks: We recommend a daypack with a capacity of between 1800 and 2600 cubic inches as you will need large enough space to hold your water, camera, rain gear, snacks, and extra clothes for the changing weather conditions. Please line your daypack with a durable plastic bag to keep your belongings dry. Before you leave home check to be sure that your daypack is comfortable to wear all day and that there is space for all of your items. Please note that a fanny-pack is **not** large enough to hold all of the items you will need for the day. Having a daypack with padded shoulder straps and a hip belt will provide for much more comfortable hiking.

Footwear: Well-fitting, sturdy boots 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. For general trekking, lightweight cordura or leather boots work well. Leather boots may be waterproofed in various simple ways, and cordura boots will be waterproof if they are lined with Gore-Tex. We recommend that you get boots that come above the ankle for this trip— you'll find that this will give you more support in uneven, rocky or slippery terrain, all of which describe the AT!

Clothing: Layering is the most practical and efficient method of insulating the body. Several layers of varied weight materials provide better insulation than one thick layer of clothing. Also, adding or subtracting layers allows you to adjust to the temperature at your particular level of activity. 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.**

Rain Gear: You will need a parka or jacket made of a coated nylon or a waterproof/breathable fabric like Gore-tex, HellyTech, Membrane, H2No, or Ultrex. **Be sure it keeps water out.** Before making this important purchase, be sure that it fits you properly. It should be large enough to fit over all your layers. In particular, the hood needs to be effective. It should shield your face from the rain and turn with your head. Movement of your arms must not interfere with the hood. Put on your daypack; can you still raise your arms? Lastly, the wind/rain pants. They should be comfortable, allow enough room for your layers, and permit free movement of your legs (for example, can you crouch comfortably?). Partial or full-length leg zippers are useful for easily putting your pants on over your boots.

Hydration: It is very important to your safety and enjoyment to have an *independent* ability for accessing your water. As you are hiking you will need water to be accessible in order to drink frequently. 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. Some models are designed to attach to the outside of your pack. Bladder bags can hold 40-100oz. of water.

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

<http://www.patc.net>

The Potomac Appalachian Trail Club is a volunteer organization that takes care of 270 miles of the Appalachian Trail and 730 miles of other trails

<http://www.nps.gov/shen/>

The official site of the Shenandoah National Park

WEATHER

The weather varies based on the altitude. In the towns, typically the temperatures are in the high 70s and low 80s at this time of year. As we climb up, the weather becomes changeable mountain weather, which could include rain and cold wind and temperatures that are about 10 degrees cooler. Bringing the proper equipment will add greatly to your enjoyment and your safety.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

May 22 and May 26: Luray Caverns Motel West: 540/743-4356
May 23, 24, 25: Park Lodges: Lewis cabins, Big Meadow Lodge and Skyland Lodge. There are no phones in the cabins. The main number is 540/999-3500. Cell phone reception is spotty

CONDITIONING

Being physically prepared will assure that you have the energy to do everything you choose to. If you already exercise regularly, the single most important additional preparation you can make is to spend time hiking with your daypack on and loaded with water and gear for the day. Consider taking your daypack to the nearest park after work twice a week and walk up and down hills. Start about 4 to 6 weeks before the trip with an hour and work up to two. This should be in addition to your regular aerobic exercise. If you live in the flatlands, then substitute stadium steps or tall buildings, or work out on a stairmaster.

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 3 or 4 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.

RECOMMENDED PRE-TRIP READING

Arnold, Harriet. *The Dollmaker* This is a moving and painful story of an Appalachian family that moves to a northern city. There was a terrible movie with Jane Fonda made of it a few years ago but the original book is a classic and gives a good portrait of the pressures on a family that moves away from their roots.

Bryson, Bill. *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.

Conners, John *Shenandoah National Park: An Interpretive Guide*. In this book, Conners, an environmental geologist, identifies, describes and explains many of the important contributions of geology, geomorphology, weather, climate, flora, fauna and human history to the Shenandoah landscape.

Lambert, Darwin *The Undying Past of Shenandoah National Park* Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 1989 A good history of the area and the park, although somewhat boosterish in tone (which isn't necessarily a bad thing)

**** reading list continued on last page**

Getting There

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.

TRAVEL

Plan to meet at the Luray Caverns Motel West at 5pm. If you're flying, we will pick you up at the Dulles Airport (IAD) at 3pm

If you are flying: Dulles Airport (IAD) is serviced by most of the major airlines, including many lower cost airlines such as Southwest. Plan to arrive **not later than 2:30pm** on May 22. You can fly out anytime after 2:30 pm on May 27.

If you are driving from the northeast: find your way to I-95. New York City to Shenandoah National Park is about 340 miles.

1. Follow I - 95 South through Maryland to exit 27, I-495 (the Capital Beltway), and head towards Silver Spring
2. Merge onto I-66 W via exit number 49 towards Manassas/FrontRoyal.
3. Merge onto US-29 S via exit number 43A towards Gainesville/Warrenton.
4. Merge onto US-211/522 W toward US-15 Bus (Warrenton/Luray).
- 5) Continue W on US-211 it will merge with US 340.
- 6) Continue to 1001 US Hwy 211 W and the Luray Caverns Motel West

If you are driving from the Midwest, find your way to I-70 E.

1. Merge onto US-522 via exit number 1B-on the left- toward Hancock/Winchester
2. Merge onto VA-37 S toward US-50.
3. Merge onto I-81 S toward Roanoke.
4. Merge onto I-66 E via exit number 300-on the left-toward Front Royal/Washington.
5. Merge onto US-340 S/US-522 S via exit number 6 toward VA-55/Front Royal
6. Turn left onto US-340 E/US-522 E/VA-55 E. Continue to follow US-340 E.
7. US-340 E becomes US-340 BR S/N Broad St
8. Turn left
9. Merge onto US-211W/US-340 S toward New Market
- 10) 1001 US Hwy 211 W is the address of the Luray Cavern Motel West

LODGING

Depending on your connections, you may be able to fly into IAD 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.

Getting There Continued

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:

Comfort Inn and Suites Airport

45515 Dulles Plaza
Sterling, VA US 20166

Phone:

Avg Price; \$56-\$76

Fitness Center, breakfast included, complimentary airport shuttle, internet.

Holiday Inn Dulles

45425 Holiday Drive
Dulles, VA 20166

Hotel Front Desk: 1-703-471-7411

Avg price: \$75-95

2.1 miles from airport, with complimentary shuttle, fitness center, whirlpool and Jr. Olympic swimming pool internet, and on-site restaurants.

Country Inn and Suites

45620 Falke Plaza
Sterling, VA, 20166

Telephone: (703) 435-2700

Avg Price: \$89-\$109

3 miles from airport with shuttle, internet access, complimentary breakfast buffet, fitness center and free US Today.

Marriott Dulles Airport

45020 Aviation Drive
Dulles, Virginia 20166 USA

Avg price: \$79-\$99

Phone: 1-703-471-9500

Free airport shuttle, business center, continental breakfast.

RECOMMENDED READING CONTINUED

Reeder, Carolyn and Jack ***Shenandoah Secrets: The Story of the Park's Hidden Past.*** Potomac Appalachian Club, 1991. More than a trail guide or a history book, this book is full of stories and legends of the area. It describes sights you'll see along Skyline Drive as well as hiking trails.

A good trail guide for Shenandoah National Park is ***Hiking Shenandoah National Park*** by Bert and Jane Gildart