

Wildflowers and Waterfalls

Adventures in Good Company's General Information

Welcome to Adventures in Good Company's Exploring the Great Smokies! We have compiled some information that may be helpful as you prepare for your journey. Please feel free to contact the Adventures in Good Company office (1-877/439-4042) if we can provide any additional information.

Emergency contact information

We will be staying at the Eight is Enough cabin in Gatlinburg. The number is 866-34 SMOKY.

Weather

The weather varies based on the altitude. In town, it will be very pleasant, up to the low 70s. As we climb up, the weather becomes changeable mountain weather, which could include rain, cold wind and even snow. Bringing the proper equipment will add greatly to your enjoyment and your safety. Make sure that your daypack is comfortable, lined with a garbage bag, and large enough to fit everything.

Conditioning

This trip involves hiking with some elevation changes. Being physically prepared will assure that you have the energy to do everything you choose to. If you already walk regularly (meaning 4 to 5 times a week for at least 30 minutes), 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, preferably somewhere there are hills. 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.

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 pace that makes you breathe faster than usual, but not so fast that you can't carry on a conversation. Two months before the trip also incorporate day hikes as suggested above.

Tipping Guidelines

Tipping at the end of the trip is completely 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-\$10 per person, per day. Oftentimes, trip members organize a group envelope (this makes it anonymous) and present it to the guides at the last shared meal on Saturday.

Getting There: If you are driving from the northeast: find your way to I-81. From the New York-New Jersey area, you take I-78 to I-81. New York City to Gatlinburg is about 695 mi.

1. Follow I - 81 South through Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia and into Tennessee, till I-40.
2. Take exit I-40 exit 443 onto Rte 66 (Foothills Parkway) towards Gatlinburg
3. Go approximately 6.0 miles and at the end of the parkway, turn left on Hwy 321
4. Continue 1.8 miles to Cosby and turn right to remain on 321
5. Continue on 321 into Gatlinburg and turn right at Traffic Light 2A (just past Food City)
6. Continue 0.5 miles over the ridge and turn right at the stop sign
7. Go less than one block and bear right again on the Hidden Valley Road
8. Gatlinburg Falls Resort Guest Services Center will be three blocks ahead on the left

If you are driving from the midwest: find I-75.

1. Follow I - 75 South to I-40 at Knoxville, TN
2. Take I-40 exit 407 onto Rte 66; go 9 miles toward Pigeon Forge/Gatlinburg until dead end at Hwy 441
3. Turn right on 441 S to Gatlinburg
4. Turn left at first traffic light on Dudley Creek Bypass (Traffic light #1)
5. Continue 1 mile to a fork and bear left
6. Go less than one block and bear right
7. Gatlinburg Falls Resort Guest Services Center will be three blocks ahead on the left

If you are flying: The nearest airport is McGhee Tyson airport (TYS) in Knoxville, TN. It is serviced by most of the major airlines, including United, American, Northwest, Delta, Continental and US Air. We will meet you at the airport at 12:00. Please indicate that you are requesting van transportation on your travel form.

Some pre-trip reading

Billings, D. *Back Talk from Appalachia: Confronting Stereotypes*. The University of Kentucky Press, 1999. A series of essays serving as an introduction to Appalachian Studies. The most "academic" book of this list.

Crowther, Hal. *Cathedrals of Kudzu*. A personal landscape of the south. Louisiana State University, 2000. Essays on the modern South which explains a lot that you did not know to ask.

Flagg, F. *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Café*. Funny novel about the South in the 1930s. They made a movie from the book. See the movie section below.

Godwin, Gail. She is a prolific writer who grew up in Asheville, North Carolina. One of her recent novels is *Evensong*.

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,

Ball, Donna. *Smoky Mountain Tracks: A Raine Stockton Dog Mystery*. This is a fun mystery to read, especially if you like dogs. The book really gives a great sense of place as the author provides great detail and description of the Smoky Mountains.

Ray, Janisse. *Ecology of a cracker childhood*. Milkweed editions. 1999. Growing up in rural Georgia.

A good trail guide for the Smokies is *Hiking Trails of the Great Smoky Mountains* by K. Wise.

A good flower book with great pictures is *Great Smoky Mountains Wildflowers* by Campbell, Hutson and Sharp's. 5th edition. If you are a flower lover, the book is small enough to carry in your pack.

Movies and Videos

You might want to check out these movies, all but one are available on video.

Fried Green Tomatoes (1991) with Kathy Bates and Jessica Tandy. Written by Fannie Flagg. The story weaves between the present and the depression in Alabama.

Nell (1994) with Jody Foster is the story of a present-day wild child who grows up in a forest wilderness outside of Robinsville, North Carolina. Nell speaks in a language no one has ever heard before. It was filmed in the Southern Appalachias. Good story, fantastic scenery.

Songcatcher (2001) with Janet McTeer. A recent movie about Appalachia in the early part of the 20th Century. The music is wonderful

Interesting and useful web sites

<http://www.highcountryoutdoors.com/hiking/trails.htm> The Blue Ridge area

<http://www.nps.gov/grsm/> The official site of the Great Smoky Mountain National Park

<http://www.littlegreenbrierlodge.com>. The site is under construction but if you want to show your friends where you're staying, this is the site to visit