



Trip Summary

Wildflowers and Waterfalls: Exploring the Great Smokies

TRIP AT-A-GLANCE

Dates: May 1 -7, 2011
 Location: Great Smoky Mountain National Park, TN
 Cost: \$ *1545
 Rating: 2/3
 Activities: hiking, white water rafting

Meeting Place: Knoxville airport or our lodging
 Arrive: 12:30 at TYS or 3 pm at Gatlinburg Falls Resort
 Depart: 3 pm at the Knoxville airport

* Deduct 5% if you are one of the first 5 to register (by 2/1/11) and 3% of the entire trip fee when the balance is paid by check.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- experienced guides
- six nights lodging in a private room (most with private bath)
- all meals and snacks from dinner on Sunday through breakfast Saturday
- transportation from the Knoxville airport (TRI) and within Tennessee
- white water rafting

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Travel to the trip meeting place (airfare or driving)
- Guide gratuities
- Alcoholic beverages

Trip Highlights

- seeing 30 species of wildflowers on any hike
- rafting a fun section of the Pigeon River (suitable for women with no experience)
- visiting Little Greenbrier Community and learning about the people who lived here
- hiking beautiful trails, including a section of the Appalachian Trail
- gazing at the view from the hot tub and luxuriating in your own private room

Trip Overview

The Great Smoky Mountains National Park is world famous for the diversity of its plant and animal life, the beauty of its ancient mountains, and many excellent hiking trails. Our annual trip is a great way to begin your hiking season. Designed to give you an overview of one of our most treasured National Parks, our trip will give your hiking legs a great spring beginning to the hiking season. We'll see wildflowers and waterfalls, hiking at a leisurely pace to enhance the enjoyment of the scenery, be able to take pictures and identify flowers, and soak those 'winter tired' feet in beautiful pools at the edge of waterfalls. Whether you are intrigued by salamanders or birds, wildflowers or trees, waterfalls or mountain vistas, learning about the fascinating cultural history, or just seeking less traveled paths, you will quickly understand why the Great Smokies have been designated both an International Biosphere reserve and a World Heritage Site.

Our Itinerary

This itinerary may be modified based on weather and where the wildflowers are best.

Sunday: If you're flying in, we'll meet you at the Knoxville Airport at 12:30. We will drive to the Park and enjoy a nice introduction to the cultural history of the Smokies by visiting the area once known to early settlers as the Little Greenbrier Community. We'll visit the Little Greenbrier School (first opened in 1882), a pioneer cemetery,

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

and the Walker Sisters cabin and home site. This slightly ascending trail is along an old roadbed. Little Brier Gap Trail, 2.6 miles.

Monday: Our trail today rises at a steady, moderate grade as it passes through a forest of large Eastern Hemlocks and Fraser magnolias and then into a moist, sheltered cove hardwood forest. Well-known for its incredible display of wildflowers in April and May, the forest floor can be carpeted with up to 30 to 40 species of wildflowers. Rich in cultural history as well, Porters Creek trail passes the old Baxter Cabin, stone walls, an old cantilevered barn and the Owenby Cemetery, all remnants of the time that a thriving community lived here. We will hike to Fern Branch Falls and have lunch before turning back. Porters Creek Trail, about 4 miles.

Tuesday: Traveling off the beaten path, today's trail leads into a natural limestone sink. Home to many rare plants, various caves, and a waterfall that flows into a cave, White Oak Sink offers unique opportunities to learn about the geology, natural history, and cultural history of the area. Spring wildflowers abound in the sink, coating the trail side with a beautiful variety of colors. We'll begin our hike on an old roadbed with an easy uphill grade. The trail into the sink is an unmaintained trail with occasional steep ascents and descents. White Oak Sink, 5.0 miles

Wednesday: Ready to give your legs a break and see a completely different part of the ecosystem? Then the white water of the Pigeon River is for you! Although the rapids are large enough to be exciting, the trip is completely appropriate for novice rafters. We won't be doing it all day, though, so this is a good day to visit Gatlinburg.

Thursday: The famed Appalachian Trail goes right through the middle of the park. The section we hike today, built in the early 1930s, was the first trail created for public use in the Park and provides spectacular views of the area. Always hiking above 5000 feet, we will experience the flora and fauna of the higher elevations of the Smokies. The craggy, rock face of Charlie's Bunion provides outstanding views of the Porters Creek Valley and the main spine of the Smokies. The trail includes steady, easy climbs along with steeper, rocky sections and some declines. Those who choose not to hike the entire way can relax and wait at one of the AT Shelters.

If there is time and energy, this would also be a good day to go to Clingman's Dome. Rising 6,643 feet above the Great Smoky Mountains, Clingman's Dome is the highest point along the Appalachian Trail and provides a 360 degree view of the surrounding mountains. From its 54 foot observation tower the average viewing distance is about 22 miles; but on a clear pollution free day, views can amplify as far as 100 miles into 7 states. The ascent, however, is easy - about a half-mile walk along a paved path from the parking lot.

Our Itinerary Continued

Appalachian Trail to Charlie's Bunion, 8 miles.

Friday: Our trek today will take us through Eastern Hemlock and deciduous forests as we hike along the Maddron Bald Trail. Built by the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC), the trail begins as an old roadbed and rises consistently, though moderately, throughout its entire length. Albright Grove, named for Horace Albright who was an advocate for the park and a director for the National Park Service, is an awesome remnant of old growth forest. Here you will experience the sights, sounds, and feel of this home to ancient trees. We'll have plenty of time to stroll among and admire the grand Eastern Hemlocks, silverbells, Fraser magnolias, tulip trees, and other tree species before returning along the Maddron Bald Trail. Albright Grove and Maddron Bald Trail, 6.7 miles.

Saturday: We have time to squeeze in one more short hike this morning. A short paved trail leads to Laurel Falls, one of the most popular waterfalls in the Park. The trail passes through a forest of pine and oak trees before reaching this 80 foot falls, named for mountain laurel which won't be blooming yet. You will have plenty of time to photograph the falls or to relax, enjoy, and absorb the beauty and sounds of the waterfall before heading back to our vehicles and a final lunch. If you're driving, you can plan to leave by 1 p.m. If you're flying we'll return you to the Knoxville airport by 3 PM. Laurel Falls. 2.5 miles.

Packing List

The weather in the Smokies in the Spring is quite variable. It could be 70s and sunny or 30s and snowing. Please follow the packing list. It is better to not wear something you brought than to need something you left out.

FOOTWEAR

- 1 pair of hiking boots: boots need to come over the ankle and be well broken in and comfortable.
- 1 pair of comfortable athletic shoes, Keens, or Teva/Chaco sandals: for sightseeing and walking
- 1 pair of water shoes, for rafting (your walking shoes if sandals or Keens/Solomons may work for both)
- 3 pairs of hiking socks: wool or synthetic equivalent (Thorlo, Ultimex, or Smartwool)

CLOTHING

- 1 pairs of synthetic/nylon long pants for hiking. Zip offs work well.
- 1 pair of shorts: should be a quick-drying nylon for rafting/hiking (optional)
- 1 lightweight, light-colored, long-sleeved shirt to protect you from the sun (button up front is a good choice)
- 3 T-shirts or short-sleeved shirts (two should be a synthetic or lightweight wool and the third can be cotton)
- 1 pair lightweight long underwear top and bottoms: silk, wool or synthetic equivalent (Capilene, Thermastat, MTS, or polypropylene)
- 1 midweight top – wool or synthetic. A wool or fleece vest also works well for this layer
- 1 fleece jacket
- 1 rain jacket and 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
- Underwear/nightwear
- Swimsuit (for the hot tub!)
- 1 pair wool, Capilene, or Polartec gloves and a warm wool or fleece hat
- 1 wide-brimmed hat with a strap that will keep it on your head
- comfortable, casual clothes to wear around the cabin and out to dinner.

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, blister bandaids, cloth athletic tape, ibuprofen, personal medications, if any. Individuals allergic to insect bites must bring an anaphylactic kit. Please consult your pharmacist.

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.). Should be lined with a garbage bag.
- 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 (can be rented at local outfitter)
- bandana (for multiple uses)

OPTIONAL

- Camera (extra battery) and film/memory card
- Book, notebook, journal, pencil/pen
- Binoculars
- zip lock baggies for camera and other things
- Your favorite snack
- Playing cards, games
- wrist watch with an alarm or travel clock
- neoprene socks (for rafting)

Notes on the Packing List

Daypacks: We recommend a daypack (1800 to 2600 cu in) with space for all of your items. Before you leave home check to be sure that your daypack is comfortable to wear all day. Having a daypack with a hip belt and padded shoulder straps 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. If you have weak ankles or are recovering from an ankle injury, get boots that come above the ankle– you'll find that this will give you more support in uneven or slippery terrain.

Also bring shoes that can get wet and will stay on your feet, such as Solomon or Keen water shoes, athletic shoes, or Teva sandals. Wearing neoprene socks or wool socks with sandals will keep your feet warmer than sandals alone and the water is cold at this time of year. Be sure your footwear fits comfortably, without constriction, when wearing a thick pair of wool or neoprene socks.

Personal First Aid Kit: Small first aid kit with familiar medicine you might need for personal use. Like: blister or foot remedies such as moleskin, gelskin, blister bandages or similar. The amount and kind you bring will depend on your tendency to blister but many people get blisters on hiking tours. Other suggestions: remedies for respiratory ailments? Stomach ailments? Sore muscles or joints? We will have a first aid kit too, but if you already know what works for you it's better to have it with you than

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. You use long underwear as your base layer, your midweight top or vest for your second layer, and your fleece jacket as a third layer. Your rain gear is used as your outer layer, and warm hat and/or gloves as needed.

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.highcountryoutdoors.com/hiking/trails.htm>

The Blue Ridge area

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

The official site of the Great Smoky Mountain National Park

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 exercise regularly (meaning 3 to 4 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 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 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.

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.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

We will be staying at the Stairway to Heaven cabin in Gatlinburg. The number is 866-34 SMOKY. Cell phone reception is spotty in the Park.

RECOMMENDED 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.

Arnow, 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.

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.

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

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, Delta, Continental and US Air. We will meet you at the airport at 12:30. Please indicate that you are requesting van transportation on your travel form.

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

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

Getting There Continued

LODGING

Most of you should be able to fly in the day of the trip, however, if you need to come the day before there are many lodging options in Knoxville.

If you have any gambling spirit, the cheapest way to find a hotel room is to go through Priceline (www.priceline.com). You can specify that the hotel is near the airport but not if it has an airport shuttle thus you risk having to take a taxi from the airport to your hotel. If you prefer to know what you're getting into, the following are a sample of the possibilities (prices are approximate and do not include taxes):

Comfort Suites Airport

Single/double \$85 - \$95

140 Cusick Rd.

Alcoa, TN 37701

Amenities: Free airport shuttle, across the street from the airport. Indoor heated pool, fitness center, breakfast included.

Days Inn Airport

Single/double \$65 - \$90

2962 Alcoa Highway

Alcoa, TN 37701

One mile from airport with free airport shuttle. Amenities include: free breakfast, laundry facilities, cable television, free local calls

Country Inn and Suites by Carlson-Knoxville Airport

Single/double \$70 - \$90

162 Cusick Road

Alcoa, TN 37701 US

Free airport shuttle; one mile from airport. Amenities include: fitness room, whirlpool, complimentary continental breakfast.

Fairfield Inn by Marriott Knoxville Airport

Single/double \$89 - \$109

126 Cusick Rd

Alcoa, TN 37701

Free airport shuttle, located across from airport. Amenities include: high speed internet, indoor pool and exercise room, complimentary breakfast

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.