

Below is the proposed itinerary for the trip. As is true on any adventure travel trip, plans for any specific day may be modified due to weather considerations, unforeseen circumstances, new opportunities, and group interests.

**DAY 1**

**Drive from Knoxville to Park, visit the Walker Sisters cabin**

This itinerary may be adjusted based on weather conditions and where the wildflowers are in full bloom.

If you're flying in, we'll meet you at the Knoxville Airport at noon. From there, we'll drive to the park and begin with an introduction to the cultural history of the Smokies by exploring what was once the Little Greenbrier Community. Highlights include the Little Greenbrier School, first opened in 1882, a pioneer cemetery, and the Walker Sisters' cabin and home site. This slightly uphill trail follows an old roadbed.

If you're driving, please plan to meet us at the Metcalf Bottoms Picnic parking lot (south side) by 2:00 p.m. We'll hike the Little Brier Gap Trail, which is 2.6 miles round trip. Dinner tonight will be at our lodge, where you'll enjoy a classic Southern barbecue meal.

- Included Meals:** Dinner
- Accommodations:** Mountain Laurel Chalets
- Daily Activities:** Hiking (2.6 miles)
- Travel:** Driving (1 hour 15 minutes)

**DAY 2**

**Hike Porters Creek Trail**

Our trail today ascends at a steady, moderate grade through a forest of towering Eastern Hemlocks and Fraser magnolias, eventually transitioning into a moist, sheltered cove hardwood forest. Renowned for its stunning wildflower display in April and May, the forest floor can become a vibrant carpet of 30 to 40 different wildflower species. Rich in cultural history, Porters Creek Trail features landmarks such as the old Baxter Cabin, stone walls, a historic cantilevered barn, and the Owenby Cemetery—remnants of a once-thriving community.

We'll hike to Fern Branch Falls, where we'll pause for lunch before heading back. Porters Creek Trail is approximately 4 miles. Tonight's dinner will begin with appetizers and continue with the first of several delicious, homemade meals prepared by your guides, ending (of course!) with dessert!

- Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations:** Mountain Laurel Chalets
- Daily Activities:** Hiking (4 miles)
- Travel:** Driving (1 hour)

**DAY 3**

**Check out Visitors Center, hike to White Oak Sink**

Our first stop this morning will be the Sugarlands Visitors Center, where we'll have the opportunity to learn more about the park, its history, and its natural inhabitants.

Our first stop this morning will be the Sugarlands Visitors Center, where we'll have the opportunity to learn more about the park, its history, and its natural inhabitants through the orientation film and the natural history museum. Then, it's back to hiking and the search for wildflowers!

Traveling off the beaten path, today's trail leads into a natural limestone sink. White Oak Sink is home to many rare plants, various caves, and a waterfall that flows into one of the caves, offering unique opportunities to explore the area's geology, natural history, and cultural heritage. Spring wildflowers abound in the sink, carpeting the trail with a stunning variety of colors.

Our hike begins on the School House Gap Trail, an old roadbed with a gentle uphill grade. Soon, we'll turn off the School House Gap Trail onto the unmaintained trail to White Oak Sink, which features occasional steep ascents and descents. Depending on time and energy levels, we may also have the option to visit Laurel Falls on our way back. A 2.4-mile walk on a paved trail leads to the most visited falls in the park. After our hikes, we'll head back to the lodge for some well-deserved relaxation—and tonight is pizza night! Definitely well deserved!

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Accommodations:** Mountain Laurel Chalets

**Daily Activities:** Hiking (5 miles)

**Travel:** Driving (1.5 hours)

## DAY 4

Hike to Grotto Falls, Kuwohi, or take a free afternoon

This morning, we'll head to the Grotto Falls hike, one of the park's most spectacular waterfalls—and the only one you can actually walk behind! The trail is a moderate 2.6-mile hike through a hardwood cove, offering great wildflower spotting and beautiful views across the valley.

After our hike, we'll return to our condo for lunch, with a few different options to choose from. The afternoon is free, and there are no wrong choices!

Your guides will offer the opportunity to journey to the highest points of the park—New Found Gap (with a short walk on the Appalachian Trail) and Kuwohi, at 6,643 feet, the highest point in the eastern U.S.

Alternatively, you could choose to enjoy downtown Gatlinburg or, since it's vacation, relax back at the lodge, perhaps enjoying the porch or the hot tub. Your guides will help you navigate the options and get you where you want to go. Or, maybe your afternoon will include a scoop of ice cream—just a prelude to another delicious meal at the lodge. Mileage will vary depending on your choices.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Accommodations:** Mountain Laurel Chalets

**Daily Activities:** Hiking (2.6 - 4 miles)

**Travel:** Driving (1.5 hours)

## DAY 5

Whitewater rafting on the Pigeon River, visit Bud Ogle's Farm

Ready to give your legs a break and explore a completely different part of the ecosystem? We'll start with a delicious pancake breakfast before heading to the whitewater of the Pigeon River! While the rapids are exciting, the trip is perfectly suitable for novice rafters.

Afterward, we'll return to Gatlinburg and visit the historic Bud Ogle's farm, where we'll take a 1.2-mile nature hike to explore what a typical homestead was like in this region, including a plume for water and a gristmill.

Back at the lodge, you'll have time to relax—perhaps in the hot tub or by unwinding in rockers on the porch—before enjoying another homemade dinner!

- Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations:** Mountain Laurel Chalets
- Daily Activities:** Rafting (2-4 hours), Hiking (1.2 miles)
- Travel:** Driving (2 hours)

**DAY 6**

Hike Maddron Bald Trail, final dinner in Gatlinburg

Today's trek will take us through Eastern Hemlock and deciduous forests as we hike along the Maddron Bald Trail. Built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the trail begins as an old roadbed and ascends steadily but moderately throughout its length. We'll enjoy lunch by the beautiful cascades before having the option to continue on to Albright Grove, an old-growth forest named for Horace Albright, an advocate for the park and a director of the National Park Service.

Here, you'll experience the sights, sounds, and feel of a 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.

We'll return to the lodge with plenty of time to freshen up before heading into Gatlinburg to share our last dinner together at one of the many local restaurants.

- Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations:** Mountain Laurel Chalets
- Daily Activities:** Hiking (6.7 miles)
- Travel:** Driving (1 hour)

**DAY 7**

Return to Knoxville airport by 11am

It's our last morning in the Smokies, but we'll make sure to savor every minute! We'll take our time this morning, enjoy our final breakfast together, and soak in the view from the lodge before making our way back.

We'll stop by the Sugarlands Visitors Center for one last chance to pick up any items you may want to take home, and we'll even have time to walk the nature trail to Cataract Falls.

Afterward, we'll reluctantly head to the Knoxville airport. If you're driving, plan to leave by 10 a.m. If you're flying, we'll return you to the Knoxville airport by 11:00 a.m. for a flight out after 12:00 noon.

- Included Meals:** Breakfast
- Daily Activities:** Nature Walk (.7 miles)
- Travel:** Driving (1.5 hours)

