

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

### Transfer from Dulles Airport (IAD) to Luray, trip orientation

If you are flying in, plan to arrive Dulles Airport by 2 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 Hotel East) at 4:30 pm. We will gather to introduce ourselves and start getting to know each other and then begin our trip orientation. We will stop for dinner and then finish up any topics not yet covered.

## DAY 2

### Hike from South River Falls Picnic Area to Lewis Cabins

After a hearty breakfast we pack up and head for the South River Falls Picnic Area. We will start our hike, appreciating the fact that the van carries our luggage to Lewis Mountain Cabins. The hike today is a lovely 5.5-mile 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 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 quiet of the area. Mileage today: 5.5 miles

## DAY 3

### Hike from Lewis Cabins to Big Meadow

Our destination today is Big Meadows. We start with a gentle ascent of Bearfence Mountain. We have a choice between taking the Bearfence Mountain Scramble Loop (weather permitting) which is an amazing hands and feet scramble up basalt rocks to a 360-degree view. Alternatively, there is a very pleasant side trail. Next is Hazeltop Mountain (about a 600-foot climb) and a mile walking along the ridge, the "green tunnel" walking that the AT is known for. We descend to Milam Gap where our van is waiting. For those who feel finished for the day, we shuttle to Big Meadows Lodge, check in, and optionally take the path behind our rooms up to Blackrock, for a beautiful last view of the surrounding countryside before sunset. Alternatively, you can choose to continue on the AT and hike directly into Big Meadow from Milam Gap. Mileage today: 6.1 - 8.4 miles Mileage today: 6.1 - 8.4 miles

## DAY 4

### Hike Big Meadows to Skyland Lodge

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 'souvies'. 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. One in particular, the Salamander Trail, leads to the top of Hawksbill Mountain, the highest peak and widely considered to have the best views in the park. We then descend to the Hawksbill parking area where we can either shuttle into Skyland Lodge or continue another 3.1 miles via the AT. Tonight's dinner will be in the dining room at Skyland which has a lovely panoramic view overlooking the valley below. This time of year there is often entertainment during the dinner hours as well. Mileage today: 4.2 - 8.5 miles

## DAY 5

### Hike from Skyland Lodge to Mary's Rock, return for final dinner in Luray

This is our last hiking day today so we will go out in style, as 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 to the Massanutten Mountains beyond. We will then continue to Pinnacles Picnic area where a shelter and lunch await us. After lunch we will shuttle north to Meadow Spring Trail, and ascend to the AT again via the Meadow Spring Trail and continue to our last amazing spot of the week - Mary's Rock, with its many varied folk tales. Backtracking to Meadow Spring Trail again we will descend to the vans 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: 7.4 miles

**DAY 6**

**Visit Luray Caverns, return to IAD**

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 any time after 2:30. If you drove you can plan to be on the road by 11:00am.