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## HIKING LODGE TO LODGE ON THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL

### Trip Summary

#### HIGHLIGHTS

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

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## TRIP AT A GLANCE

Location:	Shenandoah National Park, VA
Activities:	Hiking
Arrive:	At 2PM at Washington Dulles airport (IAD) or at the Mimslyn Inn at 4:00PM on Day 1.
Depart:	At 1PM at Washington Dulles airport (IAD) or from the Mimslyn Inn at 11:00AM on the last day of the trip (Day 6)

### 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 all seasons. 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. Maximum group size: 12

### Rating

This trip is suitable for any woman who either enjoys hiking or is new to hiking and wants to learn in a safe and fun environment. While the trail ups and downs are not huge (i.e less than 1000 feet at a time), they are continuous and there is little flat. A rating of 3 requires aerobic conditioning, such as walking vigorously up hills, jogging, cross country skiing or stair stepping for 30 - 45 minutes at least 3 - 4 times a week. On several days there are options for longer hikes; if you choose to do all of them, this trip would be closer to a rating of 4, and your aerobic conditioning should be for at least 40-50 minutes 4-5 days a week. There are typically 4 to 6 hours of daily activity. **Rating:** 1 2 **3** **4** 5

### What's Included

- 1 - 2 experienced AGC guides based on group size
- 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 and Luray Caverns

**Not included:** travel to and from Dulles, alcoholic beverages, guide gratuities, and travel insurance

## OUR ITINERARY

Below is the itinerary we have planned 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

The Appalachian Trail is the longest hiking-only footpath in the world, stretching over 2,000 miles from Maine to Georgia. While many people endure thru hike attempts, carrying everything they need with them for months at a time - we get to experience the magic of trail life with simple daypacks and comfortable beds awaiting us each night. Spend a few days with us and you'll agree, this lodge to lodge adventure is the best way to see the Blue Ridge Mountains in Shenandoah National Park! If you are flying in, plan to arrive at Dulles Airport (IAD) by 2PM. We will pick you up at the airport and make the hour and a half drive to the town of Luray, Virginia. If you are driving, you can meet us at our lodging (Mimslyn Inn) at 4:30PM. We will gather to introduce ourselves and start getting to know each other before a trip orientation and dinner. (D)

### DAY 2

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 our next lodging, Big Meadows. 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, giving us the perfect beginning to stretch our legs. Along the way we may see black bears foraging for berries, peregrine falcons soaring overhead, or notice brightly colored salamanders scurrying underfoot.

We end today's hike at Lewis Mountain Campground and Cabins where we can admire the rustic cabins and visit the camp store for a well deserved treat! Tonight we'll enjoy dinner in the Big Meadows Dining Room before retiring to our comfortable rooms. Mileage today: 5.5 miles (B, L, D)

### DAY 3

We start our day with a short shuttle back to Lewis Mountain Campground and Cabins to begin hiking where we left off yesterday. Today's hike commences with a gentle ascent of Bearfence Mountain where we have a choice between the Scramble Loop (weather permitting) or staying on the Appalachian Trail. The scramble is a non-technical and very fun hands-over-feet climb up basalt rocks to a 360-degree view.

Next we pass Hazeltop Mountain (about a 600-foot climb) followed by a bit of "green tunnel" walking that the AT is so well known for. After lunch on the trail, we descend to Milam Gap where our van is waiting. For those who are ready to relax back at the lodge for the day, we shuttle back to Big Meadows from Milam Gap. For those who prefer to continue hiking, it's an additional 3 miles down

the AT to get you to the door of Big Meadows Lodge. Dinner tonight is once again at the Big Meadows beautiful dining room. Mileage: 6.1 - 8.4 miles (B, L, D)

#### DAY 4

Before continuing our hiking today, we will stop at the Big Meadows Visitor's Center where we can tour the exhibits, watch the park movie, and buy some souvenirs. We will then continue on the AT to Skyland Lodge with optional blue-blazed trails that detour to panoramic overlooks. One in particular, the Salamander Trail, leads to the top of Hawksbill Mountain, the highest peak in Shenandoah National Park and widely considered to have the best views. Paying close attention to our wooded surroundings, we can appreciate the people and efforts that have united to make Shenandoah the outstanding park that it is. Over three hundred of Shenandoah National Park's historical structures are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. We may notice a cluster of apple trees that used to be a planted orchard or a rock wall that was hand built by Civilian Conservation Corps members. Truly, there is history everywhere in Shenandoah for those that take the time to notice it! 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. Mileage: 4.2 - 8.5 miles (B, L, D)

#### DAY 5

This is our last hiking day so we will go out in style by hiking to as many beautiful vistas as possible. We greet the morning with a detour off of the AT on the Stony Man Nature Trail. This gentle trail leads to the top of Stony Man hill with a sweeping 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 and continue to our last amazing spot of the week; Mary's Rock. Though the exact naming origin is unclear with many varied folk tales, one thing is certain, the view is outstanding! One legend maintains that a girl named Mary climbed the mountain alone and then came back with a bear cub in her arms! 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'll enjoy a final celebratory dinner together! Mileage today: 7.4 miles (B, L, D) Overnight: Mimslyn Inn

#### DAY 6

But wait, there's more! If you grew up on the East Coast, you have undoubtedly heard of the Luray Caverns, which are advertised by countless attention grabbing billboards. So you know it is a tourist trap but with good reason! The Caverns are intriguing and definitely merit a visit so we embark on the hour-long tour before driving back to the airport. We will have you back to the Washington Dulles (IAD) airport by 1:00PM and you can plan to fly out any time after 2:30PM. If you drove you can plan to be on the road by 11AM. (B)

## ADDITIONAL TRIP INFORMATION

### Getting There

**Flying:** Plan to fly into the Dulles Airport in Washington, DC (IAD) not later than 1:30pm in time to meet the group at 2:00 p.m. You'll be meeting at door #4 (the doors are numbered) in the Baggage Claims area, inside the building. There are chairs just opposite the door. Your guide will find you there.

**Driving:** If you're driving, the address is 831 W Main St, Luray, VA 22835. **Getting Home:** On Day 6, the last day of the trip, we'll have you back to the Dulles Airport (IAD) by 1:00 p.m. and you can plan to fly out any time after 2:30 p.m. If you drove, you can plan to be on the road by 11:00 a.m.

If you would like assistance with airfare, we recommend contacting our AirDesk Partner, [Exitto Travel](#). Start by submitting this [form](#). Just fill in your dates and destinations, including any additional notes about preferred carriers, class of service, possible stopovers, etc., and an agent will typically respond via email within a few hours. If you prefer to call, the number is 800-655-4053; be sure to tell them you are traveling with Adventures in Good Company.

Please note: Exitto charges a one-time, non-refundable processing fees of \$35 per passenger.

### Accommodations

We'll spend the first and last night at The Mimslyn Inn in Luray, Virginia where you can step back in history with its picturesque surroundings and historic manor and find southern hospitality. In between we stay at renowned [Park Lodges](#) with two nights at Big Meadows Lodge and one night at Skyland Lodge. Built in 1939 with stones hewn from the Massanutten Mountains and native wormy chestnut, Big Meadows Lodge has an easy, natural feeling and is officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The legacy of Skyland Lodge begins in 1888, when George Freeman Pollock Jr. makes it his mission to find the perfect spot for a summer retreat. He calls the property's breathtaking views of the Shenandoah Valley "beauty beyond description." The two lodges have standard rooms with 2 beds and a bathroom in each room. The Mimslyn offers a variety of single rooms, double rooms and double cottages. All have shared bathrooms. There are 4 single supplements available for this trip.

### Travel Insurance

We recommend that you purchase a travel protection plan to help protect you and your travel investment against the unexpected. For your convenience, we offer travel protection through Travelex Insurance Services. For more information on the available plans or to enroll, visit [www.travelexinsurance.com](http://www.travelexinsurance.com) or call 1-800-228-9792 and reference location number 06-0331.

Travelex Insurance Services, Inc CA Agency License #0D10209. All products listed are underwritten by, Berkshire Hathaway Specialty Insurance Company, NAIC #22276.

## CANCELLATION POLICY

Cancellation charges reflect the many expenses Adventures in Good Company cannot recover if you cancel, even if you must do so due to illness, injury, or personal emergencies. These fees are not meant to be punitive. The charges made reflect the expenses Adventures in Good Company has incurred in administering your reservation and planning for your participation. We recognize that the majority of those who cancel their reservations do so out of necessity. Please note that we do not make any refunds for any unused portion of your trip, not arriving, arriving late, or leaving the trip early. [Click here for our Cancellation & Payment Policies and Booking Terms & Conditions.](#)