



**ADVENTURES**  
*in good company*



## 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 2 p.m. at Washington Dulles airport (IAD) or at Luray Caverns motel at 4:30 p.m. on Day 1.
- Depart:** At 1 p.m. at Washington Dulles airport (IAD) or from the Mimslyn Inn at 11:00 a.m. 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

If you are flying in, plan to arrive Dulles Airport by 2 p.m. 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 p.m. 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

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

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

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 'souvenirs'. 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. Often, there is entertainment during the dinner hours as well. Mileage today: 4.2 - 8.5 miles

## DAY 5

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

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 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.

## ADDITIONAL TRIP INFORMATION

### GETTING THERE

**Flying:** Plan to fly into the Dulles Airport in Washington, DC (IAD) on Day 1, 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.

### AIRFARE

If you would like assistance with airfare, we recommend contacting our AirDesk Partner, [Exito 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: Most of the international airlines are in-network for Exito, so they do not charge extra for their services (and often have access to discounted rates). When necessary, processing fees out-of-network carriers are minimal at around \$35-\$50 per ticket.

### ACCOMMODATIONS

We'll spend the first night at Luray Caverns Inn in Luray, Virginia and the last night at the Mimslyn Inn. In between we'll spend one night at each of the [Park Lodges](#): Lewis Cabins, Big Meadow Lodge, and Skyland Lodge. At Lewis Cabins the accommodations are double cabins (2 rooms with a bed in each and a shared bathroom). The other two lodges and the Luray rooms are standard rooms with 2 beds and a bathroom in each room. 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.

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