



ADVENTURES
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SLACKPACKING MARYLAND

TRIP SUMMARY

HIGHLIGHTS

- Hiking the entire 40.2 miles of the AT in Maryland, from the Mason-Dixon Line to Harpers Ferry
- Hiking on some of the easier sections of the AT — but don't be fooled, there are still rocky paths, ups and downs, and challenges on the trail
- Learning the role that this area played in the Civil War
- Enjoying the beautiful vistas
- Experiencing spacious solitude at the Blue Mountain Retreat

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TRIP AT A GLANCE

Location: Harpers Ferry, MD

Activities: Hiking

Arrive: Plan to meet at the Dulles Airport (IAD) at 1:00 p.m. on Day 1. If you're driving, meet at the Blue Mountain Retreat just outside Harpers Ferry at 3 p.m.

Depart: If you're flying, there is an 11 a.m. group shuttle to IAD for flights out after 2 p.m. on the last day. If you're driving, you can leave any time after 11 a.m.

TRIP OVERVIEW

The Appalachian Trail, while often rugged and remote, is designed to accommodate both people who want to hike the entire trail and those who choose to section hike it, either by backpacking or by slackpacking. The A.T. in Maryland follows a 40-mile route along the backbone of South Mountain, a north-south ridge that extends from Pennsylvania to the Potomac River. This state is steeped in Civil War history and home to the original Washington Monument. This section is easy by A.T. standards, and is a good place to find out if you're ready for more rugged parts of the Trail. Join us as we continue our travel along the trail.

RATING

This trip is rated a 4 because you will be hiking from 7.5 to 11.5 miles a day (see the itinerary for daily mileage) four days in a row and requires being in excellent physical condition. You can always choose to stay at the hostel for the day, which is a pleasant 3-mile walk from the town of Harpers Ferry. A rating of 4 requires aerobic conditioning for at least 40-50 minutes 4-5 times a week with additional endurance exercise (e.g. going for a 2-hour hike with elevation gain once a week) and strength training. Going for longer hikes before the trip is recommended if you want to hike the entire 40 miles. This is an ideal first slackpacking trip for anyone who wants to see what they're like but with a shorter commitment and for any woman who is interested in section hiking the Appalachian Trail. **Rating:** 1 2 3 [4](#) 5.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- 1 - 3 experienced AGC guides based on group size
- Five nights lodging at Blue Mountain Retreat
- All meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on Day 6
- Transportation between Dulles and the hostel and daily shuttles back and forth to the trailhead

What's not included: Travel to and from Dulles airport (IAD), 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

Meet at 1 p.m. at the Dulles Airport (IAD) or 3 p.m. at our lodging in Harpers Ferry. If you are flying, group transportation from the airport to Harpers Ferry will be arranged for 1 p.m. The shuttle ride is about an hour and will deposit you right at the door of our retreat. If you prefer to drive to Harpers Ferry, please plan to arrive at 3 p.m. We will start with introductions and a discussion of all things hiking as well as an overview of our trip. There will be some time to relax and go for a walk while the guides prepare the first of many delicious dinners. We'll head to bed early, anticipating an early morning.

Overnight: Blue Mountain Retreat, Harpers Ferry (D)

DAY 2

After a delicious and hearty breakfast, we will have about an hour shuttle to our hiking start at Pen Mar Park near the Pennsylvania and Maryland state line. Hiking southward along the Appalachian Trail on our first leg through Maryland, this part of the trail is mostly forested and has a little of everything: easy flat walking, some rocky ascents and descents, plus occasional great views. We reach 1800 feet a couple of times, including the appropriately named, High Rock. We will take a break at the Raven Rock trail shelter and get a glimpse of through-hikers experience. Then, a few more hills —down and up and down — when we emerge from the forest to our pick-up location at Route 77. Tonight (and every night) we'll return to our private retreat where our guides prepare a home-cooked meal, designed to replenish our spirits and bodies.

Distance: 8.2 miles. Overnight: Blue Mountain Retreat, Harpers Ferry (B,L,D)

DAY 3

Another day on Appalachian Trail! We'll enjoy breakfast before shuttling back to the place we ended the previous day. Today we go back to Foxville Road/Route 77. We start off hiking with a relatively short uphill, then down and back up to a ridge along South Mountain State Park. In fact, we travel in South Mountain State Park for our entire trip through Maryland, with some smaller state parks adjoining along the way. South Mountain was the site of some important Civil War battles and we pass placards that memorialize the struggle at several points along the way. We pass a couple of shelters, which make for nice breaks, and several rocky outcrops that drop off steeply to views of patchwork green farm fields below and the blue hills in the distance. This section has two gorgeous overlooks of the surrounding valleys and mountains at Black Rock and Annapolis Rocks. We finish the day at the A.T. trailhead parking lot off I-70. Hiking on the A.T. footbridge that crosses I-70 frequently draws honks and waves from cars passing below and confirms our

own inclinations that Hiking is way more fun than driving! After a long and satisfying day, we'll shuttle 'home' for another delicious dinner and a bit of relaxation.

Distance: 11 miles. Overnight: Blue Mountain Retreat, Harpers Ferry (B,L,D)

DAY 4

Once again, we return to yesterday's finish to continue hiking south through Maryland's forested mountains. It's not every day you hike past a monument to our first president, but today's trek has a stop at the Washington Monument in Washington Monument State Park. Located atop South Mountain, this is the first completed monument dedicated to the memory of George Washington -- a stone tower initially erected by the citizens of Boonsboro in 1827. After admiring the stonework and history, we continue on past the Dahlgren Backpacker campground and through Fox's Gap. We have some more up and down hiking, including a rocky trail down from White Rocks Cliff. We end the day's hike at Gathland State Park, rich with civil war history. It's best known for the imposing War Correspondents Arch, the only monument dedicated to the memory of Civil War correspondents. We're getting pretty close to the end and it's a short drive back to our lodging and dinner.

Distance: 11.5 miles. Overnight: Blue Mountain Retreat, Harpers Ferry (B,L,D)

DAY 5

After breakfast, we shuttle back to Gathland State Park where we continue our journey across Maryland. Our trail gently slopes up, past the Ed Garvey shelter (a great lunch stop), and onward to the dramatic Weverton Cliffs. Our last views are spectacular from here, as we enjoy a snack looking over the Potomac River and into West Virginia and Virginia. Then it is a short steep downhill to the Potomac River, where the trail follows the historic Chesapeake and Ohio (C&O) Canal Towpath.

Today, we'll have completed our grand total of 40.2 miles across Maryland! After we have time to freshen up at our lodging, we'll drive into nearby Harpers Ferry where we'll have a couple of hours free to explore. We'll have dinner there tonight at a local restaurant, celebrating our adventures along the trail, getting all our 'trail names' straightened out, and perhaps thinking about our next A.T. opportunity!

Distance: 9.5 miles. Overnight: Blue Mountain Retreat, Harpers Ferry (B,L,D)

DAY 6

Depending on the weather, and our interests, we have a couple of options this morning for a last hike or visit to Harpers Ferry. For those of you driving, you are free to leave any time after 11 a.m. For those of you flying out of Dulles, the shuttle will leave Blue Mountain at 11:00 a.m. and you can plan to fly any time after 2:00 p.m. (B)

ADDITIONAL TRIP INFORMATION

GETTING THERE

Plan to fly into the Dulles Airport in Washington, DC (IAD) not later than 12:30 p.m. in time to meet the group at 1:00 p.m. for a shuttle to Harpers Ferry.

If you're driving, plan to meet the group at the Blue Mountain Retreat by 3 p.m. It is located on the Maryland side of the Potomac River, just across from Harpers Ferry. The address is 1032 Hoffmaster Rd Knoxville Maryland USA 21758

GETTING HOME

If you're flying, there is an 11 a.m. group shuttle to IAD for flights out after 2 p.m. on the last day. If you're driving, you can leave any time after 11 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 will be staying in the lovely [Blue Mountain Retreat](#) for the week. It is a private, spacious house with ample parking space. There is a wraparound deck with a dining area, and a living room full of comfy chairs to relax in after a long day of hiking.

The lodging has 9 bedrooms 4 bathrooms, 2 living rooms and 2 dining rooms. Some bedrooms can accommodate up to 4 people, but we will only have a maximum of 2 people per room.

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 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.](#)