



BLUE RIDGE & GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS—NORTH CAROLINA & TENNESSEE'S NATIONAL PARK



WALKING & HIKING | Casual Hotels | Family—20s & Beyond

BLUE RIDGE & GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS—NORTH CAROLINA & TENNESSEE'S NATIONAL PARK

Itinerary	4
Trip Accommodations	7
Arriving & Departing	8
During Your Trip	9
Destination Details	11
Trip Documents & More	12
Getting Active for Your Trip	14
Where to Stay Before & After Your Trip	15
Suggested Packing List	18

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Open daily 6 a.m.–6 p.m. Pacific time



STRAIGHT *talk*

We want to make sure you're on the right trip and that you have the best experience possible. Every Backroads trip is unique and this one is no exception.

SHUTTLES

In order to bring you to our favorite corners of the Blue Ridge Mountains and Great Smoky Mountains National Park, we spend more time shuttling on this trip than on a typical Backroads trip. These strategic shuttles enable us to explore the best hikes this region has to offer.

DAY 1

On the first day of the trip, meet your Backroads Trip Leaders (the folks in Backroads T-shirts) at 9 a.m. at the Renaissance Asheville Hotel (828-252-8211), located at 31 Woodfin Street in Asheville, North Carolina. Please arrive dressed in your hiking clothes and bring your luggage and a day pack with your rain gear and anything else you may want for today's hike (your luggage will be transported to our first night's accommodations).

LATE TO THE TRIP START? See "Arriving & Departing" for more information.

SHUTTLE TO BLACK BALSAM 1 Hour

WALKING & HIKING OPTIONS:

Black Balsam Loop: 4.3 Miles (500' elevation gain)
Black Balsam & Sam Knob Route: 6.9 Miles (1,100')

SHUTTLE TO PILOT COVE 45 Minutes

Welcome to North Carolina! After meeting in Asheville, we shuttle into the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Take in the views of the most scenic section of the Blue Ridge Parkway along the way to the trailhead. The famous 469-mile parkway winds through Virginia and North Carolina connecting Shenandoah National Park with Great Smoky Mountains National Park, offering unparalleled Appalachian mountain views. Our destination is the Great Balsam Mountains, an ancient subrange of the Blue Ridge,

the most famous of which was featured in Charles Frazier's *Cold Mountain*. Today's route takes us through sections of mixed hardwood, pine forest and bright patches of rhododendron to the edge of the Shining Rock Wilderness for sweeping alpine views of the bald summits of Black Balsam Knob and Tennent Mountain. Keep an eye out for the migratory birds that stop here in the spring and fall.

Rest your legs in the shuttle to Pisgah National Forest and our home for the next two nights, Pilot Cove, where we stay in private cabins that blend right in to the forest. Tonight we gather for a welcome toast and shuttle into Brevard for dinner. *Lodging: Pilot Cove*



DAY 2

WALKING & HIKING OPTIONS:

DuPont Waterfalls Route: 6 Miles (600' elevation gain)
Bridal Veil Falls Route: 8 Miles (900')
Reasonover Creek Route: 10.6 Miles (1,300')

SHUTTLE TO PILOT COVE 30 Minutes

After breakfast, jump in the shuttle for a short ride to DuPont State Forest, North Carolina's first recreational state forest, nicknamed the Land of Waterfalls. The 10,473 acres that make up the forest contain 82 miles of trails, five mountain lakes and four cascading waterfalls. We hike first to Hooker Falls, whose water flows into a deep pool, making it a popular swimming spot. As you hike through the still forest, listen for the sound of rushing water growing louder as you approach Triple Falls, named

for its three distinct cascades. If this area looks familiar, it may be because it was featured in both *The Hunger Games* and *The Last of the Mohicans*.

Continue along the forest trail to High Falls, one of the most powerful waterfalls in the North Carolina mountains, which spills a dramatic 120 feet down an inclined plane of granite. You may see the wooden roof of a charming covered bridge peeking out from the top of the falls—the bridge was built in 2000 as part of a planned real estate development. Thankfully, after a long legal battle, the state purchased the land from the developer so it could be preserved. After experiencing these unique falls, hike deeper into the forest and enjoy lunch en route at picturesque Lake Dense. You may end your hike at the Visitor Center, continue hiking to stunning Bridal Veil Falls or challenge yourself on the Reasonover Creek trail.

Back at your cabin, take some time to relax on your balcony or explore the wooded trails on the property. This evening we dig in to a barbecue dinner. *Lodging: Pilot Cove*



DAY 3

SHUTTLE TO GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK 2 Hours

WALKING & HIKING OPTIONS:

Sweat Heifer Creek Route: 3.4 Miles (900' elevation gain)

Icewater Springs Route: 6 Miles (1,300')

Charles Bunion Route: 8.5 Miles (1,900')

SHUTTLE TO DANCING BEAR LODGE 1 Hour

This morning we get an early start, shuttling into Tennessee and Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The park is an International Biosphere Reserve and the country's most visited national park with over 150 trails and 800 miles of breathtaking backcountry. Starting from Newfound Gap, our route today climbs the famous Appalachian Trail for grand views of the Smokies, including the peaks of Mount Le Conte and Myrtle Point. Enjoy the sights of blooming dogwoods and azaleas in spring, bright mountain laurel and rhododendron tangles in summer and spectacular foliage displays in fall. Passing by Fraser fir and red spruce woods, arrive at the rugged rock outcrop of Charles Bunion, taking in the impressive panorama. We might even spot a bear along the way!

Afterward, our shuttle takes us to our home for the next two nights, Dancing Bear Lodge, set on 20 acres at the edge of the park. After settling into your cabin, meet up at the lodge's bistro for Appalachian-inspired dishes and handcrafted cocktails. *Lodging: Dancing Bear Lodge*

DAY 4

SHUTTLE TO ALUM CAVE 1 Hour

WALKING & HIKING OPTIONS:

Alum Cave Route: 4.4 Miles (1,100' elevation gain)

Mount Le Conte Route: 10 Miles (2,800')

SHUTTLE TO DANCING BEAR LODGE 1 Hour

Fuel up with breakfast then jump in the shuttle for a scenic ride west through Great Smoky Mountains National Park to our trailhead. Our destination is the Alum Cave Trail.

The first part of our hike takes us through old-growth forest along Alum Cave Creek to unique Arch Rock—a formation of black slate in the shape of an arch. Make your way under the arch and up stairs carved into the stone. Soon we're treated to incredible mountain scenery including, on a clear day, the Eye of the Needle—a hole in the top of the rock at Little Duck Hawk Ridge. Keep an eye out for duck hawks (peregrine falcons) above. Next we arrive at the trail's namesake, Alum Cave, a massive concave overhang towering about 80 feet high and 500 feet long. Rich in history, the cave was mined in the mid-1800s by the Epsom Salts Manufacturing Company, and during the Civil War for saltpeter to produce gunpowder. If you're up for more miles, continue up trails hugging the cliff face (feel free to use the cable handrails) past more incredible geologic formations and rhododendron to the top of Mount Le Conte, one of the highest peaks of the Smoky Mountains. Grab a refreshment at the Le Conte Lodge, an overnight retreat featuring rustic cabins for overnight hikers, before returning the way you came.

Back in the shuttle we return to Dancing Bear Lodge. Feel free to take a stroll to Apple Valley Mountain Village to visit its quaint stores and cafés. This evening we meet up to toast our week together, followed by a festive farewell dinner at the lodge. *Lodging: Dancing Bear Lodge*



DAY 5

MORNING YOGA 1 Hour

SPRUCE FLATS FALLS ROUTE 2 Miles (400' elevation gain)

SHUTTLE TO ASHEVILLE & AIRPORT 2½ Hours

Rise early to salute the sun with gentle stretching in an optional outdoor yoga class at Dancing Bear. Or, opt to explore the lodge's two-mile trail network. After breakfast we take a quick shuttle to the Tremont Institute for our final hike. Tremont, named for a combination of "tree" and "mountain" was one of the last areas of the park to be logged and is now a residential environmental education center. Our route takes us to Spruce Flats Falls, one of the most scenic falls in the area.

After, we have time to return to the hotel and freshen up before lunch. Next, we're off to visit a local artist and musician to learn about handcrafted mountain dulcimers, one of Appalachia's original stringed instruments. Then we shuttle to downtown Asheville, and then on to the airport. Please see "Arriving & Departing" for end-of-trip logistics.

KEEPING YOU UP TO DATE

We are always seeking opportunities to enhance this itinerary. We'll be certain to notify you of any important changes prior to departure; other changes may be communicated on trip by your leaders.

SHIFT GEARS

Our trips are designed to be flexible, giving you the freedom to experience the best of the region the way YOU want. Feel like you're ready to go, go, go? We can show you the way! Want some downtime or prefer to head out on your own? No problem! Your Trip Leaders will make sure to tell you the best days to take time for yourself (if you want it) without feeling like you're missing out. So feel free to shift gears and make it your day!

TRIP ACCOMMODATIONS

Casual Hotels



2 Nights (Pictured)

Pilot Cove

Bordering Pisgah National Forest, the modern cabins at Pilot Cove are designed to blend into their verdant setting and have easy access to area trails. | Pisgah Forest | www.pilotcove.com | 866-758-2683

2 Nights

Dancing Bear Lodge

With porch swings, rocking chairs and simple charm, the contemporary cabins at Dancing Bear Lodge offer rustic comfort in a serene setting. | Townsend | dancingbearlodge.com | 800-369-0111

ARRIVING & DEPARTING

After reviewing the following information, please inform us of your arrival and departure plans on your *Personal Information Form*.

Meeting Time & Location

On the first day of the trip, meet your Backroads Trip Leaders (the folks in Backroads T-shirts) at 9 a.m. at the Renaissance Asheville Hotel (828-252-8211), located at 31 Woodfin Street in Asheville, North Carolina. Please arrive dressed in your hiking clothes and bring your luggage and a day pack with your rain gear and anything else you may want for today's hike (your luggage will be transported to our first night's accommodations).

Arriving Late to the Trip Start?

If you have a delay or emergency on the day your trip starts and need to contact Backroads, please email your Trip Leaders (you'll receive an email 48 hours prior to the trip start with their contact info) or call the Backroads office at 800-462-2848 (domestic) or 510-527-1555 (international), 6 a.m.–6 p.m. Pacific time.

If you miss the pickup at the Renaissance Asheville Hotel, it's possible to get to our first night's lodging, Pilot Cove in Brevard, on your own. Taxi service is available from downtown Asheville or the Asheville Airport to Brevard; the ride takes between 20–40 minutes and costs around \$40–70. We highly recommend **Asheville Airport Shuttle** (www.ashevilleairportshuttle.com; 828-831-1053). Call ahead to make a reservation.

Conclusion of the Trip

Backroads offers complimentary shuttle service to the Asheville airport, arriving around 3:30 p.m., and to the Renaissance Asheville Hotel arriving around 4 p.m. If you're flying out of Asheville on the day the trip ends, please schedule your flight for after 5 p.m.

Flight Arrangements

This trip starts and ends in Asheville, North Carolina. We recommend flying into and out of Asheville Regional Airport (airport code: AVL; www.flyavl.com). Or, if you need to leave the trip early on our last day, you can fly out of Knoxville's McGhee Tyson Airport (TYS;

www.flyknoxville.com). A shuttle from our last night's hotel to the Knoxville airport takes around 30 minutes and costs about \$60. Contact **Chariots of Hire** for reservations at 865-522-8108 or reservations@chariotsofhire.com.

Please note that starting October 1, 2020, a REAL ID-compliant driver's license, state-issued enhanced license or a valid passport is required for domestic air travel within the US. For more information on acceptable alternate identification, visit: www.tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/identification.

For help arranging air transportation to and from your Backroads trip, please work with your own travel advisor, or you may work with our preferred travel agency partner. Their professional expert travel advisors are ready to share their insiders' knowledge of Backroads and our worldwide destinations and are available to assist you with any of your travel needs. Please note that they are an independent travel agency and consulting and ticketing fees may apply, based on the services requested. Simply ask your Backroads Trip Consultant to connect you! You can also book directly with the airline, or through a travel website.

Ground Transportation to Downtown Asheville

We recommend the following transportation options to downtown Asheville. All prices and times were accurate at the time of printing but are subject to change. Please call each company directly for the most current information.

Taxis from the airport to downtown take about 30 minutes and cost approximately \$50 for up to two people.

Asheville Airport Shuttle

(www.ashevilleairportshuttle.com; 828-231-1053) provides private shuttle service from the Asheville airport to downtown Asheville for about \$40 (gratuities not included). Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.

Asheville Shuttle (www.ashevilleshuttle.com; 828-808-0013) provides shuttle service from the Charlotte airport to downtown Asheville on demand for about \$75.

Reservations are required and you can reserve your seat online or by phone. Check the website for current pricing and schedules.

PRICES & SCHEDULES

All prices and schedules were current at the time of printing, but are subject to change at any time.



DURING YOUR TRIP

Trip Leaders

Each of your Trip Leaders plays many roles during your vacation: guide, host, caretaker, naturalist, chef, historian, troubleshooter, interpreter. These remarkable individuals have highly developed instincts for making people comfortable, for seamlessly handling the logistics of travel and for successfully navigating a wide range of unexpected situations. They're passionately committed to ensuring you enjoy an exceptional vacation—smooth, flexible and tailored to your needs. According to past guests, the caliber of our leaders is what sets Backroads apart from all other travel companies. With their knowledge, professionalism, enthusiasm and service ethic, they're the number-one reason people return to travel with us again and again. We look forward to having you meet them.

A Word about Gratuities

We think our leaders are unparalleled at what they do—you be the judge.

Gratuities for most services during your trip are included in the price. While we've thought about including a Trip Leader tip as part of the overall trip cost, we acknowledge that gratuities are customary in the industry as a way to recognize excellent service on a more personal level.

We offer specific Trip Leader tip recommendations because our guests have consistently asked for them.

Our recommended gratuity for this trip is \$140 per guest.

While cash gratuities are always preferred, checks (on US trips only; payable to a Trip Leader) or PayPal are also available options. At the beginning of the trip you'll receive a contact list with your leaders' email addresses, which also serve as their PayPal IDs. Regardless of the number of leaders on your trip, you can pay the full amount to any one of them. All gratuities are then divided among your leaders.

Accommodations

The casual cabin accommodations on this trip are quite

unique.

All rooms have private baths. If you request a room with two beds, your room may have one bed and one sleeper sofa or rollaway. Please note that guestrooms can vary in size. Single room availability is limited.

At Pilot Cove, your cabin comes equipped with a full kitchen and laundry facilities. This property does not have a restaurant onsite so we will go offsite or bring food in.

Roommates

Backroads will try to find a roommate (of the same gender) for guests wishing to share a room. If you sign up more than 95 days in advance of your trip and no roommate is available, 50 percent of the private room charge will be due at final payment. Should a roommate be found before your trip departs, the private room charge will be refunded. If you sign up less than 95 days in advance of departure and no roommate is available, the full private room charge will apply. If a roommate is found before your trip departs, the private room charge will be refunded. On some trips, twin rooms are limited or unavailable; a private room charge applies if a shared twin room is not available, regardless of the number of days before departure. Please be sure to speak with your Trip Consultant to confirm your room arrangements.

Cell Service & Internet Access

Cell phone and data service is limited in some of the locations we visit on this trip. Internet access should be available at all of our hotels, although the connection may be slower than ideal.

Meals

Food is an important part of the Backroads experience. For lunch we look for the best way to capture the essence of the region. It may be a Backroads Grand Picnic, when your Trip Leaders prepare the freshest and healthiest local fare at a carefully chosen setting along the day's route; a boxed lunch; a packed lunch; a meal together at a favorite restaurant; or the opportunity to have lunch on your own.

Our dinners feature farm-to-table meals and classic Southern cuisine.

All breakfasts, five lunches and four dinners are included

in the trip price.

Be aware that vegetarian/vegan, gluten-free and low-carb dishes are not always available. If you have special dietary requirements, please indicate them on the *Personal Information Form*. Your Trip Consultant will pass on the information to your Trip Leaders. Alcoholic beverages at meals are not included in the trip price, unless otherwise noted.

Recommended Dinner Attire

Restaurants on this trip are fairly casual. You'll feel comfortable wearing anything from jeans and T-shirts to slacks and dressier shirts.

Lost Luggage

On any flight, there is the possibility of lost luggage. Backroads believes that it's a great idea to take a small carry-on bag with enough clothing and supplies to last a day or two. Also be sure to bring with you any personal gear you deem indispensable on the trip. This way, in the event of lost luggage you won't have to spend time replacing essential items and miss activities while you wait for your bags to catch up. Please note that Backroads does not assume responsibility for any luggage lost or damaged during your trip.

Trip Guest List

During the trip, leaders will distribute a guest list that includes the names and contact information of everyone on the trip. If you do not want your contact information to appear on the guest list, please inform your Trip Consultant at least 30 days prior to the trip start.

ENTER TO WIN!

BACKROADS GUEST PHOTO CONTEST



Share your favorite trip images
for the chance to win

1 of 5 GRAND PRIZES

up to \$5,000 in Backroads Trip Credit
or Honorable Mention

\$250 in Backroads Trip Credit awarded to 75+ photos

FOR RULES GO TO [BACKROADS.COM/PHOTO_CONTEST](https://www.backroads.com/photo_contest)



DESTINATION DETAILS

Climate

Spring and fall days in the Carolinas and Great Smoky Mountains are warm with about 60 percent humidity. Although it doesn't rain often, when it does it can be significant, so we suggest bringing along quality, breathable rain gear. Weather can change dramatically at higher elevations. Be prepared for wind and cooler temperatures. This area can also be unseasonably hot into October.

Asheville, North Carolina

Average:	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
High °F	47	50	58	67	75	82
Low °F	28	31	37	45	53	61
Precip. inches	2.9	3.3	3.3	3.0	3.3	3.4
Average:	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
High °F	85	84	77	68	58	49
Low °F	65	64	57	46	38	30
Precip. inches	3.3	3.4	3.2	2.1	3.0	2.8

Gatlinburg, Tennessee

Average:	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
High °F	48	53	61	70	77	83
Low °F	25	28	33	41	50	58
Precip. inches	4.6	4.5	4.7	4.2	5.9	5.5
Average:	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
High °F	86	85	80	71	61	51
Low °F	62	61	55	43	34	28
Precip. inches	5.8	4.6	4.3	2.7	4.1	4.3

Helpful Information

Visit www.backroads.com/trip_prep for links to other websites offering helpful travel information.

Visitor Information

Asheville, North Carolina's Tourism Board
www.exploreasheville.com

Blue Ridge Parkway
www.nps.gov/blri/index.htm

The Great Smoky Mountains
www.visitmymokies.com

RECOMMENDED READING



The more you know about your destination before you go, the more you'll appreciate all that you'll see when you get there. We've selected a few of our favorite books to help capture the essence of the region.

- A Walk in the Woods*, Bill Bryson
- Trail of Tears: The Rise and Fall of the Cherokee Nation*, John Ehle
- The Land Breakers*, John Ehle
- North Carolina: A History*, William S. Powell
- The Great Smoky Mountains National Park*, Steve Cotham



TRIP DOCUMENTS & MORE

Travel Protection Plan

Inside your Pre-Departure Packet is a brochure describing the Travel Protection Plan that Backroads offers. The plan helps provide coverage for trip cancellation/trip interruption, trip delay, medical expenses and evacuation/repatriation, lost baggage, and more. We recommend that you purchase travel protection to help protect you and your travel investment against the unexpected. If you are interested in purchasing the Travel Protection Plan that Backroads offers, please remit the additional amount noted on your invoice.

Cancellations & Refunds

If you must cancel your reservation, a fee will be charged. Please review your trip invoice for cancellation policy details. **Exceptions to this policy cannot be made for any reason**, including those of weather or personal emergencies. There is no refund for joining a trip late or leaving early. Private rooms and staterooms, bike rentals and internal air charges are considered part of the trip price and are subject to cancellation fees. You are required to provide a signed *Release of Liability*, *Assumption of All Risks and Arbitration Agreement* and a completed *Personal Information Form* prior to your trip departure. If you fail to provide a signed release form, you will not be allowed to join the trip and will be subject to Backroads' cancellation policy.

On the rare occasions when Backroads must cancel a trip, all payments received to date will be refunded, which constitutes full settlement. Backroads is not responsible for expenses incurred in preparation for any cancelled trips, such as airline tickets or for costs incurred due to travel delays, flight cancellations or illness.

Transfers

With the exception of Private and Custom Trips, you may transfer from one trip to another without penalty, within the parameters of your trip's transfer policy. When transferring to a different date or trip, if the trip costs more than your original trip, you are responsible for the difference in cost. Please review your trip invoice for additional transfer policy details. After the allowable

transfer date, our cancellation policy applies. Cancellation penalties will not be charged if you are able to fill the vacancy with another guest(s).

Itinerary Changes

If unforeseen circumstances require a change in the trip itinerary, Backroads will make every effort to select alternative accommodations of the same quality and to keep the activity modifications minimal.

Electronics & Other Valuables

It is best to leave valuables at home. If you must bring valuables on the trip, please understand that they are 100 percent your responsibility, regardless of what anyone (including leaders) might tell you. Cash, jewelry and passports are especially important to keep in your possession. It's not safe to leave valuables in Backroads vans; while not common, break-ins do happen. You may choose to lock them in your room's safe, if one is available to you. If you're concerned about forgetting items in the safe (easy to do!), a good trick is to leave something on top of it that you can't forget, such as a single shoe.

Although we will transport your valuables during your trip as a convenience, **we do not assume responsibility for any damage or loss.** This policy applies to personal electronics as well as other items, such as luggage, jewelry, and fragile and delicate accessories, whether purchased on the trip or otherwise.

After your trip ends, if you realize that you've accidentally left an item behind in Backroads' possession, we'll do our best to honor return requests. However, we're not able to guarantee returns based on leader availability limitations to find and send items (our leaders are on the go!) and possible shipping issues. If you've left an item at a hotel, please contact that hotel directly to make arrangements.

On-Your-Own Activities

During, before or after your Backroads trip, there may be time for you to enjoy some of the area's special activities on your own. These activities are not included in your Backroads trip itinerary and are not options sponsored by Backroads, but they can often be a highlight for those who choose to participate. We mention them so you are aware and because you might enjoy these activities on

your own. Please understand that Backroads is not responsible for any problems which may occur during any on-your-own activities.



WORLD BICYCLE RELIEF

**MAKING A
POSITIVE IMPACT**



**Backroads is pleased to support
World Bicycle Relief's mission of
providing bicycles to women, students, rural
workers, healthcare providers
and others in disadvantaged
communities worldwide.**



VISIT WORLDBIKICLERELIEF.ORG

GETTING ACTIVE FOR YOUR TRIP

NAVIGATION OPTIONS ON THIS TRIP

Turn-by-turn paper directions included.

Downloadable GPS files available for use on your own device—log into your account at Backroads.com 2 weeks before your trip for more details.

Terrain

The terrain we encounter on this trip ranges from lightly rolling to hilly with several steep longer climbs. Some routes have exposed sections. Hiking trails are often uneven, with roots, mud, rocks and other obstacles. Please note that unpredictable mountain weather can make hiking conditions more challenging.

Remember, take your time and go at your own pace—you're on vacation! Your Backroads Trip Leaders will be available at intersecting routes when you're ready for a snack, a cool drink, or a lift back if you're done for the day. Most days you'll have a choice of mileage options, so you can decide how active you want to be—it's always up to you.

Conditioning Tips

Every Backroads trip is designed to appeal to a wide variety of interests and fitness levels. We know your pace may vary from one day to the next—and your traveling companions' may differ somewhat from yours. So we present a range of mileage options, and each day you decide exactly what and how much you want to do.

Before your trip, we suggest walking and hiking regularly and hitting a few hills whenever you can. Review the route options in the daily itinerary for the range of mileages offered on this trip. But mostly, just show up and have fun!

Pacing & Endurance

Here are a few suggestions for increasing your endurance while on your Backroads trip:

- Make sure your muscles are warmed up before you start walking.
- Walk and hike at a steady pace that you can maintain throughout your walk—don't push yourself too hard at the beginning.
- Eat high-energy snacks throughout your walk or hike, and drink water often—before you are thirsty—to avoid dehydration. (Your leaders will have plenty of food and water on hand.) Some people find that a water-pack hydration system, worn like a backpack and equipped with a plastic tube for drinking, is a good accessory on long outings or in hot climates, since it enables you to carry more water and drink regularly without having to stop.
- Perhaps most important, make sure your shoes fit properly and have been broken in before the start of the trip.

Activity Level

The routes on this trip are rated Levels 2–4.

ACTIVITY LEVEL		BIKING		WALKING	
Avg. Time in hours		Avg. Miles	Max Elev. Gain in feet	Avg. Miles	Max Elev. Gain in feet
1	2–3 hrs	8–22	1000'	2–5	800'
2	2–4 hrs	18–32	2200'	4–7	1300'
3	3–5 hrs	26–42	3400'	5–9	2000'
4	4–6 hrs	36–54	4400'	6–11	3000'
5	5–7+ hrs	48–70+	4400'+	7–13+	4000'+

Review the "Activity Level" section on the web for more details on daily route options.

Resources

The American Hiking Society website is packed with all sorts of useful information related to walking and hiking. Visit americanhiking.org.

Your local outdoor store can be an excellent resource too; ask to speak with an experienced employee.

Staying Comfortable: FAQs

Q: Do I need to bring hiking boots for my trip?

A: Varying weather conditions and terrain can make any trail challenging, whether you're hiking up a mountain or walking through a valley. We recommend hiking boots or sturdy hiking shoes (sometimes called "light hikers") with robust tread, ample ankle support and waterproofing. Your average running shoes often have inadequate tread and stability for terrain like gravel and mud—though even these may be suitable if you know that's what works for you. Most importantly, your shoes should be comfortable and well broken in before your trip starts.

Q: It's not really going to rain during the trip, is it?

A: Well, it just might! Rain is possible no matter where you travel. Your best bet for staying comfortable during a shower is to wear quality rain gear that is both waterproof and breathable.

Q: Does wearing layers really make a difference?

A: Yes! The trick for staying comfortable in fluctuating temperatures is to wear three basic non-cotton layers of lightweight clothing: innerwear (to wick moisture away from your skin), insulating garments (for warmth) and outerwear (to protect against wind or rain). The different layers let you add or remove clothing in response to changes in the weather or your internal temperature.

WHERE TO STAY BEFORE & AFTER YOUR TRIP

For help arranging hotel accommodations for before and after your Backroads trip, or an extension to your trip, please work with your own travel advisor, or you may work with our preferred travel agency partner. Their team of professional travel advisors are ready to share their insiders' knowledge of Backroads and our worldwide destinations and are available to assist you with any of your travel needs. Please note that they are an independent travel agency and consulting and ticketing fees may apply, based on the services requested. Simply ask your Backroads Trip Consultant to connect you! You can also book directly with the hotel, or through a travel website.

Please note that Backroads does not block rooms and does not offer special rates for pre- and post-trip stays. If you plan on extending your stay at our first night's hotel before the trip starts or our last night's hotel when the trip ends, let the hotel reservations agent know that you're traveling with Backroads—you may be able to avoid changing rooms. **We recommend booking your rooms as early as possible, especially during peak travel season!**

The following is a selection of recommended properties that span a range of prices, amenities and locations. Refer to the Hotel Room Rates guide for the starting double-occupancy rates, which were accurate at time of printing. Note that rates are subject to change and some hotels may require a minimum stay.

HOTEL ROOM RATES	
IN US DOLLARS PER NIGHT	
\$501 and up.....	◆◆◆◆◆
\$300 to \$500.....	◆◆◆◆◆
\$201 to \$300.....	◆◆◆◆◆
Up to \$200.....	◆◆◆◆◆

Renaissance Asheville Hotel is our meeting location on Day 1 and a drop-off location on Day 6. See the following for more information on this hotel.

Asheville

Hotel map: bit.ly/AshevilleHotels

Inn on Biltmore Estate

Savor turn-of-the-century elegance and breathtaking views of the Blue Ridge Mountains at this gracious inn, nestled on the Biltmore's 8,000-acre majestic estate. In addition to the inn, the Biltmore has a Village Hotel and a private cottage. (pool, spa) | www.biltmore.com/stay | 866-336-1245 or 828-225-1600 | 210 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆◆◆◆◆

Omni Grove Park Inn

There's no shortage of things to do at this luxury inn: play golf on the Inn's historic golf course, relax at the spa or enjoy upscale restaurants, cafés and bars. (pool, spa) | 290 Macon Avenue | www.grovetparkinn.com | 800-438-5800 | 512 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆◆◆◆◆

Aloft Downtown Asheville

Vibrant and stylish, this modern hotel features wide open spaces and a fresh approach to hospitality. Grab a cocktail and head onto The Ledge, an open-air patio overlooking Biltmore Avenue below. (pool) | 51 Biltmore Avenue | www.aloftashevilledowntown.com | 866-716-8143 or 828-232-2838 | 115 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆◆◆◆◆

Hotel Indigo Asheville Downtown

Get a real feel for Asheville's vibrant character at Hotel Indigo. Its convenient location also means you're never far from locally-owned shops, fine restaurants, antique stores, art galleries and hiking trails. | 151 Haywood Street | www.ashevillehotellodgingdowntown.com | 877-951-4667 or 828-239-0239 | 116 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆◆◆◆◆

Renaissance Asheville Hotel

Sophisticated and luxurious, the Renaissance Asheville Hotel offers all the comforts of home and the deluxe perks one would expect from the Marriott hotel family. (pool) | 31 Woodfin Street | www.renaissanceasheville.com | 828-252-8211 | 277 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆◆◆◆◆

Sourwood Inn

This charming bed-and-breakfast retreat situated in the lush Blue Ridge Mountains feels far removed from bustling downtown Asheville, though located only 10 miles away. | 810 Elk Mountain Scenic Highway | www.sourwoodinn.com | 828-255-0690 | 12 rooms | Rates: ◆◆◆◆◆



Biltmore Village

Hotel map: bit.ly/BiltmoreVillageHotels

Grand Bohemian Hotel Asheville, Autograph Collection

This boutique hotel gives new meaning to the word

"luxury." Deluxe bedding, antique furnishings and fixtures and an extravagant European ambiance are just a few of the details that make up the unique Autograph Collection hotel. *Travel + Leisure* World's Best. (spa) | 11 Boston Way | www.bohemianhotelasheville.com | 828-505-2949 | 104 rooms & suites | Rates: ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Hilton Asheville Biltmore Park

Situated on Biltmore Park's Town Square, this environmentally friendly hotel offers the best of both worlds: awe-inspiring views of the Blue Ridge Mountains and unrivaled access to local attractions. (pool, spa) | 43 Town Square Boulevard | www.hiltonasheville.com | 828-209-2700 | 165 rooms & suites | Rates: ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Inn on Biltmore Estate

This former Vanderbilt residence sits on 8,000 acres of meticulously landscaped gardens originally designed by Frances Law Olmsted. Savor turn-of-the-century elegance and breathtaking views of the Blue Ridge Mountains at this gracious inn. *Travel + Leisure* World's Best (pool, spa) | 1 Lodge Street | www.biltmore.com/stay/inn | 866-336-1245 or 828-225-1600 | 210 rooms & suites | Rates: ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Village Hotel on Biltmore Estate

A more casual property on the rolling hills of the legendary Biltmore Estate, this hotel provides easy access to Antler Hill Village's winery, restaurants and outdoor activities. (pool) | 207 Dairy Road | www.biltmore.com/stay/hotel | 800-411-3812 or 828-225-1333 | 209 rooms & suites | Rates: ♦ ♦ ♦

SUGGESTED PACKING LIST

LUGGAGE REMINDERS

Please limit your luggage to one medium-sized suitcase (we recommend 25"–28", preferably not hard case) and one small carry-on bag. Be sure to mark your luggage with your contact information.

Essential

Travel Items

- ☐ wallet (credit cards, bank cards & ID)
- ☐ cash for incidentals & leader gratuities
- ☐ airline tickets/e-ticket confirmation details
- ☐ sealable, quart-size plastic bags for stowing small liquid containers, swimsuit, etc.
- ☐ toiletries (including sunscreen & lip ointment)
- ☐ medications & copies of prescriptions
- ☐ list of important addresses & contact numbers

Active Clothing & Gear

- ☐ light hikers or boots
- ☐ hiking socks
- ☐ walking/hiking shorts and/or lightweight pants
- ☐ non-cotton base layers of varying weights
- ☐ lightweight hiking jacket or vest
- ☐ hat with brim, bandana or sweatband
- ☐ daypack/waistpack (for water, camera, snacks)
- ☐ sunglasses (with retention strap)
- ☐ sport sandals and/or flip-flops
- ☐ swimsuit

Rain Gear & Cold Weather Clothing

You may not need all of the items listed here, but they are necessary to stay comfortable in case of rain or unseasonably cold weather.

- ☐ waterproof (breathable) rain jacket & pants

- ☐ waterproof/water-resistant warm gloves
- ☐ warm jacket (easy to pack)
- ☐ warm hat

Non-Active Clothing

- ☐ clothing & shoes for downtime & restaurants
- ☐ lightweight jacket (like fleece) or warm sweater

Backroads provides water bottles & hiking poles.

Optional

- ☐ camera & charger (**remember to enter our Guest Photo Contest!**)
- ☐ cell phone & charger
- ☐ headlamp or small flashlight
- ☐ alarm clock
- ☐ CamelBak or similar hydration backpack
- ☐ guidebook and/or field guides
- ☐ notebook/travel journal & pens
- ☐ reading material
- ☐ earplugs
- ☐ insect repellent

Great Gear Vendors

For a list of some of our favorite gear and gadget retailers, visit www.backroads.com/gearup.

NOTES

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