

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

Meet at Atlanta airport (ATL), hike in Amicalola Falls State Park, private wine tasting

We pick you up at the Atlanta (ATL) airport at 12:30 p.m. and begin our adventure with a visit to Amicalola Falls State Park for a short hike on a paved trail with a series of steps. Amicalola Falls, at 729 feet, are the tallest cascading waterfalls east of the Mississippi River and often the last stop for hikers before they start their Appalachian Trail Thru Hike. After our hike and waterfall gawking, we continue to our hostel for dinner and a private wine tasting. A knowledgeable woman from the Dahlonega Tasting Room will educate us and our palates about wine as we taste several varieties. Well-fed and well exercised, we will be ready for bed tonight! (D)
DAY 2

Hike to Raven Cliff Falls, visit Cavender Creek Vineyards, dinner in Dahlonega

Our hike today is the Raven Cliff Falls Hike, a 5 mile out and back hike. This trail follows Dodd Creek through the Raven Cliffs Wilderness Area to a massive dark bluff near the headwaters some 2.5 miles from the parking area. Because of the size of Ravens Cliffs and the lack of human interference, the area has abundant bird life including grosbeaks, vireos, and wild turkeys besides the ravens that give the area its name. From there we visit Cavender Creek Vineyards to check out their wines. We will also spend a few hours in Dahlonega; every Saturday folks bring their instrument(s) and just start playing and/or singing on the Dahlonega square, a weekly event known as Appalachian Jam. If Appalachian music is not your style, there are also lots of shops to check out. We'll return to the lodge in time to relax and clean up before going out to dinner that night in downtown. (B,L,D)

DAY 3

Springer Mountain hike at the beginning of the Appalachian Trail, dinner at the lodging

After a hearty breakfast at the lodge, today we're going to see the very beginning of the Appalachian Trail - Springer Mountain! We'll look at the plaque there and imagine what it's like to stand there knowing you're about to attempt to hike 2200 miles. We'll be happy our hike today is only 5.2 miles! Our hike starts with a 500-foot ascent from the parking lot to the top of Springer Mountain, on a gradually ascending rocky and rooty trail. After taking pictures at the top, the rest of the hike is a gentle downhill, about 1200 feet, to 3 Forks. Along the way we'll pass Stover Creek Shelter where we can stop to eat our picnic lunch. We can also stop to soak our feet during several stream crossings, one of the true pleasures when hiking. Right before the end we'll pass through old growth hemlock - soaring trees that have disappeared along many sections of the trail. Dinner is at our lodging tonight, followed by s'mores around the fire. (B,L,D)

DAY 4

Optional hike, brunch at Wolf Mountain Vineyards, return to airport

Our breakfast will be light this morning because we need to save room for the brunch at Wolf Mountain Vineyards. Brunch is typically buffet style with a theme that varies month to month. Before brunch, there is an optional 2-mile hike at DeSoto Falls. After savoring our last meal together, we head to the airport where you can plan a flight out after 5:30 p.m. (B, Brunch)