

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 the Airport or at Blue Mountain Retreat Center - Welcome Dinner

Meet at 1:00 p.m. at the Dulles Airport (IAD) or 3:00 p.m. at the Blue Mountain Retreat Center, just across from Harpers Ferry. If you are flying, group transportation from the airport to Harpers Ferry will be arranged for 1:00 p.m. The shuttle ride is about an hour and will deposit you right at the door of the lodging. If you prefer to drive to Harpers Ferry, please plan to arrive at the Blue Mountain Retreat Center by 3:00 p.m. After settling in we'll gather for introductions and trip orientation before enjoying one of the first delicious dinners made by your guides. Overnight: Blue Mountain Retreat Center (D)

DAY 2

Hike Harpers Ferry to Blackburn Center

Today and every day we'll have an early and hearty breakfast, so we have adequate time to prepare for the day and get on the trail early. After breakfast, we'll shuttle to the very tip of Harpers Ferry, near the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers, where we'll start along the Appalachian Trail. Passing Saint Peters church and Jefferson Rock, we'll cross over the Shenandoah River and continue under canopy to Keys Gap. For those who would like to keep hiking, we'll continue through Buzzard Rocks, along Laurel Springs, and on to the Blackburn Center situated approximately .3 miles off trail. The Blackburn Center is a PTC maintained shelter area. While they offer bunk space and tenting platforms for those who are backpacking, we'll meet our shuttle there and head back to the Blue Mountain Retreat Center. Distance: 13.0 miles. Elevation gain/loss: 2,720 feet/1,900 feet Think you might want to ease into the week a little more gently? We've got you covered. You can always take out at Keys Gap for a 6.3-mile day with an elevation gain/loss of 1440 ft. /800 ft. You don't even have to decide till you get there. Tonight, and every night we'll return to our lodging where the guides will prepare a filling, home cooked meal, designed to replenish your spirits and your body. Overnight: Blue Mountain Retreat Center (B,L,D) Shuttle Time: 10 minutes/35 minutes

DAY 3

Hike Blackburn Center to Bear's Den Lodge

Another day on trail! This morning we'll shuttle back to the Blackburn Center, where we ended yesterday, and hike the .3 miles (all up!) to rejoin the AT. We'll pass through Snickers Gap (maybe a trail angel will have left some real Snickers?) and begin the first 4 miles of the infamous 13.9 mile 'Roller Coaster' - so called because of tightly packed ups and downs. There will be plenty of rocks, great challenging ups and lovely wooded downs. We'll pass Raven rocks and Crescent Rocks - yes, there is a theme here - and at the end of the day we'll walk right to the Bears Den Lodge - a favorite destination for AT hikers! Distance: 9 miles Elevation gain/loss: 2,100 feet/2,000 feet Shuttle Time: 35 minutes/40 minutes Overnight: Blue Mountain Retreat Center (B,L,D)

DAY 4

Hike Bear's Den Lodge to Ashby Gap

Putting back on trail this morning from the Bears Den Lodge, we'll first pass by the Bears Den rocks - beautiful granite and sandstone boulders that do look like they would make the perfect den for bears! If you want a big challenge, you have the option to hike 13.9 miles, including the remaining 9.9 miles of the 'Roller Coaster', and on to Ashby Gap. If that isn't appealing, you can opt for an earlier out after 7.5 miles. You will still have lots of up and down, but the shorter mileage allows you to do it at a slower pace. Regardless of which you choose, at the end of the day we'll end up shuttling back to our home on the trail - the Bears Den. Distance: 13.9 miles Elevation gain/loss: 4,000 feet/2,000 feet, or 7.5 miles and less gain and loss. Shuttle: 40 minutes/50 minutes Overnight: Blue Mountain Retreat Center (B,L,D)

DAY 5

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Hike Ashby Gap to Manassas Gap

After another hearty breakfast, we'll be back on trail this morning starting at Ashby Gap. We'll start off hiking by passing a rock wall that was originally surveyed by 19-year-old George Washington. The trail today passes several AT shelters including Whiskey Hollow and Manassas Shelter. Whiskey Hollow is a newer shelter built by the local AT club. After a long and absolutely satisfying day, ending at Manassas Gap, we'll shuttle back to the Blue Mountain Retreat for another delicious home cooked meal and a well-deserved rest. Distance: 13.6 miles. Elevation gain/loss: 2,400 feet/2,780 feet. Shuttle: 50 minutes/1 hour 10 minutes Overnight: Blue Mountain Retreat Center (B,L,D)

DAY 6

Hike Manassas Gap to Front Royal, Farewell Dinner Out on the Town

Can it really be over so soon? Sadly, yes. And our last day on trail, is going to be a great one! We'll put in at Manassas Gap for our final 8.7 miles of the trip. About halfway through we'll be sure to take a break at the Jim and Molly Denton Shelter area. This shelter has a great front porch as well as a solar shower and yes, running water! We'll finish the day with a slow downhill, losing about 1,000 feet in elevation, where we'll find ourselves on Route 522 and our awaiting shuttle. We should be back in plenty of time to prepare for dinner out tonight where we'll remember our week together and say goodbye, until the next AT opportunity! Distance: 8.7 miles. Elevation gain/loss: 1,955 feet/1,590 feet. Overnight: Blue Mountain Retreat Center (B,L,D)

DAY 7

Happy Trails to You!

As always, we start the day with a great breakfast. Except today we won't be burning it off! After close to 60 miles and about 12,000 feet elevation gain and loss in 5 days, our bodies will be confused - no hiking today! If you're driving, you're free to leave when you need to. If you are flying, there will be a 9:30 a.m. group shuttle to IAD for flights out after 12:30 p.m. (B)