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AT SECTION BACKPACK - NORTH CAROLINA BALDS

Trip Summary

HIGHLIGHTS

- Standing Indian Mountain (5,498 feet) and Albert Mountain (5,220feet), some of the tallest mountains south of the Smokies on the AT
- Standing on top of beautiful, grassy balds with 360 degree views
- Traversing the AT through the Nantahala Wilderness
- Backpacking in cool autumn weather during early fall foliage season in southern North Carolina
- Refining our lightweight backpacking techniques so our packs stay under 30 pounds
- For some, finishing Georgia! Yay!

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TRIP AT A GLANCE

Location:	Georgia & North Carolina
Activities:	Hiking
Arrive:	Arrive Atlanta Airport by 1:30pm on Day 1
Depart:	Depart Atlanta Airport any time after 2:30 pm on Day 10

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; that is, hike a new section every year. This year we continue our tradition of offering a new section hike. We will be backpacking in southern North Carolina winding through the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountain range and the remote Nantahala Wilderness area. The terrain is a wonderful mix of rugged, rocky hiking, climbing summits and balds, beautiful vistas, ridge walking, rolling forest trails, and cool spring fed streams and rivers. Come join us for another great section of wilderness backpacking on this historic trail.

Rating

This trip is rated a 4 as it involves early mornings, strenuous hiking, and elevation gain and loss with a backpack on that weighs 30 pounds. The difficulty of the hiking is greater than the mileage indicates. It requires that you be in very good physical condition and have wilderness backpacking experience. If you have never backpacked or if it has been a long time since you did, please consider our June trip: [Intro to Lightweight Backpacking](#). Rating: 1 2 3 **[4]** 5

What's Included

- 1 - 3 experienced AGC guides based on group size
- Two nights indoors lodging and seven nights camping
- 2 dinners at restaurants, all breakfasts (including on trail), all dinners on trail
- Group camping, cooking, and safety equipment
- Transportation to and from the trail heads at the beginning and ending of the section hike
- For women arriving early for the instruction day, the extra fee covers a shared room, breakfast/lunch and instruction

Not included: Airfare to and from trip start, trail lunches and snacks, alcohol (which is not permitted on the trail), guide gratuities, and personal expenses.

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

Arrival day! Please note: This trip is recommended for experienced backpackers. Our preference is that you have participated in the Introduction to Lightweight Backpacking offered each year by AGC in June or have equivalent lightweight backpacking experience. If this trip is the one that fits your schedule but you have never backpacked or if it has been a long time since you have backpacked you will need to plan on arriving at the trip beginning 1 day early (by 3pm) in order to participate in an instruction day. The additional charge for this day will be \$250 per person and will include a room at the trip hotel (based on double occupancy) and guide. Otherwise your first day is Day 1 of the trip when the first group meeting will be at 3:00pm at the trip hotel (TBA). If you are flying, there will be a group shuttle from the Atlanta airport scheduled for 1:30pm. At the trip hotel, we will start with introductions and a discussion of what to leave behind. After dinner, we spend the rest of our evening getting ready for our wilderness backpacking adventure and, as is always a good idea at the beginning of a backpacking trip, get to bed early. (D)

DAY 2

After an early breakfast, we'll load up the van and head to our 'put in spot' on the trail. For those of you who have done either the AT section backpacks offered in Georgia or have done the AT Slackpack in Georgia may recognize our beginning - Dicks Creek Gap on US 76. Our destination for the night will be Plumorchard Gap Shelter. Although short mileage for our first day, this gives us time to truly enjoy being back on the AT! Mileage today: 4.4

DAY 3

Now that we are finally on trail we'll be eager to get started on our quest this morning. The highlight for many this day may be crossing the GA/NC border or perhaps it'll be the old, twisted (much photographed) tree near the border, or, our first Bald - Couthouse. Whatever your highlight, we'll celebrate tonight at Muskrat Creek Shelter - any day on the AT is a day for celebration! Mileage today: 7.3 B, D

DAY 4

Today we will begin with the familiar "muds and puds" of the AT - some of those both mindless and (to some) pointless ups and downs of the mountains. But - then we'll hit a real 'up' and eventually summit Standing Indian Mountain which stands at 5,498 feet. Beautiful vistas await! After summiting and admiring the view we then begin heading down for a while -- our destination tonight is Carter Gap Shelter. Although our mileage is longer today we'll enjoy the beautiful scenery and the 'down' to our shelter will make our afternoon a bit easier. Mileage today: 12.5 B, D

DAY 5

Ah -- a bit of a shorter day as a reward for the great mileage yesterday. Nice rolling terrain with another great peak, Albert Mountain and Albert Mountain fire tower offering more beautiful views of these gorgeous mountains and valleys. Destination tonight is Long Branch Shelter. Mileage: 9.0 B, D

DAY 6

After getting an early start today, we head toward Winding Stair Gap and eventually to our first bald - Siler Bald. We will actually camp about .5 miles from the Bald so if daylight and energy allow you can consider visiting the Bald without your pack! Mileage today: 11.4 B, D

DAY 7

Being up on Siler Bald in the morning is spectacular! We have a bit less mileage today so can slow down and enjoy the beauty of the morning. There are several interesting spots along the trail today including an historic spot associated with early NC history, the Wayah Bald stone tower and footpath --- AND---trash cans! Yay! We will have the opportunity to enjoy another Bald though, Wayah Bald also offers great picture opportunities. Our destination is past Wayah Bald at the Wayah Bald Shelter and campsites. Mileage today: 7.3 B, D

DAY 8

Beginning to feel like a thru-hiker? It is wonderful to be out for such an extended time! Today gives us more of the 'up' and 'downs' the AT is known for, great vistas, some green tunnel walking and just the satisfaction of being 'out there!' We are headed for another bald! This one with an observation tower and panoramic view---Wesser Bald. Ho-hum -- getting a bit jaded with all the beautiful scenery? Never! Our shelter area tonight will be past the Wesser Bald and at the Wesser Bald Shelter -- a mere .1 miles from the bald -- sunset opportunities await! Mileage today: 10.6 B, D

DAY 9

Our last day on trail is always a bit of mixed emotion. Feels like we could just go on and backpack to Maine. On the other hand -- a shower sounds really good! We leave camp this morning with those thoughts in our heads but we have a few miles to go and a few more hours to enjoy our adventure on the AT. Our destination is the Nantahala Outdoor Center -- usually a place of great activity with kayaker, canoers, hikers, backpackers and sightseers all bustling around having lots of fun. Our shuttle will pick us up here and transport us to our trip hotel where showers await! After spending a bit of time with hot water and soap we'll all gather -- clean and sparkling (will we recognize each other?) and head into town for a celebration dinner together spending time remembering our great week on the AT. Mileage today: 5.9 B, D

DAY 10

Sadly---we have to head home although I'm sure the AT is loudly calling to continue! But, unfortunately most of us do have flights to catch (or work that is calling!) If you are driving you are free to leave any time after breakfast. If you are flying, we will shuttle back to the MARTA station and catch the train to the airport. We will have you to the Marta by 12:30pm so you are free to make flight reservations any time after 2:30pm.

ADDITIONAL TRIP INFORMATION

Getting There

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 stay the first and last night in a VRBO in Hiawassee, GA. There are 4 single supplements available for these two night for an additional \$200. In between there are seven nights of camping. Most nights we stay in or near a shelter with varying amenities (e.g. fire pit, composting outhouses) depending on whether we are in designated wilderness or state park lands. All our camping sites have water nearby. Bringing your own tent (single tent) is an option. Please contact the office with the specs of your personal tent.

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

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