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## FALL IN THE GREAT SMOKIES

### Trip Summary

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- Exploring one of America's oldest mountain ranges and most popular National Parks
- Rafting a fun section of the Pigeon River (suitable for women with no experience)
- Visiting Little Greenbrier Community and learning about the people who lived here
- Hiking beautiful trails, and enjoying lunch next to a waterfall
- Gazing at the view from the hot tub and luxuriating in your own private room

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## TRIP AT A GLANCE

**Location:** Great Smoky Mountains National Park

**Activities:** Hiking

**Arrive:** Arrive at the Knoxville airport (TYS) by 12:00 pm on Day 1 or, if you're driving, at Metcalf Bottoms South Picnic area inside the park by 2:00pm. Directions will be sent with the pre-departure document.

**Depart:** At the Knoxville airport by 11:30 am on the last day for flights out after 12:30pm

### Trip Overview

The Great Smoky Mountains National Park is world famous for the diversity of its plant and animal life, the beauty of its ancient mountains, and many excellent hiking trails (over 900 miles). Designed to give you an overview of one of our most treasured National Parks, hiking there in October is definitely a peak experience. We'll marvel at the views, hiking at a leisurely pace to enhance our enjoyment of the scenery, take time to take pictures and identify shrubs and trees, and soak our feet in beautiful pools at the edge of waterfalls. Whether you are intrigued by salamanders or birds, waterfalls, or mountain vistas, learning about the fascinating cultural history, or just seeking less traveled paths, you will quickly understand why the Great Smokies have been designated both an International Biosphere reserve and a World Heritage Site.

### Rating

This trip is appropriate for any woman who exercises regularly at a moderate level (such as going for 45-minute brisk walks with hills 3 to 5 days a week), and who either enjoys hiking or is new to hiking and wants to learn in a safe and fun environment. This trip does require a certain level of physical fitness to fully enjoy the experience. The trails and terrain you will encounter will be well developed woodland trails with rolling terrain, with occasional steep sections, uneven footing, shallow water crossing, primitive bridge crossing, rocks, and roots. Your hikes will be under forest canopy (trees) as well as a day spent at a higher elevation with spectacular views. You will be spending between 6 - 7 hours each day hiking or rafting. On this trip, there is also a special emphasis on cultural and natural history.

**Rating:** 1 **2** 3 4 5

## What's Included

- 1 - 2 experienced AGC guides based on group size
- Six nights lodging in a private room with ensuite bathroom
- All meals from dinner on Sunday through breakfast Saturday
- Transportation to/from the Knoxville airport (TYS) and transportation during the trip
- White water rafting and rafting guide gratuities

**Not included:** Airfare to/from Knoxville (TYS), alcoholic beverages, guide gratuities, and any optional activities

## 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

If you're flying in, we'll meet you at the Knoxville Airport at noon. After driving to the park, we start with an introduction to the cultural history of the Smokies by visiting the area once known to early settlers as the Little Greenbrier Community. We'll visit the Little Greenbrier School (first opened in 1882), a pioneer cemetery, and the Walker Sisters cabin and home site. This slightly ascending trail is along an old roadbed. If you are driving, please plan to be at Metcalf Bottoms Picnic parking lot (south side) by 2:00 pm. Little Brier Gap Trail, 2.6 miles. (D)

### DAY 2

Our trail today is a wonderful introduction to the variety of hiking in the Smokies. The beginning of the trail is smooth and easy as it follows an old road along the scenic banks of the Little River. The sparkling clean water of the Little River supports a variety of charismatic aquatic life, including the eastern hellbender salamander and the occasional river otter. At 2.4 miles we'll arrive at the junction of the Cucumber Gap trail and follow its well-worn single track up and down through peaceful forest to Jake's Creek Trail. Along the way we'll visit the rich cultural history of the area. As you hike, you'll notice the remnants of cottages built by affluent citizens of Knoxville in the 1920's, some of which the park has worked to preserve. Following the hike we will return to our lodge for our first home-cooked dinner of the trip. Cucumber Gap Loop, about 5.5 miles. (B, L, D)

### DAY 3

Our trek today will take us through Eastern Hemlock and deciduous forests as we hike along the Maddron Bald Trail. Built by the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC), the trail begins as an old roadbed and rises consistently, though moderately, throughout its entire length. Albright Grove was named for Horace Albright, who was an early advocate for the park and a director of the National Park Service. The grove that honors him is an awesome remnant of old growth forest, where you can experience the sights, sounds, and feel of this unique forest environment. We'll have plenty of time to stroll among and admire the grand Eastern Hemlocks, silverbells, Fraser magnolias, tulip trees, and other tree species before returning along the Maddron Bald Trail. Mileage: 6.7 miles. (B, L, D)

### DAY 4

Ready to give your legs a break and see a completely different part of the ecosystem? We'll enjoy a delicious breakfast and then onto the white water of the Pigeon River! Although the rapids are large enough to be exciting, the trip is completely appropriate for novice rafters. Returning to Gatlinburg, we'll head over to Bud Ogle's farm and give our legs a stretch by hiking the 1.2-mile nature hike and explore what a typical homestead was like in this part of the country, including a plume for water, a grist mill and 'drive thru' barn. Mileage: 1.2 miles hiking, many miles rafting! (B, L, D)

### DAY 5

Now that we've had time to get acquainted with the park, this morning we'll head to the Visitors Center where we'll learn a whole lot more! With the help of an excellent film, we'll hear about the park, its history and its natural inhabitants and maybe even see a few of the places we've already visited. Then the hiking continues - destination, Laurel Falls. Laurel Falls is one of the most visited spots in the park and for good reason! Not only is it a pleasant walk but also one of the most spectacular falls in the Smokies.

After the falls, we'll head back to our lodge for lunch and a little relaxation. For the afternoon, you can choose your favorite way to enjoy the rest of the day: a hike to Grotto Falls (a moderate 2.6-mile hike to the only 'walk behind' waterfalls in the Smokies) with one of the guides; or, since it is vacation, you might want to just spend a relaxing afternoon back at the lodge, enjoying the porch or hot tub. Who knows - even shopping and local crafts could be on the agenda! Your guides will help you sort out the options and you get where you want to go. Mileage will vary depending on choice made. (B, L, D)

## DAY 6

Today will be spent at the highest part of the park - we're headed for Clingman's Dome and the Appalachian Trail at Newfound Gap! We'll stop first at Clingman's Dome where we'll walk the .5 mile paved 'up' to the Dome. Climbing to the top of the Dome will give us a fabulous view of the entire park as well as an amazing display of fall colors! After enjoying the scenery, we'll make our way to Newfound Gap for more gorgeous scenery and to learn about the founding of the park and the work of the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps). The CCC was a federal work program that operated from 1933 to 1942 in the United States for unemployed men as part of the New Deal. After learning a bit more of the park history, we're going to take a hike on the famous Appalachian Trail! From Newfound Gap we'll head north to Icewater Spring Shelter, an AT shelter for backpackers. Icewater Spring shelter will give us a great spot for lunch with a view. After lunch, we'll head back to the parking lot and make our way back to Gatlinburg and our lodge. We'll have one last chance for that hot tub before getting ready for our last dinner together - out on the town in Gatlinburg! Mileage: .5 - 6 total. Elevation gain/loss: 900/ 900 feet (B, L, D)

## DAY 7

It's our last morning in the Smokies and we'll continue to savor every minute! We'll take our time this morning, enjoy our last breakfast together and the view from the lodge, before making our way, reluctantly back to Knoxville. If you're driving, you can plan to leave by 10 a.m. If you're flying, we'll return you to the Knoxville airport by 11:30am for a flight out after 12:30 pm. (B)

## ADDITIONAL TRIP INFORMATION

### Getting There

If you are flying: The airport to fly into is the McGhee Tyson Airport (TYS) in Knoxville

If you are driving: You can meet the group at either of the two places below: a. Meet at the McGhee Tyson Airport, park your car in the long-term parking facility, and ride with the group to the beginning of the trip. b. Drive to Metcalf Bottoms picnic area, (south side with the outhouses) in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Directions upon request.

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: Exito charges a one-time, non-refundable processing fees of \$50 per passenger.

## Accommodations

On this trip we stay the entire week in a [luxury lodge](#), perched on a mountainside just outside Gatlinburg. There are 12 private rooms (some with king beds and others with Queens) all with private bathrooms. Amenities include a pool table, a covered porch with rocking chairs and a great view, a hot tub, fireplace, and a large dining and living room. **Everyone gets her own bedroom on this trip.** Rooms are assigned by lottery.

If you are coming with someone with whom you would like to share a room and bed, there is a 10% discount (limited to 2 people).

## 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](http://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.](#)