



ADVENTURES
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WILDFLOWERS & WATERFALLS: EXPLORING THE GREAT SMOKIES

Trip Summary

HIGHLIGHTS

- Seeing up to 30 species of wildflowers on any hike
- Rafting a fun section of the Pigeon River (also suitable for women with no experience)
- Visiting Little Greenbrier Community and learning about the people who lived here
- Hiking beautiful trails, and lunch everyday 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, TN

Activities: Hiking

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

Depart: You will be back at the Knoxville airport by 11AM for flights out after 12PM on the last day.

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. Our annual trip is a great way to begin your hiking season. Designed to give you an overview of one of our most treasured National Parks, our trip will give your hiking legs a great spring beginning to the hiking season. We'll see wildflowers and waterfalls, hiking at a leisurely pace to enhance our enjoyment of the scenery, take time to take pictures and identify flowers, and soak those 'winter tired' feet in beautiful pools at the edge of waterfalls. Whether you are intrigued by salamanders or birds, wildflowers or trees, 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. Maximum group size: 12

Rating

This trip is appropriate for any woman who exercises regularly at a moderate level (such as going for 45 minute brisk walks 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. On this trip there is a special emphasis on cultural and natural history and stopping to smell the flowers (literally). **Rating:** [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

This itinerary may be modified based on weather and where the wildflowers are best.

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 2PM. Little Brier Gap Trail, 2.6 miles. Dinner tonight is at our lodge and you'll be treated to a typical southern bar-b-que dinner, complete with hush puppies and corn on the cob! (D)

DAY 2

Our trail today rises at a steady, moderate grade as it passes through a forest of large Eastern Hemlocks and Fraser magnolias and then into a moist, sheltered cove hardwood forest. Well-known for its incredible display of wildflowers in April and May, the forest floor can be carpeted with up to 30 to 40 species of wildflowers. Rich in cultural history as well, Porters Creek trail passes the old Baxter Cabin, stone walls, an old, cantilevered barn and the Owenby Cemetery, all remnants of the time that a thriving community lived here. We will hike to Fern Branch Falls and have lunch before turning back. Porters Creek Trail, about 4 miles. Dinner tonight will begin with appetizers and continue with the first of several homemade meals by your guides, ending with (of course!) dessert! (B, L, D)

DAY 3

Our first stop this morning will be the Sugarland's Visitors Center where we'll take the opportunity to learn more about the park, its history and its natural inhabitants through the orientation film and their natural history museum. Then - back to hiking and the search for wildflowers! Traveling off the beaten path, today's trail leads into a natural limestone sink. White Oak Sink is home to many rare plants, various caves, and a waterfall that flows into a cave, offering unique opportunities to learn about the geology, natural history, and cultural history of the area. Spring wildflowers abound in the sink, coating the trail side with a beautiful variety of colors. Our hike begins on the School House Gap trail, an old roadbed with an easy uphill grade. Shortly we'll turn off the Schoolhouse Gap trail onto the trail to White Oak Sink, an unmaintained trail with occasional steep ascents and descents. After our hike we'll head back to the lodge for some well-deserved relaxation, and - tonight is pizza night! Also well deserved! White Oak Sink, 5.0 miles (B, L, D)

DAY 4

Today our morning will take us to Grotto Falls hike - one of the more spectacular waterfalls in the park and the only one you can actually walk behind! The trail is a moderate 2.6-mile hike through a hardwood cove offering great wildflower spotting as well as views across the valley. After our hike, we will return to our condo for lunch and a few choices. The afternoon is free and there are no bad choices! Your guides will offer the opportunity journey to the highest points of the park -- Newfound Gap (with a short walk on the Appalachian Trail) and Clingman's Dome, at 6,643 feet the highest point on the eastern side of the U.S., to enjoy downtown Gatlinburg, or, since it is vacation, you might want to just spend a relaxing afternoon back at the lodge, enjoying the porch or hot tub. Your guides will help you sort out the options and help you get where you want to go. Or, maybe ice cream is in your afternoon - just an appetizer before another meal at the Lodge. Mileage will vary depending on choices made. (B, L, D)

DAY 5

Ready to give your legs a break and see a completely different part of the ecosystem? We'll enjoy a pancake 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 pay a visit to the historic Bud Ogle's farm where we'll take 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 and a grist mill. Back at the lodge, perhaps the hot tub or just relaxing in rockers on the porch before another homemade dinner! (B, L, D)

DAY 6

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, named for Horace Albright who was an advocate for the park and a director for the National Park Service, is an awesome remnant of old growth forest. Here you will experience the sights, sounds, and feel of this home to ancient trees. 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. We'll return to the lodge with plenty of time to freshen up and head into Gatlinburg to share our last dinner together at one of the many local restaurants. Albright Grove and Maddron Bald Trail, 6.7 miles. (B, L, D)

DAY 7

It's our last morning in the Smokies but 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 back. We'll fit in a visit to Sugarland's Visitors Center for one last chance for any items you may just have to have and even have time to walk the nature trail to Cataract Falls. After that, we reluctantly head to the Knoxville airport. If you're driving, you can plan to leave by 10AM. If you're flying, we'll return you to the Knoxville airport by 11AM for a flight out after 12PM. (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.

Getting Home: The last day of the trip, Day 7, if you're driving, you can plan to leave by 10AM. If you're flying, we'll return you to the Knoxville airport by 11AM for a flight out after 12PM.

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

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 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.](#)