

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

(some are seasonal)

CLAY-SKEET SHOOTING is the newest and fastest growing shotgun sport. [Fowler Farms Sporting Clays](#) is about a mile from our cabins and their course features 11 stations set up on their game preserve in the mountains, woods, and fields of Spring Creek, NC. Safety glasses and ear protection provided at no charge, shotgun rentals and ammunition available for purchase. Practicing safe gun handling is their priority.

DRIVING TOURS (self-guided) Wander around these country roads admiring “barn quilts,” old homesteads, and great mountain vistas! Lots more information and maps can be found in the cabin “welcome” binder.

FISHING Is available within walking distance, on Spring Creek, directly across from Freedom Lane. We don't currently have fishing poles, but you may bring your own. Licenses and bait are available at [Trust General Store](#) 4 miles south of cabins at intersection of NC-209 and NC-63 or [C & H Fishing Supplies](#) 257 Mountain Heights Ave in Hot Springs. Follow NC-209 north into Hot Springs and turn left on US-25/US-70, turn right on Mountain Heights Ave.

Spring Creek runs past our cabins and into the town of Hot Springs. It is a designated NC Mountain Heritage Trout Waters. The creek is stocked abundantly several times each year with Brown, Brook, and Rainbow Trout.

Max Patch Pond is a stocked trout pond (seasonal) located on the right about ½ mile past the parking area at Max Patch Mountain. (See “Hiking” below, for directions.)

The French Broad River also runs through Hot Springs and is accessible from **Murray Branch Recreation Area** (See “Picnic Areas” below) In the 1970s, the NC Wildlife Commission put smallmouth bass and some fingerling muskies into the French Broad River; these along with catfish are now found in abundance. The river is ranked as one of NC's top four best rivers for smallmouth bass.

The **Big Laurel Creek** and **Shelton Laurel Creek** are just five miles north of Hot Springs. **Hickey Fork Creek** (a small tributary of Shelton Laurel Creek) has a rare native population of beautiful Brook Trout!

HIKING (self-guided) Some of our guests' favorite local trails are listed below with more trail information in the cabin binder. Keep in mind, this area is sparsely populated with limited volunteers maintaining the extensive trail systems.

SAFETY FIRST: It is always cooler at higher elevations and the weather can change drastically in just a few hours. You should dress in layers of non-cotton, moisture wicking clothing and always pack a rain proof outer layer. Wear comfortable socks and hiking shoes or boots. You may want to bring a hiking pole.

In a lightweight pack carry some supplies: a map/compass, first aid kit/medications, sunscreen, a pocketknife, a lighter, a whistle, a flashlight, a jacket, safety/emergency blanket, 2-3 quarts of water per person per day, and snacks (nuts or trail mix, protein bars, beef jerky). Remember LEAVE NO TRACE. Carry everything out that you brought in and bury human waste. Wherever you hike, be on the lookout for black bears, Copperheads, and Timber Rattlers!

Max Patch (Bald) offers access to the Appalachian Trail and has incredible 360-degree long-range views of the surrounding mountains. It was cleared in the 1800s and with a summit over 4,600 feet, you can see The Great Smoky Mountains, Mount Mitchell, and into Tennessee. It's a heavily used, popular location for hiking, picnicking, sunrises/sunsets, even weddings!

DIRECTIONS: From the cabins, turn right at end of Freedom Lane, travel South on NC-209 for about 3 miles. Turn right on Caldwell Mountain Road; go over mountain to stop sign. Turn right on Meadow Fork Road, travel approximately 1 ½ miles you'll see a brown sign on your right "National Forest/Max Patch – 5 miles"). Turn Left on Little Creek Road. To avoid a long stretch of gravel road, in 1000 ft turn right on Poplar Gap Road; Poplar Gap Rd dead ends back on Little Creek Rd. Follow Little Creek Rd (road is gravel) to the end. Turn right following Max Patch Road up to the mountain, to a gravel parking lot on the right. There is also a well-stocked trout pond (seasonal) with a large new floating dock located ½ mile on the right past the parking area. NO RESTROOMS

Short Loop Trail follow the trail to the left of the trailhead sign, climbs moderately for 1.4mi and crosses the summit.

Long Loop Trail 2.4mi, hilly, with some obstacles, this loop circles Max Patch Mountain, descending into beautiful rhododendron and meadows with views back up to the top. One section passes by the headwaters of a tiny stream. This trail intersects the AT as well as the Buckeye Ridge trail, following some old roads part of the way around.

Lover's Leap Is a heavily used trail that combines Appalachian Trail (White blaze) and Lover's Leap Trail (Orange blaze) to form a moderate 1.7 mi hike. You'll walk along the French Broad River for about ½ mi then up to a steep rocky ridge via several switchbacks. Lover's Leap Ridge offers numerous overlooks with panoramic views of the French Broad River and the town of Hot Springs. Be careful walking on loose rock near the edge. At the top of the ridge take the orange blaze trail to the left and follow back down to the Silvermine Trailhead parking area.

DIRECTIONS: From Hot Springs drive to the other side of the French Broad River Bridge. Turn left on Silvermine Road, turn left again and follow signs to the Silvermine Trailhead parking area.

Rich Mountain Fire Tower is a moderately used trail to a renovated lookout tower. Long before cell phones, men use to keep a lookout for fires from towers located throughout the rural mountain areas of Western North Carolina and Tennessee.

DIRECTIONS: To reach the tower, from our cabins travel approximately 10 miles north on NC-209 to Hot Springs. Drive straight through Hot Springs and follow for 2.8 miles. NC-209 turns to US 25/70 east. Look for the Appalachian Trail bridge overhead that crosses the highway at Tanyard Gap. Just past the bridge, turn left on the paved side road. Turn left for a small parking area just before road turns left over the highway.

From Tanyard Gap, follow the Appalachian Trail north for 2.4 miles to Rich Mountain (don't cross the bridge over the highway - hike the opposite direction - look for white blazes). The AT enters the forest at a small sign. It's a strenuous uphill hike, gaining about 1,400 feet in elevation. *You can also hike the AT from the town of Hot Springs 5.9 miles to Tanyard Gap: it is a hard trail with a 2,200+ foot elevation gain.

Alltrails.com has lots of information/photos/reviews of many area trails but [Bluff Mountain Outfitters](#), located at 152 Bridge Street in Hot Springs, are *the local experts* for trail suggestions and current conditions.

If you're looking for **guided** day or overnight hikes you can contact [Blue Ridge Hiking Company](#) Email them trips@blueridgehikingco.com or call 828-713-5451 for more info.

HORSEBACK RIDING at [Sandy Bottom Trail Rides](#) 828-649-3464 enjoy a picturesque ride through the scenic mountains and meadows of the Blue Ridge by horseback. Also wagon trips, and buggy rides.

HOT AIR BALLOONING Are you "up" for a thrilling flight experience over the mountains near the Pisgah National Forest and Blue Ridge Mountains? Contact [Asheville Balloon Company](#) 828-707-2992 or see their website for more info.

MOUNTAIN BIKING there are two bike/hike trails in the area, and they are listed in the cabin "welcome" informational binder OR head over to [Bailey Mountain Bike Park](#) (approximately 1 hour away near the town of Mars Hill) a gravity-specific park with intermediate, advanced, and expert trails.

PICNIC AREAS

Murray Branch Recreation Area is popular for picnics, fishing, swimming, canoe and kayak access on the French Broad River. A great spot to stop before or after hiking the **River Ridge Loop**, **Jack Branch Trail**, or exploring **Paint Rock**, as it does have vault toilets, picnic tables, grills. Closed 10pm to 6am, no overnight camping, no alcoholic beverages.

DIRECTIONS: drive approximately 10 miles north toward Hot Springs, go over French Broad River bridge, turn left on Silvermine Road. In 500 feet, turn slightly right onto River Road. Follow River Road for approximately 4 miles along the river. Murray Branch Recreation Area will be on the left.

Rocky Bluff Recreation Area is open Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day and has a picnic area with tables and amphitheater, flush toilets, drinking water, and hiking trails including **Spring Creek Nature Trail** and **Van Cliff Loop**.

DIRECTIONS: head north on NC-209. In about 7 ¼ miles Rocky Bluff will be on your right.

RAFTING and TUBING, ZIP-LINING, and CAYONEERING 20 minutes from our cabins [Hot Springs Rafting Company](#) offers both white-water rafting and calm water tubing. Call them at 843-319-4586.

For an all-day outdoor adventure, plan a rafting, zip-lining, and/or canyoneering trip with [French Broad Adventures](#) located just 45-minutes from our cabins. Make reservations on their website or call 800-570-7238.

SKIING, SNOW BOARDING, and SNOW TUBING activities are available about 45 minutes away at either [Cataloochee Ski Area](#) in Maggie Valley OR [Wolf Ridge Ski Resort](#) in Mars Hill.

WALKING TOURS (self-guided) In downtown Hot Springs. Learn about the fascinating history of Hot Springs. Brochures and more information in our cabin "welcome" binder or at the [Hot Springs NC Welcome Center](#) 106 Bridge Street, Hot Springs NC.

NEARBY TOWNS AND ASHEVILLE

(every effort has been made to provide accurate information)

HOT SPRINGS (pop 580) the Natural Hot Springs were “discovered” in 1778 by settlers, although artifacts found at the springs indicate that the Cherokee Indians used the springs, and believed in their curative powers, many years before colonists arrived. Hot Springs NC drew visitors to its healing waters and lavish resort hotel. When World War I broke out, 2500 German passengers, officers, and crew members from luxury liners held in New York Harbor were brought to Hot Springs. The detainees were warmly welcomed by the local folks and built a village on the grounds of the hotel. After the war, many Germans returned with their families to settle in the area.

Hot Springs has the distinction of being the only North Carolina town that the Appalachian Trail passes through. In fact, the sidewalk IS the trail and has the diamond shaped A.T. markers embedded in the concrete.

ASHEVILLE (pop approx. 93,000) is a small city with fine art galleries, crafts and folk art, eclectic shops, performing arts and music, a thriving night life, casual to fine dining, historic attractions, and museums. In addition to being the home of **George W. Vanderbilt II's Biltmore Estate**, you can also explore the **River Arts District**, the historic **Grove Arcade**, the **Western NC Nature Center**, or the **NC Arboretum**.

With more breweries per capita than any other US city, the craft beer scene in Asheville has exploded to include 26 craft breweries and over 400 varieties, several annual beer festivals, brewery tours, tastings, and more. Check **Asheville Ale Trail** for more information about the many local breweries. Schedule a tour with **Asheville Brews Cruise** or **Asheville Brewery Tours**.

Some of the more well-known places in Asheville for “foodies” include **Bouchon** (4.6* French), **Buxton Hall** (4.3* BBQ), **Cúrate** (4.7* Spanish Tapas), **French Broad Chocolate** (Asheville’s own chocolate factory), **Jargon** (4.8* New American), **Limones** (4.7* Californian-Mexican), **Posana Restaurant** (4.6* American), **The Bull and Beggar** (4.6 *American), **Tupelo Honey Cafe** (4.5* Southern), **White Duck Taco Shop** (4.7* Mexican)

MARSHALL (pop approx. 650) is the **Madison County** seat and is nestled alongside the French Broad River. Walk along Main Street through downtown where you’ll find a mix of restaurants and shops including **Flow** an artist-owned gallery. **Mad Co. Brew House and Marshall Pizza Kitchen** Madison County’s first brewer. The **Old Marshal Jail** which has painstakingly been converted into a hotel with bar, deli and a market. A converted gasoline station is now **Star Diner** serving phenomenal 5-Star meals! **Zuma Coffee** you will see is much more than a coffee shop. **The Sweet Monkey Bakery** offers take and bake meals. Be sure to stop into the 100-year-old family run **Penland & Sons Department Store**.

WAYNESVILLE (pop approx. 10,000) is a beautiful small mountain town in nearby Haywood County. It is close to the **Great Smoky Mountains National Park** and **Cherokee**. Enjoy a stroll in the picturesque downtown area where you will find unique locally owned shops, boutiques, galleries, restaurants, tap rooms and micro-breweries. Waynesville is the home of **Folk moot International Dance and Music Festival**, where musicians and dancers from around the globe perform each summer, and the annual **Apple Harvest Festival** held in October. For more information about the area, you can also check **Visit Smokies - Waynesville**. FREE parking downtown in the parking garage at 151 Branner Avenue, Waynesville. Take the elevator or stairs to the top level and you will be on Main Street.

There are some great restaurants in downtown Waynesville, including **Birchwood Hall Southern Kitchen**, **Boojum Brewery and Tap Room**, **Frog’s Leap Public House**, **The Chef’s Table**, and **The Sweet Onion**.

Mast General Store is where you can find everything from outdoor gear, clothing, shoes, jewelry, pottery, home décor, toys, food and old-fashioned candies!

THINGS TO DO AND SEE

(every effort has been made to provide accurate information)

BILTMORE ESTATE in Asheville, is the largest privately-owned home in the US, with 250 rooms and 8,000 acres. It is open daily and is an incredible place to visit any time of year. Plan to spend a day touring the magnificent home, strolling through the impressive gardens, and miles of walking, hiking, and biking trails. Grab a bite to eat or savor a sit-down meal at one of the eateries on the estate. The Christmas season is spectacular, and runs from early November through early, but be sure to buy those tickets in advance as they often sell out. After your tour of the main house and grounds, head over to ***Antler Hill Village*** for shopping and to the ***Biltmore Estate Winery*** for a complimentary wine tasting (reservations required).

BILTMORE VILLAGE was constructed in the 1890s to house employees of George Vanderbilt's estate and is located near the entrance to the estate. Stroll along the brick-lined sidewalks while you explore the boutique shops, galleries, and restaurants most in historic English cottages. Nearby is ***The Cathedral of All Souls*** built by George Vanderbilt in 1896.

BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY has spectacular overlooks with several entry points nearby including Weaverville, Asheville, Waynesville, and Cherokee NC. A drive along the southern parts of the Blue Ridge Parkway is an opportunity to take it slow and enjoy the amazing vistas! The highest peaks on the parkway are found near Waynesville: Waterrock Knob and Richland Balsam are over 6,000 feet in elevation with picnic areas and hiking opportunities. Be sure you have a full tank of gas as there is limited availability on the parkway. Popular stops along the Parkway include **Grandfather Mountain**-Milepost 305, **Mount Mitchell**-Milepost 355.4, Craggy Gardens-Milepost 367.6, **Folk Art Center**-Milepost 382, **Blue Ridge Parkway Visitor Center**-Milepost 384, **North Carolina Arboretum**-Milepost 393.6

CATALOOCHEE VALLEY is located inside the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, near Maggie Valley NC and was once a thriving Appalachian community. A number of historic buildings still exist that you can explore. There are also several hiking trails. Elk were reintroduced to the Park in 2002 and are one of the biggest attractions. They can be found in the fields near Oconaluftee Village, in Maggie Valley, and the Cataloochee Valley. The elk can be aggressive, particularly during the fall mating season, do not approach them. Cataloochee Valley access is by Cove Creek Road (dirt/gravel). 1 ¼ hour away

CHEROKEE NC is where you can experience early Native American lifestyle, guided tours, craft demos, and cultural dancing at the **Oconaluftee Indian Village** and Visitor Center, a replica of an 18th century Eastern Band of Cherokee community. Learn more about Native American History and Culture at the **Museum of the Cherokee Indian** and check out the gift shops. Watch the drama **Unto these Hills** under the stars at the ***Mountainside Theater***.

CLINGMANS DOME approximately 2 hours away, is the highest point (6,643ft) along the Appalachian Trail, in the state of Tennessee, and in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. From the parking area, the trail to the observation tower is steep, but the 360-degree views will take your breath away! Expect much cooler weather, even in summer. The road up is closed during the winter and at other times when necessary.

GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK was established in 1934 and encompasses over half a million acres and over 800 miles of trails! The park is open year-round, although some roads to the park may close temporarily due to winter storms. Entrance to the park is free. To get to the southern gateway, **Oconaluftee Visitor Center**, from I-40 West, take US-19 to US-441 to the park's southern entrance near Cherokee. 1194 Newfound Gap Rd, Cherokee, NC 28719

HISTORY the **Rural Heritage Museum** is located on the campus of Mars Hill University and houses artifacts relevant to the history and culture of the Southern Appalachian area. Of special interest is the exhibit: A Fountain of Youth in the Southern Highlands: A History of Hot Springs, North Carolina. Open Thursday – Sunday 11-5pm. Closed major holidays.

MINGUS MILL is a half-mile north of the [Oconaluftee Visitor Center](#). Built in 1886, this historic grist mill uses a water-powered turbine instead of a water wheel to power all the machinery in the building. Located at its original site, Mingus Mill stands as a tribute to the test of time.

MOUNT MITCHELL is THE highest point east of the Mississippi at 6,684 feet and was North Carolina's first state park. Its easily accessible observation deck leads the eye to unmatched views. A museum explains the mountain's cultural and natural history, and its trail network allows visitors to explore short hiking opportunities near the summit and more challenging ones adjacent to wilderness areas. Always 10-15 degrees cooler. Closed Christmas Day. Hours vary seasonally. No admission fees. 2 hours away

PAINT ROCK near Hot Springs may be North Carolina's best-known example of an American Indian pictograph. Testing has indicated that the images are 5,000 years old, and it is believed the Native Americans created these rock art sites, on their way to the hot springs, as a place for prayer and contemplation. Indigenous peoples, early settlers, and tourists in later years believed that the naturally hot water springs possessed healing powers. Although the rock paintings are hard to see because they are faded--having been damaged by weather and soot from campfires—the history of this sight is amazing.

DIRECTIONS: In Hot Springs look for the historical marker, located next the French Broad River Bridge. Turn left on Silvermine Road. In 500 ft stay right (turns into River Road). Follow River Road (approximately five miles). The road runs beside the river. Paint Rock will be on your right near the end of the road.

ST JUDE'S CHAPEL OF HOPE on NC-63 behind the Trust General Store at the intersection of NC-209 in Trust. Open always. Go in and read the inspirational story of this quaint non-denominational chapel.

WHEELS THROUGH TIME MOTORCYCLE MUSEUM in Maggie Valley near Waynesville was featured on The History Channel. The 38,000 sq. ft museum houses hundreds of rare vintage motorcycles, automobiles, and memorabilia.

WINERY/VINEYARD Addison Farms Vineyard and Winery is about 30 minutes away heading toward Asheville. A family owned and operated vineyard and winery offering tastings, tours, and sales.

More info to come...