

# Day Hiking in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park

October 22, 2022 - October 30, 2022 (Trip# 2269)



Photo Credit: Warren Bielenberg, Great Smoky Mountains National Park Service

We are glad that you are interested in this exciting trip! Please read the information carefully, and then contact us if you have specific questions about this trip: Leader: Annemarie Langan, 508.932.1798, [amlhikeamc@gmail.com](mailto:amlhikeamc@gmail.com); or Associate Leader: John English, 508.944.6650, [englishjre@gmail.com](mailto:englishjre@gmail.com).

**Summary:** The Great Smoky Mountains National Park is the most visited National Park in America. Mid October through early November is the prime foliage season in the Smokies. The drives through the park, as well as the hikes themselves, will encompass some of the best views in the park. The Appalachian trail runs through the Great Smoky Mountains NP, including its highest point at Clingmans Dome. There are 16 peaks in the park over 6,000 feet. The park is home to deer, black bears, and elk among many other animals.

We will fly into McGhee Tyson airport in Knoxville, TN to rent cars and begin our journey. We will meet at the airport and drive to Gatlinburg, TN where our hotel is situated and where we will stay for the next eight nights. Most days we will hike in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park where we will be treated to waterfalls, cascades, and beautiful scenery from vistas and some mountain summits. We will start most of our day hikes entering from the Sugarlands park entrance but will target one hike in the Cades Cove area of the park. We will have one non-hiking day in the middle of the week to visit cultural and historical sites in the park or you can recharge in the mountain resort town of Gatlinburg.



Photo credit: John English



# Daily Itinerary

Following is the daily itinerary which we plan to follow. Note that the hikes may be changed or days swapped to take advantage of the best weather. (mi. = round trip mileage, ft. = feet of elevation gain). On the full days of hiking, the hiking time per day will average in the 7 to 9 hours time frame counting breaks, lunch and photography stops.

## **Day 1, SAT 10/22:**

Fly to Knoxville, TN where we will rent cars. We will then drive to Gatlinburg, check into our hotel, and shop for lunch supplies for the week.



Photo credit: John English

## **Day 2, SUN 10/23:**

We'll begin our hiking by going to one of the park's signature hikes. We will take the Alum Cave trail to the top of Mt LeConte. This is a 10.6 mile hike with almost 3,000 feet of elevation gain to the summit at 6,594 (taller than Mt Washington). We will hike right under Arch Rock, a natural arch along the trail. We will have vistas at Inspiration Point and at the summit. We will also pass by LeConte Lodge, the only lodging option inside of the park.

## **Day 3, MON 10/24:**

Today we will visit the Sugarlands Visitor Center as well as stop at the Newfound Gap viewpoint. We will also hike a couple of shorter trails with magnificent views at their tops. We will hike the 1 mile round-trip to Clingmans Dome, the highest point in the park at 6,643 feet. This hike will have just under 500 feet of elevation gain. We will also hike the Chimney Tops Trail. This trail is 4.5 miles RT but has 1,358 feet of elevation gain with some spectacular views along the way.

**Day 4, TUES 10/25:**

Today we will be planning to summit Mt Cammerer from the Low Gap Trailhead. This is an 11.1 mile hike with 3,045 feet of elevation gain. Part of our journey will also be along the Appalachian Trail. The summit has stunning views from its rocky outcrop. There is also a stone firetower at the top, which allows for 360 panoramic views.

Photo credit: Sally Britton

**Day 5, WED 10/26:**

The plan for today, after 3 straight days of hiking, will be to spend the day visiting some historical and cultural sites, or just enjoying the local Gatlinburg attractions. Dinner on this day is on your own account.

Option 1. Drive to Cherokee, NC. Stop at the Museum of the Cherokee Indian (\$12), the Mountain Farm Museum, and Mingus Mill.

Option 2. Stay in Gatlinburg. Self guided day. Attractions include Aerial Tramway, Space Needle, Skyline, aquarium, brewery/distillery, local shops, etc.



Photo credit: Warren Bielenberg, Great Smoky Mountains NPS



**Day 6, THUR 10/27:**

Today we will hike up to Gregory Bald on the Gregory Ridge Trail. This hike is in the Cades Cove area and will require 1 hr and 30 minutes of driving time to get to the trailhead. The hike itself is 11.3 miles with 3,000 feet of elevation gain. The top of Gregory Bald is actually a 10 acre grassy meadow with outstanding views towards Fontana Lake, Thunderhead Mountain, and Clingmans Dome. This will be a longer day and may require an early departure and/or dinner may be later due to the return drive from the trailhead.

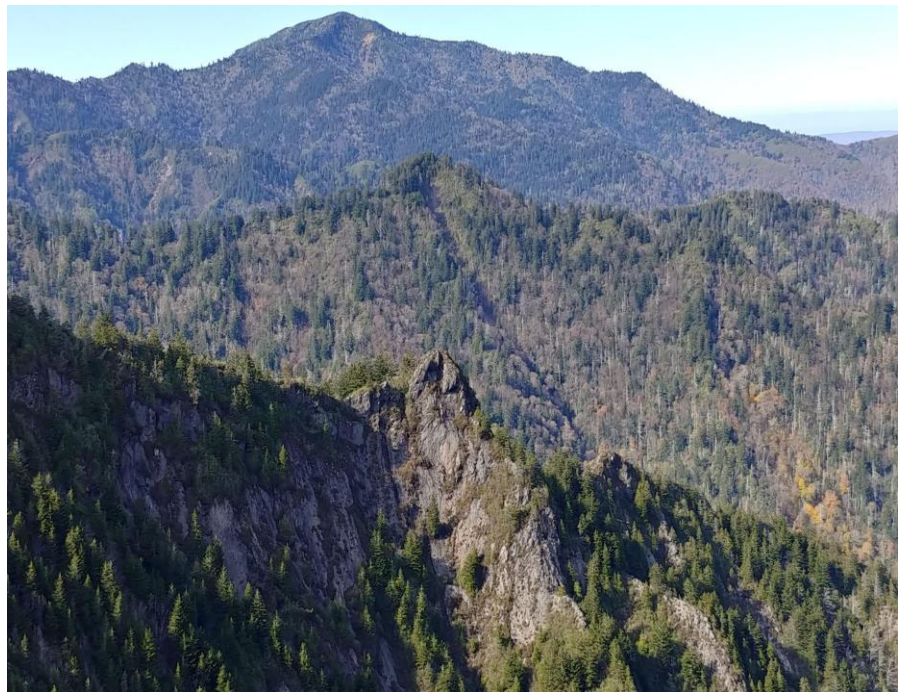
**Day 7, FRI 10/28:**

We will get up bright and early today to beat the crowds to one of the most popular hikes in the park, Laurel Falls. We will follow a paved trail to the 80 foot high Laurel Falls for some great views and photos. We also plan to split the group and traverse from separate begin and end points. This will allow us to add the Walker Sisters Place and the Little Greenbriar School to our hike. We will end up with 8.7 miles of hiking and 2,067 feet of elevation gain.

**Day 8, SAT 10/29:**

Our last day of hiking will be to Charlies Bunion. The trailhead is at Newfound Gap. The hike is 8.6 miles long with 1,981 feet of elevation gain. Panoramic views are available at many points along the way. For portions of this hike, we will be above 6,000 feet. We will have views of Mount LeConte and Myrtle Point. We will be following the Appalachian Trail for this hike. We may also add the Jump Off Trail spur for an additional vantage point on our return trip. After the hike, we will enjoy a farewell dinner together in Gatlinburg.

Photo Credit: John English

**Day 9, SUN 10/30:**

We will have breakfast, pack up, depart the hotel and drive to McGhee Tyson airport for our return flights home.

While the itinerary in this prospectus is what the leaders have planned at the time of writing, various factors may require changes for reasons of safety, transportation or lodging availability, and unforeseeable circumstances (such as weather considerations, natural disasters in areas to be visited, or governmental or ranger recommendations). The leaders reserve the right to make such changes as necessary, both before and during the trip.

## AMC Mission

AMC AdventureTravel trips are run in a manner supportive of and consistent with conservation, recreational and educational principles and the mission of the Club.

The leaders will encourage participant conduct that is consistent with Leave No Trace environmental and conservation principles and local regulations.

## Participant Profile

You should enjoy traveling and be comfortable traveling in areas which are unfamiliar to you. You should recognize that you may find yourself in closer quarters or be less comfortable than you are used to at home. You should make it a priority to help others on the trip and contribute to their having a great time. If you do that, we guarantee that you will have a great time.

This is a moderate / vigorous (4-5) hike geared towards the outdoors adventurer and experienced hiker. You must be able to hike up to 12 miles per day at a moderate pace with elevation gains between 1,500 feet and 3,100 feet, while carrying enough equipment to keep you safe in the event of bad weather or injury. While average high temps are expected to be in the mid-50s, colder weather is possible. Rain is also a distinct possibility. Participants will need to bring and be prepared to use some cold weather clothing and gear. An itemized list will be made available to confirmed participants. To see more about the rating system, click on this link:

[AMC Trip Ratings](#)

Standard AMC Adventure Travel Terms and Conditions can also be found here:

[Adventure Travel Standard Terms and Conditions](#)

# Experience & Risks

This trip is designed for experienced hikers. On the day hikes, you must be able to hike an average of 10 miles per day at a moderate pace easily, with moderate elevation gains, while carrying enough equipment to keep you safe in the event of bad weather or injury.

People wishing to participate in this trip must have previous hiking experience at the intermediate level or higher. Although the hiking will be at a moderate pace, this is not a trip for beginners or people who have not hiked during the past year. This trip is not the right time for getting into shape. You should already be in good physical condition by the time you arrive in Knoxville.

Hiking with a pack, up mountains above 6,000 feet is physically demanding, especially for people who generally reside at or near sea level. Although the elevations for the most part are not high enough for contracting altitude sickness, the combination of physical exertion and lower oxygen levels will require that we pace ourselves and pay close attention to proper nutrition and hydration.

When you participate in this activity you should be both physically and mentally prepared and equipped with the appropriate gear. You should always be aware of the risks involved and conduct yourself accordingly. We are not responsible for your safety: you are.

Bears are rarely a problem in the Great Smokies, but we will review safe practices for hiking in bear country before we start our hikes.

Nonetheless, it may happen on any trip that a trip member is or becomes unable to participate in one or more of the planned activities. Leaders in their sole judgment have the right and obligation to refuse participation in any activity to any group member for reasons of group or individual safety. Illness, injury or lack of proper gear or fitness for a particular activity are examples of some conditions that might result in a participant being unable to perform one or more activities. Leaders may try to find a substitute activity for the trip member, but this may not always be possible.

Prior to your being accepted as a participant in this trip, you will be asked to discuss your capabilities and experience with us. We may also request references to confirm your fitness level and suitability for participating in trip activities. Please do not be offended by our questions.

# Safety

As participant safety is a high priority for all AMC-sponsored events, procedures and policies have been developed to attempt to limit participant risk. Participants are expected to work with volunteer leaders to reduce risks and make the experience successful for all. Participants should be aware that there are risks associated with outdoor adventure activities, including but not limited to adverse weather and environmental conditions, remote locations of our trips and camps, and transportation in vehicles, on foot, by boat, or on a bike. When you apply for acceptance onto a trip, please carefully read and sign the *Adventure Travel Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risks and Release and Indemnity Agreement* and call if you have any questions.

**National Park Rules: We will obey the rules and regulations of the National Parks that we will be hiking in.**



Photo Credit: John English



# Trip Price

The trip cost is \$1,900 per person for shared occupancy for AMC members. The cost for Non-members is \$2,000. To join AMC (2021 pricing \$50 individual, \$75 family) click [here](#).

The price for this excursion is based on quotes or estimates obtained at the time the trip was planned. The final price of the trip will be adjusted in accordance with the best final arrangements we can make. Any savings we achieve, as well as any cost increases we incur, will be shared by trip participants. Our cost estimates are conservative, and so a refund is more likely than a price increase. All Adventure Travel trips are run on a non-profit basis and refunds, if any, are issued after the trip's financial accounting is complete.

In accordance with AMC policy, you are subsidizing the leaders' costs. Beyond this, the leaders are not allowed to realize any profit from this excursion. The trip price includes an AMC overhead fee to cover the administrative expenses of offering Adventure Travel excursions. The trip fee also includes emergency medical and evacuation insurance coverage, which is required by the AMC. It does not include insurance for travel delay, interruption, or cancellation, or for baggage loss. If these possibilities concern you, individual travel insurance is recommended. More information about included emergency medical and evacuation insurance, as well as about optional and recommended travel insurance, will be provided to participants in their formal acceptance letters, which will be sent out when the trip has the required number of accepted applicants.

A deposit of \$1,000 is due with the application. This should be made out to the Appalachian Mountain Club and mailed to: Annemarie Langhan, 484 Woodcreek Rd, Bethlehem, CT 06751. The balance of \$900 is due by June 1, 2022.

## Includes:

- Eight nights of lodging.
- Dinner for seven nights, starting with dinner on October 22, 2022, excluding alcoholic beverages.
- Hotel breakfast for the eight nights spent at a Gatlinburg Hotel.
- Car rental and gas.
- Park Entrance fees.
- Emergency medical & evacuation insurance coverage.

## Does not include:

- Airfare. The trip leaders will advise you and will facilitate group travel, but the purchase of tickets is the responsibility of the participant. At this time, we estimate that the cost for a round trip ticket between the US East Coast and Knoxville will be in the range of \$300 to \$500.

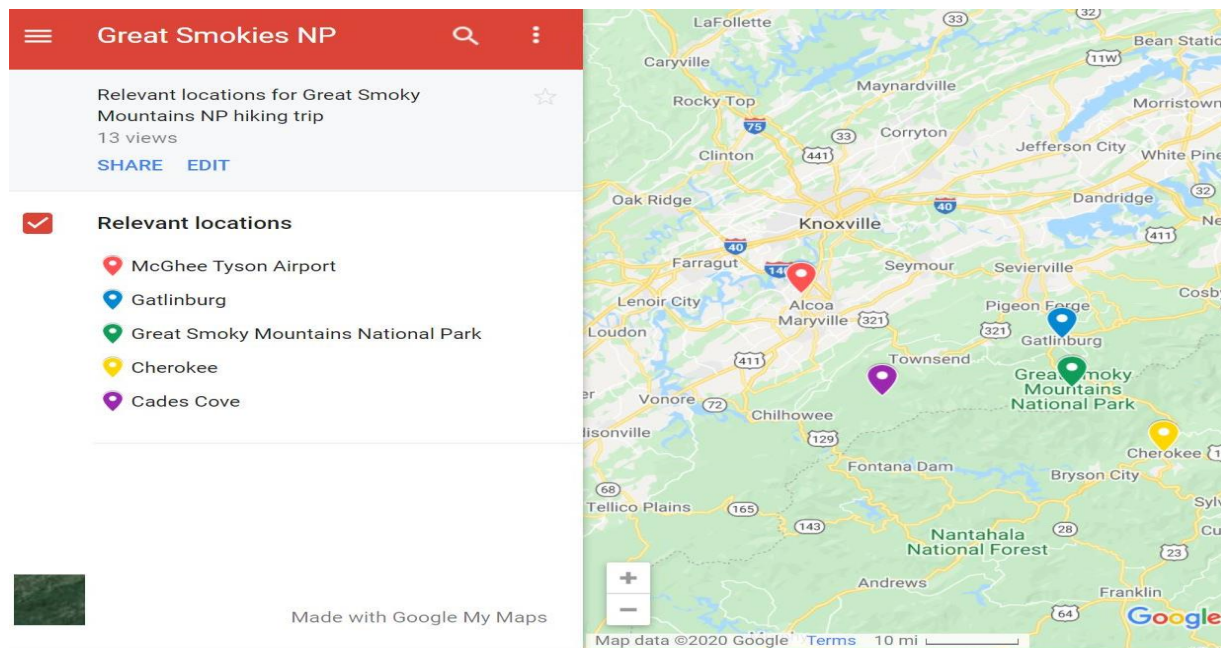
- Lunches, beverages, trail snacks, personal items, optional activities, & incidental expenses.
- Dinner on Wednesday, October 26, 2022.
- Entrance fees to any museum or attractions visited on hike free day.
- Travel insurance.

## Accommodations / Meals / Transportation / Gear

We will spend all nights in a Gatlinburg, TN hotel. We will drive to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park each day for our scheduled hikes.

Our hotel will be a non-smoking hotel, with free WiFi and a hot breakfast. The rooms will all be 2 Queen beds. All solo applicants will be assigned a room with another participant of the same gender.

Dinners will be at local restaurants. Breakfast in Gatlinburg will be provided by the hotel. Most days we will plan to leave the hotel around 7:30 AM. During the trip, all lunches are the participant's responsibility. All lunches will be "trail lunches," which should be prepared by the participants with pre-purchased food. We will visit grocery stores so that participants may purchase food when we arrive in Gatlinburg and then resupply as needed during the trip. There are a variety of supermarkets and other food stores in the city proper.



Some participants will be asked to share in the driving, which requires a check of your driving record. Please inform the leaders if you are willing to do this. A gear list will be provided.

# Registration

We expect a group size of 16 people, including the 2 leaders. This trip is likely to fill quickly. If you are interested, you should apply as soon as possible. When registration is complete, we will send all participants the names, addresses, and phone numbers of all those going on the trip. A waiting list will be established when the trip is full.

To apply, you must download, complete, and submit the applications documents which consist of:

- Application
- Confidential medical form
- Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risk and Release form
- Supplemental Medical Questionnaire (optional)

The online application is available at this link: [Apply here](#)

The remaining documents (including a COVID Release form) can be found here: [Forms](#)

You will not be accepted, and your check will not be deposited, until the leaders have determined by telephone conversation with you that you and the trip are a good match. Deposit checks from waitlisted applicants will not be cashed until a spot is available, the applicant is accepted onto the trip, and they have confirmed their continued interest.

## Participant Cancellation Policy

The AMC Adventure Travel cancellation policy is based on the fact that your cancellation may not raise the cost to the other participants or to the leaders. Once you are notified the trip is declared to run as scheduled, the minimum cancellation fee is (\$200). If actual costs (expenses already incurred on your behalf and any unavoidable future expenses that will be incurred as a result of your registration and cancellation) are higher, they will be assessed instead, unless they can be applied toward another acceptable participant. Should the leaders be able to replace you, you may be charged a reduced penalty. This will generally not be determined until after the trip. Failure to make trip payment(s) in a timely manner will be considered a cancellation.

On rare occasions AMC Adventure Travel may need to cancel all or a portion of a trip due to force majeure [e.g., terrorism, local health conditions, natural disaster, changes in local regulatory environment, etc.] In the event of such a cancellation, your trip fee will be refunded less any trip expenses already incurred plus any non-cancellable future trip expenditures. AMC Adventure Travel is not responsible for additional expenses incurred by you in preparing for the trip (including non-refundable air tickets, visa fees, gear or medical expenses, etc).



Participants are responsible for their own airline tickets & other external expenses. Most airlines will not give refunds for cancellations; sometimes they issue coupons for a future trip with an administrative charge and an expiration date. Trip cancellation insurance is advised—policy information will be supplied to all participants.

## Leaders

### Annemarie Langan

Annemarie spent years traveling in her career as a retail buyer with TJX cos. As a result, she developed an insanely crazy travel bug! Now she enjoys traveling for pleasure and leading Adventure Travel Trips. She is a hiking and backpack leader for her local Worcester AMC Chapter as well as a volunteer for AMC in the White Mountain Huts, Highland Center, and Pinkham Notch. She is also a leader for AMC August Camp. She is certified for Advanced Wilderness First Aid via NOLS, and CPR via American Red Cross. Annemarie can be reached at 508.932.1798 or [amlhikeamc@gmail.com](mailto:amlhikeamc@gmail.com).



### John English

John co-led this trip in 2021. He is a four-season day hike and trip leader for the AMC NH Chapter. He has completed the NH 48, the NH 48 in winter, and the NE 67. He is now working his way through the NE 111 and NE 67 in winter. John has led at AMC August Camp and has taught at the AMC NH Cardigan Lodge series. He has been hiking in over 40 of the US National Parks and Monuments. Contact John at 508.944.6650 or [englishjre@gmail.com](mailto:englishjre@gmail.com)