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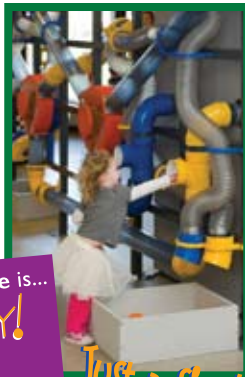
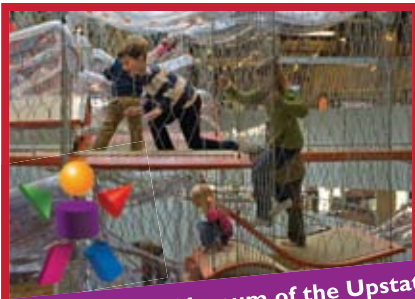
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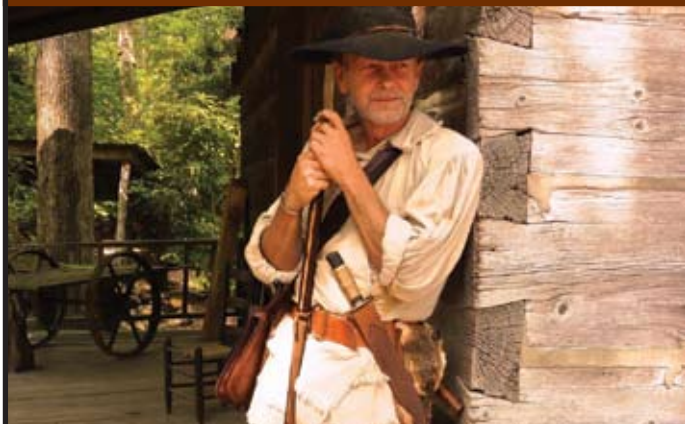
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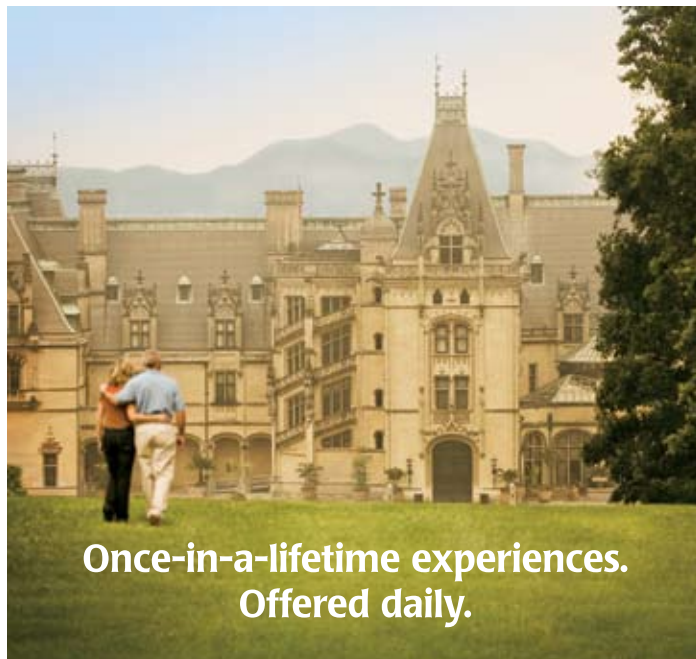
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getaway

Asheville's field guide to regional escapes

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Set your sights high, via balloon or glider or high mountain peaks. Cozy up to the fireplace at a B&B, venturing out to explore a small town or canoe across a lake (or not leaving at all). Get your hands on a good rock, and climb on up. Navigate the wilderness on a geocaching adventure. Or pop your tent at the nearest campground and roast some marshmallows. You decide.

Cover design by Emily Busey

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area map



NW Northwest

Unwind in Hot Springs, shop in Seveirville, slow down in Maggie Valley and jam in Knoxville.



NE Northeast

Visit Black Mountain, escape to Little Switzerland, check out the gorge at Linville and boulder in Boone.



SW Southwest

Explore waterfalls in Brevard, relax in Flat Rock, go fly fishing in Highlands, and get historical in Saluda.



SE Southeast

Beach it at Lake Lure, venture to Cowpens, be victorious at Kings Moutnain and make friends in Tryon.

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GETTING HIGH

Airborne adventures in the Land of Sky



Float like a butterfly (or a balloon) over WNC

PHOTO COURTESY OF PHYLLIS BARNARD, ASHEVILLE HOT AIR BALLOONS

BY JAKE FRANKEL

It's not called the Land of the Sky for nothing. Western North Carolina's numerous lofty peaks provide hiking or driving near the heavens. But there are plenty less conventional ways of getting high – safely and legally.

A pair of new zipline services let locals live out their Tarzan fantasies easier than ever before: In West Asheville, **Asheville Zipline Canopy Adventures** offers views of the surrounding mountains and the downtown skyline; the company maintains other Southeast courses (Chatooga Ridge in S.C., Pigeon River in Tenn. and the Nantahala Gorge in N.C.). Meanwhile, the routes at **Navitat Canopy Adventures** in nearby Barnardsville whisk participants through a secluded cove of Appalachian forest. Opened in 2010, Navitat's series of big sky bridges and platforms got it named by *USA Today* as of the best zipline tours in the nation.

But don't linger in the trees.

Asheville Hot Air Balloons provides beautiful sunrise tours from its site in Candler seven days a week, weather permitting.

In East Tennessee, **Chilhowee Gliderport** tours the skies in small, non-motorized planes, harnessing the power of the region's natural wind currents and mountain updrafts to keep you aloft.

For a lift that's not quite as dependent on the whims of Mother Nature, drive to Pigeon Forge, Tenn., for a sightseeing via helicopter or plane (see the list below).

Or visit **Skydive East Tennessee**: Try a tandem adventure with a trained guide or take classes to learn how to take the plunge yourself.

If that's a bit too much altitude, the massive indoor fan at **Flyaway Indoor Skydiving** in Pigeon Forge removes the bonds of gravity. And the **Appalachian Amusement Center** in Lake Junaluska, N.C., has an outdoor wind machine that enables flight without the fear of jumping out of a plane or falling from the sky.

Naturally, you can play Ben Franklin (without the lightning) and just go fly a kite. **X**

Jake Frankel can be reached at jakefrankel@gmail.com.

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 avl.mx/4p; (866) 319-8870

NE Navitat Canopy Tours

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 navitat.com

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 ashevillehotairballoons.com
 (828) 667-9943

SW A Smokies Plane Ride

Gatlinburg-Pigeon Forge Airport,
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Admission Prices vary; call ahead
 skydiveet.com; (865) 223-5155

SW Chilhowee Gliderport

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 chilhowee.com
 (423) 338-2000 or (423) 506-9015

SW Scenic Helicopter Tours

Ticket Office: 2174 Parkway,
 Pigeon Forge, Tenn.
 Heliport: Sevierville, Tenn.
Admission Varies.
 flyscenic.com; (877) 428-6929

SW Flyaway Indoor Skydiving

Pigeon Forge, Tenn.
Admission First flight: \$34; repeat
 flight: \$22. Family deal: \$155 (up to
 five flyers for a 15 minute session).
 flyawayindoorskydiving.com
 (877) 293-0639

SW Appalachian Amusement Center

Waynesville, N.C.
Admission Prices vary; call ahead
 verticalwind.com
 (828) 926-9463

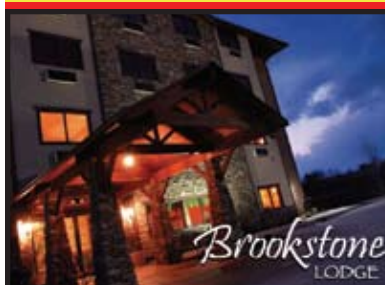
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(NOT SO) ROUGHING IT

Snowbird Mountain Lodge



Still waters running deep = great canoeing

PHOTO COURTESY OF SNOWBIRD MOUNTAIN LODGE

BY MACKENSY LUNSFORD

Within two hours or so of Asheville (and in the city itself), you're bound to find a cozy retreat that helps you get away from it all and unwind. Some are grand and luxurious, like the **Grove Park Inn**; some are rustic and quaint and surrounded by the wild, like the **Treehouse Cabins** in Hot Springs.

Less than two hours west, the **Snowbird Mountain Lodge** offers the best of these worlds. The oldest part of the lodge was built in 1940, and the stone-and-timber inn rests on 100 very hike-worthy, picturesque acres high in the Santeetlah Gap on the southern edge of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

It offers guests many reasons to get out and explore — whitewater rafting on the Cheoah or Nantahala Rivers, world-class hiking and biking in the Nantahala National Forest, a famous motorcycle touring route (local Mini Cooper clubs like the 318 curves on “The Dragon’s Tail” too), a lake (Santeetlah) and one of the country’s last remaining stands of old-growth forest (Joyce Kilmer Memorial). But the inn has a way of making you relax and stay a while.

“A lot of times, once people get here, they end up [not] wanting to leave,” says Kala Matheson, a concierge at Snowbird Mountain Lodge in Robbinsville, N.C. It’s easy to see why.

There is, for example, the charming library that innkeeper and owner, Robert Rankin, has stacked with numerous volumes covering topics from presidential history to Appalachian poetry (perhaps you’ll find Joyce Kilmer’s “I don’t think I’ll ever see / A poem as lovely as a tree”). A large picture window allows guests to recline in a comfy chair and drink in the view of the distant mountains, while woodpeckers and finches flit busily in the old-growth trees beyond the observation deck. With a cozily burn-

ing stacked-stone fireplace that’s warmed the room for decades (Snowbird is listed on the National Register of Historic Places) and various places to nest with a cup of coffee, it may be hard to tear yourself away.

The rooms are well-appointed, particularly those of the Chestnut Lodge, with private hot-tub decks affording breathtaking mountain views. Add to that the world-class cuisine orchestrated by chef Sarah Zell in a rustic dining room that boasts an adjacent fireside bar, plus the genuine Southern hospitality the staff exudes, and you have a formula for relaxation that’s drawn guests for 60 years — and earned Snowbird Mountain Lodge a well-deserved spot in the Select Registry for Distinguished Inns of North America. **X** For a B&B sampler, see the listings below.

Mackensy Lunsford can be reached at mlunsford@mountainx.com.

A B&B SAMPLER

SW **Snowbird Mountain Lodge**
(See the description above.)
snowbirdlodge.com
(828) 712-9910

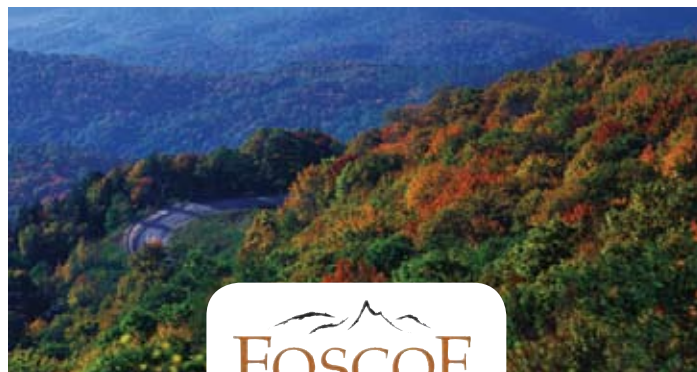
The grounds cover 250 acres at 5,000 feet and offer an outdoor hot tub, croquet, badminton, indoor racquetball and a wallyball court.
theswag.com
(828) 926-0430

SW **The Swag Country Inn**

Located near Waynesville and just 30 miles west of Asheville, The Swag Country Inn is an intimate hideaway on the edge of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

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A B&B SAMPLER *continued*

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SE Willow Wind Cabins

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ashevillecabins.com
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SE Highland Lake Inn

In a country setting in Flat Rock, N.C., Highland Lake Inn features 26 wooded acres complete with a serene lake and organic gardens. The Inn's restaurant, Season's, offers award-winning fine dining and a comprehensive wine list.
hlinn.com
(828) 635-5101

SW High Hampton Inn

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, High Hampton Inn in Cashiers, N.C., has welcomed guests since 1922. Situated among 1,400 acres in the Blue Ridge Mountains, the inn offers 116 guest rooms and suites and a selection of cottages. The resort also offers golf, tennis, a private 35-acre lake and numerous hiking trails.
highhamptoninn.com

SW River Lodge Bed & Breakfast

Built with 100-year-old hand-hewn logs taken from old barns and cabins in the Smoky Mountains region, the River Lodge Bed and Breakfast rests on six acres nestled in a bend in the Tuckasee River. *Food & Wine Magazine* says "this Smoky Mountain

B&B brims with rustic character."
riverlodge-bb.com
(877) 384-4400

NE Buffalo Tavern

Located in Ashe County about 40 minutes from Boone and Blowing Rock and dating back to 1872, the historic Buffalo Tavern Bed & Breakfast once served wine and corn liquor from its own vineyards and corn fields. Check out the Arts District in the town, West Jefferson, N.C.
buffalotavern.com
(877) 9080

NE Banner Elk Inn

The town's oldest inn (it evolved from the historic The Shawneehaw Inn), Banner Elk Inn offers the best of past and present, Southern hospitality, and cabins that complement the main house.
bannerelkinn.com
(888) 487-8263

SW Eight Gables Inn

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eightgables.com
(865) 430-3344

NW Mountain Magnolia Inn & Retreat

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mountainmagnoliainn.com
(800) 914-9306

NW Treehouse Cabins

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hotspringtreehousecabins.com
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GRAB IT

Bouldering in WNC and beyond



Hold tight and don't look down.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CLIMBMAX

BY CAITLIN BYRD

Forget the gear, and leave your ropes and fears at home when you decide to grab life by the boulders. Bouldering is a minimalistic form of rock climbing, but beware that this is not an activity for the weak of heart or body. You'll need to chalk up those hands, wear some sticky-soled climbing shoes and be prepared to fall. Yes, falling can and does hurt. That's why you should get yourself a mattress-like foam mat, known affectionately as a crash pad. These can get pretty pricey and cost more than \$100, so it's better to boulder with a friend who already has one.

Once you've got your gear, head to Boone. In the summer months, **Grandmother Mountain** is where you'll want to go. Higher elevation means cooler temperatures, and rhododendrons and trees near boulders means shade. But the Boone Boulders also offer climbers more than 100 problems — routes on boulders — which is a very good problem to have.

However, if you really want to put your bouldering skills to the test, travel 7.5 miles south of Boone and face **Hound Ears**. Hound Ears is the first site of the Triple Crown Bouldering Series, an annual competition held in the Southeast that raises money for the Southeastern Climbers Coalition and the Carolina Climbers Coalition.

If you want to stay closer to Asheville, drive to Brevard and check out the north side of **Looking Glass Rock**. The 500-foot white granite dome is a must for beginners and avid climbers alike because its variety of rock climbing formations.

Afraid to start your bouldering adventures in the great outdoors? Or need expert lessons and advice? Looking for a guide to take you on a trip? Venture to downtown Asheville's **ClimbMax Climbing Center**. The facility boasts a traverse that is more than 250 feet long with more than 100 boulder-specific problems. Once you're feeling ready to boulder, ask them about their private guide service and request to rent a crash pad. Owner Stuart Cowles and staff have 18 years of experience helping

folks in the region and will do their best to keep you on the rock (and not falling).

If you prefer to boulder by staying firmly rooted to the ground, big rocks worth hiking to or viewing are **Blowing Rock** near Boone, N.C.; **Table Rock** in upstate South Carolina; **Looking Glass** and **Pilot Rock** near Brevard, N.C.; and the geologic features at **South Mountains State Park** south of Morganton, N.C. (and that's just a few). **X**

A ROCKY SAMPLER

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diamondbrand.com
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NE Footsloggers

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SW Brevard Rock Gym

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PHOTO BY BILL RHODES

BY BILL RHODES

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And you don't need a lot of "stuff" to go camping — only your own sense of fun.

If you want to camp, you have to know where to go, right? Fortunately we live in an area that has many options. So narrow it down. What do you want? You want to stay with Uncle Jim and Aunt Martha in their big motor home, or roll out your vintage Palomino pop-up camper? Go for it. You can do that right in Asheville, minutes from downtown, the Biltmore Estate, and West Asheville at the **Bear Creek RV Park**. (avl.mx/bs). Nearby, the Lake Powhatan campground offers a variety of options for RVs, pop-ups and old-fashioned tents (avl.mx/bt). And it's got really nice showers.

On the more primitive side, you can roll out a blanket out of everyone's way, prop your head and feet up on rocks, and still have a great camping adventure. In the **Pisgah National Forest**, which surrounds Asheville, there is camping for every taste. (avl.mx/bu). Other nearby national forests include the **Nantahala** (far western North Carolina, avl.mx/prp7), **Cherokee** (east Tennessee, fs.usda.gov/cherokee), **Chatthoochee-Oconee** (Georgia, fs.usda.gov/main/conf) and **Sumter** (northwest South Carolina; fs.usda.gov/scnfs). For more options, see the state and national park listings in the back of this guide.

Beast of burden

You can, of course, go whole hog and carry everything you need to live on your back. That's backpacking, and it can really take you away. While camping and backpacking may look the same at the camp level, when you have to carry water, food, shelter and your comfort items, things get pretty heavy

pretty fast (unless you want to spend a lot to get light stuff — the lighter the gear, the more it costs).

If you have never done it, take some time and learn. There is no shortage of books and websites to help you.

Here in the Asheville area alone, you can join the **Asheville Hiking Club** (meetup.com/Asheville-hiking), visit such outfitters as **Diamond Brand** (diamondbrand.com) on Hendersonville Road in Arden, **Black Dome** (blackdome.com/) on Tunnel Road in Asheville, or **REI** (rei.com/stores/117) in Biltmore Town Square

High-tech hide-and-seek

Geocaching is a worldwide phenomenon, a mixture of old-time hide-and-seek, satellite technology, and the Web. Basically, someone hides some stuff (like plastic toys) out in the woods, publishes the latitude and longitude on geocaching.com, and other people use their GPS to find it and leave a note. It is fun, and hugely popular in WNC. X

Bill Rhodes can be reached at brhodes@mountainx.com.

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Detail from St. James the Greater, Pompeo Batoni.
 From the Bob Jones University Collection. (12292) 3/12

WATERFALL CENTRAL

Get your feet wet



Be the waterfall (and tweet about it later).

PHOTO BY ZEN SUTHERLAND

BY CAITLIN BYRD

Coming from the eastern part of the state, it took me a while to realize it's OK to swallow the water. Unlike the salty ocean spray of the coast, mountain water does not result in a violent coughing fit when ingested. However, I didn't know that until I sat beneath **Hooker Falls** in DuPont State Forest.

It was the last day of summer, the last day of freedom. Living on a tight budget, my roommates and I had made the collective decision to turn off our air conditioning a few days before — a decision we regretted immediately when we woke up sticky, humid and hot in mid-August. By noon, we made a better decision: pack light, change into swimsuits and head toward Brevard.

Known as the “Land of Waterfalls,” Brevard and Transylvania County boast more than 200 waterfalls, particularly in **Dupont State Forest**. Even Hollywood couldn't resist the cascading water when they featured Hooker, High and Triple Falls in the film *The Last of the Mohicans* and the more recent *Hunger Games*. But you don't have to be a movie star to enjoy the sights, sounds and splendor of Western North Carolina waterfalls. Paradise is only a short drive away.

From Asheville, we got on Interstate 26 East and headed toward the airport. From there, we took US 276 south and drove eight miles toward **Cedar Mountain**. After that, it was simple. We turned left on Cascade Lake Road, right on Staton Road, crossed a bridge and turned left into the parking lot. We didn't even make it through a whole CD.

As we walked into the forest determined to find cool relief on a hot day, time slowed down and the constant chatter of reality dissolved. None of us reached for our cellphones. Not one person sent a text message. No one tweeted. We unplugged from technology and checked into the roaring waterfall that was just a short walk away. A few minutes later, we were getting our toes wet in the chilly water and feeling the river's rocks and pebbles beneath our feet. Before I knew it, I was kicking and splashing in the large pool at the base of the waterfall that makes Hooker Falls such a popular swimming hole among locals and tourists.

As my roommates and I relished in our final summer day, we decided to make a memory. With slow steps and careful maneuvering, we sat beneath the waterfall, watching it flow outward and over our heads into the pool below. By the time we left, the sun had set and summer was over. But as we drove away, we waited to turn on the radio and rolled down our windows just to try and see if we could still hear the roar of the waterfall one more time.

Although waterfalls entice explorers to push their boundaries, many die each year in falling and drowning accidents: Do not climb waterfalls, be wary of slippery conditions, and respect fenced-off boundaries.

Good references for regional waterfalls abound, but one of our favorites is Kevin Adams' North Carolina Waterfalls: A Hiking and Photography Guide (for more info: avl.mx/b7). An excellent map complements Adams' work: Produced by Larry Odoski of Outdoor Paths Publishing and available at many local outfitters, it charts more than 300 regional waterfalls and rates them (for more info: avl.mx/b5).

Other DuPont State Forest waterfalls:

Triple Falls Consists of three distinct cascades that gave it its name. Can be accessed from the Hooker Falls parking lot; cross the road to get to an overlook.

High Falls After viewing Triple Falls, keep walking to find High Falls, a 150-foot waterfall.

Bridal Veil Falls After High Falls, go left and head up to Buck Forest Road and a covered bridge. Keep going, then turn right on Conser-

vation Road. After about 1.5 miles, turn right on Bridal Veil Falls Road. The road ends near the base of the waterfall after about a half mile.

Wintergreen Falls Access this smaller fall and its small pool from Guion Farm access off of Sky Valley Road. X

Caitlin Byrd can be reached at cbyrd@mountainx.com.

A WATERFALL SAMPLER

NE Blue Hole Falls

Contains a series of four waterfalls, but it gets its name from the deep blue pool in front of fall No. 3.

Located in the Cherokee National Forest, take Highway 91 northeast out of Elizabethton, Tenn. for about 10 miles. Turn left onto Panhandle Road. There should be a national forest sign for it.

Open easttn.us/attractions/attraction.aspx/BlueHoleFalls

SW Fall Creek Falls

At 256 feet tall, this is the highest waterfall in the Eastern United States. The park is also Tennessee's largest state park.

Open tennessee.gov/environment/parks/FallCreekFalls

Admission Office (423) 881-5298

SW Grotto Falls

A 25-foot waterfall located in Sevier

County and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. From the parking lot, it's a 1.4-mile hike to the falls. This is the only waterfall in the national park that you can walk behind.

Access these fall through the Trillium Gap trailhead. In Great Smoky Mountains National Park, take Roaring Fork Motor Nature Trail (no RVs or trailers) to stop #5 where you will find a large parking area.

Open easttn.us/attractions/attraction.aspx/GrottoFalls

SW Laurel Falls

These 80-foot-high falls are one of the most popular in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

From Sugarlands Visitor Center, turn toward Cades Cove on Little River Road and drive 3.5 miles to the trailhead where there are parking areas on both sides of the road.

Open nps.gov/grsm

WATERFALLS *continued*

NE Crabtree Falls

The 2-mile loop is worth it for a look at this 70-foot high waterfall.

Milepost 339.5 on the Blue Ridge Parkway

NE Linville Falls

Linville Falls drops 90 feet into the Linville Gorge. Visitors can take two different hikes to see five different views of the waterfall. You can hike to all five views with one 4-mile hike.

Milepost 316.4 on the Blue Ridge Parkway

SW Dry Falls

Less than 2 miles away from Highlands, NC you'll find Dry Falls. Visitors can walk behind this 75-foot-tall waterfall. When the sun hits the water just right, you'll see a rainbow in the spray from the falls.

Take I-40 West to route 23/74 W toward Waynesville. Then take 23/74W to 23/441 toward Dillsboro, Sylva and Franklin. Take U.S. Highway 64 East toward Highlands. Look for the sign.

SW Skinny Dip Falls

Despite its name, these falls are not clothing optional. But you can still enjoy the waterfall and swimming hole in your bathing suit.

Milepost 417 at Looking Glass Rock, the trailhead for the falls is right across from the parking area (there are no signs directing you to the waterfall).

SW Sliding Rock

When the days get hot slip and slide

on a 60-foot-long flat sloping boulder and into a natural pool that is 8 feet deep for only \$1.

Located 8 miles from Brevard, take US Highway 276 North into Pisgah National Forest. Go 7.6 miles and there will be a parking area on the left.

SW Cashiers Sliding Rock

Brevard has its Sliding Rock, but there's another place to go. Cashiers (pronounced "cashers") Sliding Rock is much smaller (10 feet long), but it still does the trick.

From the intersection of NC 107 and US 64 in Cashiers, follow NC 107 south for a mile or so to Whitesides Cove Road. Look for the golf course hole on the right to be sure you're going the right way. Turn right onto Whitesides Cove Road and follow it until you reach a bridge.

SW The Green River

The lower section of the river is for tubing and beginner kayaking, while the upper section offers something for the more experienced kayaker.

Take exit 28 toward Saluda, head north on Holbert Cove Road to Green River Cove Road. Turn left and the swimming area is at the bottom on the left.

SE Lake Lure

Go swimming and boating — or just relax on a beach while you're in the mountains. Admission: \$8 for adults, \$7 for seniors, \$6 for children 3-15, and free for children under 3.

Lake Lure, NC

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getaway sampler

Looking for a few ideas?
Here are some sample itineraries
that cover the region.

WESTWARD HO!

STAY at the Snowbird Mountain Lodge or the Appalachian Inn for a bit of comfort in the wilderness.

HIKE in the Nantahala National Forest, particularly the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest, which offers nearly 4,000 acres of old-growth forest, miles of trails and many waterfalls. [avl.mx/b3](#)

RAFT the class V rapids of the Cheoah River or the tamer Nantahala.

RIDE the Tsali Recreation Area's 42 miles of trails. While its four-loop system of routes is open to horses too, it's rated one of the top 10 places in the U.S. to mountain bike. [avl.mx/b2](#)

VISIT Yellow Branch Pottery and Cheese, a working studio and farm that offers gorgeous stoneware and fabulous cheese — what more could you want? [yellowbranch.com](#)

FISH/CANOE/SWIM/CAMP at Lake Santeetlah, a 2,800-acre lake with 80 percent of its forest-lined shoreline free from private development.

MOTOR (carefully) the "Tail of the Dragon" at Deal's Gap, an 11-mile stretch of mountain road popular with motorcyclists; it boasts an astonishing 318 curves ([tailofthedragon.com](#)). A bit tamer but nonetheless spectacular route is nearby, on the Cherohala Skyway. ([cherohala.com](#))

TAKING THE HIGH ROAD

Northeast and into the High Country

START the day by driving about 75 minutes northeast of Asheville to the area near the town of Linville Falls (just north of Marion, N.C.).

GO CAVING and check out the underground geologic wonders of Linville Caverns ([linvillecaverns.com](#)). Nearby Tennessee has the most caves in the U.S. — 8,350 — including Forbidden Caverns near Sevierville and central Tennessee's "Rumble Room." One of the largest cave rooms in the eastern U.S., it's almost five acres across. Discovered during a fishing expedition, Linville Caverns has been open to the public since 1937.

HIKE to Linville Falls. Or for a more vigorous adventure, explore the adjacent Linville Gorge Wilderness Area.

STAY, SHOP AND EAT in the small, charming town of Banner Elk, N.C. Dining and lodging options abound, with rental cabins, B&Bs, small hotels, restaurants and boutiques lining the high mountain valley. A good resource to help you find the overnight accommodations that are best for you and a list of some of the town's restaurants: [bannernelk.org](#).

EXPLORE Grandfather Mountain — the attraction area and the state park. Check out the Nature Museum, walk and enjoy the amazing view from the Mile High Swinging Bridge (if you dare) or trek through the rugged surrounding wilderness. [avl.mx/b0](#) and [grandfather.com](#).

NORTH BY NORTHWEST

(The Tour)

GO west to Townsend, Tenn., about two hours from Asheville.

STAY at the Blackberry Farm ([avl.mx/bj](#)) if you want pastoral luxury, or

CAMP at Little River Village Campground ([avl.mx/bk](#)).

LEARN how to fly fish at the Little River Outfitters fly shop and fly fishing school ([avl.mx/bl](#)); or

SADDLE UP at Davy Crockett Riding Stables for a guided trail on your very own horse ([avl.mx/bm](#)).

DESCEND into the Tuckaleechee Caverns ([avl.mx/bn](#)) for a 75-minute underground tour that features a large open underground room that's big enough to hold three football fields. The Cherokee name means "peaceful, green place."

HIKE the Chestnut Top Trail for a strenuous hike, or take the easier Schoolhouse Gap route if you'd rather look at the wildflowers.

LISTEN to mountain music Saturday night at The Pickin' Porch at Nawgins Nob.

SOUTHEAST AND DOWN

Thirty-six hours of mountains,
whitewater and ... gold?

GET YOUR RUSH at the U.S. National Whitewater center, a 400-acre outdoor-adventure mecca that's located between Gastonia and Charlotte, N.C. With the world's largest man-made recirculating river, it offers Class II, III and IV whitewater adventures, led by a professional guide. [usnwc.org/](#)

RELAX along the banks of Lake Wylie south of Belmont, N.C., at the the Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden: 110 acres of rolling meadows and woodlands being developed as one of the most beautiful gardens in the world. (Hint: Check out the perennials.) [dsbg.org/](#)

ROCK IT by hiking in Chimney Rock State Park, famous for the scenes in the movie *Last of the Mohicans*. Visit the 500-million-year-old towering monolith that gives the park its name (you can park close if the hike is too daunting). There are trails, rare plants, dramatic scenery in any season and a quaint town replete with shops and places to eat nearby. [chimneyrockpark.com/](#)

GO FOR THE HISTORY around Kings Mountain, N.C., where the beginning of the end of the Revolutionary War occurred: In 1780 streams, of farmers from "over the mountain" converged on Kings Mountain and defeated troops under General Cornwallis, effectively ending the war in the south and setting the stage for the final loss at Yorktown, Va., the next year. [nps.gov/kimo/index.htm](#)

PAN FOR GOLD AND PRETTY STONES near the Broad and Catawba rivers. America's first gold rush was in the low hills to the south and east of Asheville. In fact, until the 1848 discovery of gold in California, the piedmont of North Carolina was the primary source in the U.S. Broad River Gems: [avl.mx/bi](#)

FESTIVAL GUIDE

Resources for planning your getaway



Bungee your way to the nearest festival.

PHOTO BY BILL RHODES

Start your adventure with a handy field guide: spring and summer festivals within easy driving distance of Asheville. For info on state and national parks in the area, as well as major visitor and tourism centers, check out *Getaway's* online listings (mountainx.com/getaway). Now get your traveling shoes on.

LET THE FESTIVALS BEGIN

APRIL

NE Blue Ridge Wine & Food Festival

Festival season begins with this most civilized of offerings: wine tastings and seminars, chef's challenges, an appearance by celebrity chef Teresa Giudice and the new "Grillin' & Chillin'" event.

Downtown Blowing Rock, NC

Open April 11-15

Admission Tickets are by event and run \$20-\$50

blueridgewinefestival.com

SE Come-See-Me Festival

Ring in spring with a beach dance, parade, race, jazz music, gourmet gardens, tailgating and a fireworks display.

Rock Hill, SC

Open April 12-21

Admission Most events are free

comeseeme.org

AVL Asheville Earth Day

This daylong extravaganza combines

music, arts and local food with environmental education.

Lexington Avenue, Asheville

Open April 21

Admission Free

SW Ribfest, Wings & BBQ

Sample ribs and wings and pick a winner for the People's Choice Award at the street festival, which benefits the Gatlinburg Hospitality Association's educational scholarship.

Downtown Gatlinburg, TN

Open 5-9 p.m. April 26

Admission Free; armbands for tasting can be purchased by donation.

eventsgatlinburg.com

NE Merlefest

Launched in honor of the late Eddy Merle Watson, son of legendary musician Doc Watson, MerleFest has been running strong since 1988 and brings not only roots music stars (Vince Gill, Sam Bush, Alison Krauss & Union Station) but up-and-comers such as The

Honeycutters and Johnson's Crossroad. *Wilkes Community College campus, Wilkesboro, NC*

Open April 26-29

Admission Four-day passes \$155/general admission, \$250/prime reserved seating; \$135/three-day passes; day passes are \$35/Thursday, \$50/Friday, \$55/Saturday and \$40/Sunday. Parking, tent camping and RV camping are additional charges.

merlefest.org

SW Spring Festival at the Farm

Arts and crafts, a pound cake sale, wagon rides, entertainment and more round out a day of springtime fun.

Historic Johnson Farm near Hendersonville, NC

Open 10 a.m.-4 p.m. April 28

Admission \$6/adults, \$4/students, preschoolers get in for free.

hendersoncountypublicschoolsnc.org/johnson-farm

NE Fire on the Mountain

Learn about the history of ironwork and watch contemporary craftspeople show off forging techniques and ferrous materials.

Locust Street, Spruce Pine, NC

Open 10 a.m.-4 p.m. April 28

Admission Free

downtownsprucepine.com

MAY

NW French Broad River Festival

The lineup for this river-oriented music festival includes Lukas Nelson & Promise of the Real, The Gourds, Sol Driven Train. You can also compete in

a raft or mountain-bike race, or help clean up the French Broad River.

Hot Springs Campground and Spa, Hot Springs, NC

Open May 4-6

Admission \$80 includes camping and registration fees for races.

SW Adventure Travel Film Festival

Filmmaker Austin Vince and travel writer Lois Pryce host this three-day film extravaganza that follows true-life adventurers—including the first descent of the Yenisey River through Mongolia, and the story of three English housewives who, in 1958, bought a Land Rover and drove it from London to Zanskar in the Himalayas.

Nantahala Outdoor Center, Bryson City, NC

Open May 4-6

Admission \$75/weekend pass (advance tickets available until April 29)

noc.com

SE Spartanburg Spring Fling

This street festival, the largest in up-state South Carolina, offers live music, kids' rides, arts and crafts, a corn-hole tournament and more.

Downtown Spartanburg, SC

Open May 4-6

Admission Free

cityofspartanburg.org

SW UBLCon 2012

The United Bellydance League hosts "workshops, shopping and laughter for belly dancers of any style" with musicians and dance fans also invited. The all-day festival culminates with a live show.

Southwestern Community College, Bryson City, NC

2012 SEASON

Hairspray

Apr 12-29, 2012

Whose Wives Are They Anyway?

May 24-Jun 9, 2012

Beehive

Jul 19-Aug 11, 2012

864.233.6733

www.centrestage.org



FESTIVALS continued

Open May 5
Admission \$35/workshops, \$5/show admission
ublcon2012.brysoncitybellydance.com

SW Ramp Festival

The annual ramp festival puts the naturally grown wild onion grown — an Appalachian staple — in the spotlight, along with live music and entertainment, of course.
American Legion Field in Waynesville, NC
Open 11 a.m.-4 p.m. May 6
Admission Free
downtownwaynesville.com

NE Lake Eden Arts Festival (LEAF)

A full, family-friendly weekend of music, art, dance, healing arts and camping; Taj Mahal headlines along with Seun Kuti & Egypt 80, the Preservation Hall Jazz Band and others.
Camp Rockmont in Black Mountain, NC
Open May 10-13
Admission Weekend passes are \$155 adults/\$130 kids; weekend plus Thursday are \$179/\$149. Day tickets are \$103/\$91 Friday-Sunday, \$45/\$37 Friday or Sunday, \$55/\$48 Saturday. Day passers take a shuttle from the Owen Middle School parking lot.
theleaf.com

SW Dolly's Homecoming Parade

Ms. Dolly Parton herself acts as grand marshal for the parade (in its 27th year), featuring marching bands, entertainers, floats, baton twirlers, horses and more.
Begins at traffic light 6 in Pigeon Forge, TN
Open 6 p.m. May 11
Admission Free
mypigeonforge.com/events_dolly_parade.aspx

SW Artisphere

Downtown Greenville showcases all manner of arts, from an outsider arts festival and indoor exhibitions to three days' worth of performing arts, plus kids events and food.
In and around downtown Greenville, SC
Open May 11-13
Admission Outdoor activities and performances are free.
artisphere.us

SW Bloomin' BBQ & Bluegrass

This is Sevierville's biggest annual happening, complete with the Bush's Best

Tennessee State Championship barbecue cook-off, free bluegrass music, kids' activities, crafts and food.
Downtown Sevierville, TN
Open May 18-19
Admission Free
bloominbbq.com

SE Dairy Goat Festival and Parade

Check out the prize dairy goats, sample (and purchase) goat-milk products and take in the live music and entertainment — but leave your dog at home.
Spindale, NC
Open May 18-19
Admission Free
goatfestival.com

SW Blue Ridge Bookfest

Meet regional authors, attend presentations and book signings and hear readings by poets, fiction writers and creative nonfiction writers.
Blue Ridge Community College Conference Hall, Flat Rock, NC
Open May 18-19
Admission Free
blueridgebookfest.org

SW Cruisin' and Groovin'

Classic and collector cars line the streets while festivalgoers enjoy music from the '50s and '60s, ice cream and other treats, plus door prizes throughout the day.
West Main Street, Dandridge, TN
Open May 19
Admission Free
dandridgecruisein.com

AVL Montford Music & Arts Festival

This very local festival celebrates one of Asheville's historic neighborhoods along with a thriving art and music scene with craft booths, food and bands.
Montford Avenue, Asheville
Open 10 a.m.-7 p.m. May 19
Admission Free
montfordfestival.org

SW Saluda Arts Festival

Fine artists from across the western Carolinas display their watercolors, acrylic paintings and drawings, woodworking, photography, pottery, jewelry, sculptures, stained glass, metalworking and more.
Downtown Saluda, NC
Open 10 a.m.-4 p.m. May 19
Admission Free
saluda.com

SW Iris Festival

The lovely flower provides a fine excuse to enjoy a juried arts and crafts festival complete with live entertainment and dance, a "Kids' Korner," the Antique Avenue, a woodcarving show (held in conjunction) and, of course, the Miss Iris Festival Pageant.
Downtown Greeneville, TN
Open May 19-20
Admission Free
greencountypartnership.com/iris_festival.aspx

AVL Mountain Sports Festival

Billed as "three days of outdoor sports, live music and beer," this festival offers competitions in trail races, cyclocross, Ultimate Frisbee and more, along with clinics, demos, kids' events and three days' worth of bands.
Carrier Park, Asheville
Open May 25-27
Admission Free music and entertainment; to compete, contact the coordinator for each event via the festival website.
mountainsportsfestival.com

NE Miner's Heritage Day

Gather the kids to embark on a treasure hunt, tour mines, take a hike or kick back to live music.
Emerald Village, Little Switzerland, NC
Open 9 a.m.-9:30 p.m. May 26
Admission Tours are \$15/adults, \$10/seniors, and free for children.
emeraldvillage.com

SW White Squirrel Festival

There are more than a dozen live concerts, but this festival is also chock-full of everything from a 5K/10K race and guided tours to a White Squirrel Photo Contest and Memorial Day parade.
Downtown Brevard, NC
Open May 26-27
Admission Free
brevardnc.org/white-squirrel-festival/

SE Lake Lure Arts & Crafts Festival

This twice-yearly event features artisans and crafters selling handmade wares, plus a children's area.
Memorial Highway, Lake Lure, NC

Open May 26-28
Admission Free
lakelureartsandcraftsfestivals.com

SW Carl Sandburg Folk Music Festival

Commemorate poet and biographer Carl Sandburg with a day of instrumentals, folk ballads and spiritual songs inspired by his American folk music collection, *The American Songbag*.
Carl Sandburg Home, Flat Rock, NC
Open 11 a.m.-4 p.m. May 28
Admission Free
nps.gov/carl
(828) 693-4178

JUNE

NE Blue Plum Festival

This outdoor arts and music fest spans seven blocks in downtown Johnson City and includes a 5K run, bicycle race, animation festival and an "urban arts throw down."
Downtown Johnson City, TN
Open June 1-3
Admission Free
blueplum.org

NW Bluff Mountain Festival

The annual Bluff Mountain Festival, a fundraiser for the Madison County Arts Council, plays host to some of the region's best old-time and bluegrass bands, plus ballad singers and cloggers.
Hot Springs Spa and Resort, Hot Springs, NC
Open 8 a.m.-5 p.m. June 9
Admission Free
madisoncountyarts.com

NW Bonnaroo

You don't go to the 'Roo so much as survive it (the crowds, the dust, the heat), but with a lineup that includes Radiohead, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Phish, The Beach Boys, Bon Iver, The Avett Brothers and Foster the People, it's worth it.
Manchester, TN
Open June 7-10
Admission \$259.50 (plus fees) for general admission; \$1,399.50/pair (plus fees) for VIP. Campground access is included. Bring your own tent or RV (an RV pass is required), or you can rent one.
bonnaroo.com

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 online at www.mountainx.com/getaway.



FESTIVALS continued

SW Appalachian Lifestyle

Mountain craft, food and entertainment are all represented during this daylong event, where you can watch demos on lumberjacking, butter churning, soap making and more.

Main Street, Waynesville, NC

Open 10 a.m.-5 p.m. June 9

Admission Free

downtownwaynesville.com

SW Blue Ridge BBQ & Music Festival

There are crafts and music (including some noteworthy performers), but the main focus is on the 'cue.

Harmon Field in Tryon, NC

Open 10 a.m.-11 p.m. June 8-9

Admission \$8; free for children 12 and under

blueridgebbqfestival.com

SE The Mighty Moo Festival

This four-day fest includes street dances, a golf tournament, beauty pageant, baseball game, an arts and crafts sale and parade — all celebrating the crews of World War II aircraft carrier USS Cowpens CVL-25 and the current USS Cowpens, an Aegis-guided missile cruiser.

Downtown Cowpens, SC

Open June 13-16

Admission Free

cowpensmighty moo.com

SW Cherokee Bluegrass Festival

Bring a lawn chair (but leave the pets and adult beverages at home) for three days of music including Rhonda Vincent & The Rage, David Holt, Lorraine Jordan & Carolina Road among others. Call ahead for camping reservations.

Happy Holiday RV Village, Cherokee, NC

Open June 14-16

Admission A three-day pass is \$85/advance, \$99/at the gate; single-day passes are \$30/\$35; children 12 and under get in free with an adult.

cherokeebuegrass.com

NE WNC Highlands Celtic Festival

This year's festival celebrates Celtic heritage with athletic demos, border-collie herding, music and, of course, craft beer.

Pisgah Brewing Company, Black Mountain, NC

Open June 15-16

Admission \$20/advance; \$25/at the gate; children 12 and under get in free. celticheritageproductions.com/wnc.htm

SW Cherokee Pow Wow

Two days of dancing, contests and Cherokee cultural celebrations make up this annual event, now in its 37th year.

Acquoni Expo Center in Cherokee, NC

Open June 29-30

Admission \$5/day; children 5 and under are admitted free.

cherokee-nc.com

AVL Shindig on the Green

In its 46th season, the mountain music showcase features clusters of acoustic bluegrass groups playing to small crowds while other bands take the stage. Bring a lawn chair and a picnic.

Pack Square Park, Asheville

Open 7 p.m. on Saturdays June 30-Sept. 1 (except July 28 and Aug. 4)

Admission Free

folkheritage.org/shindigonthe green.htm

SW Cashiers Mountain Music Festival

Grammy-winning bluegrass star Tony Rice headlines, as does Balsam Range and legendary fiddler Bobby Hicks; other artists include Blue Highway, Acoustic Syndicate and Larry Keel and Natural Bridge.

Village Commons area in Cashiers, NC

Open June 30-July 1

Admission \$25/day; \$40/two-day pass; free for children 12 and under.

cashiersnorthcarolina.com/cmmf

NE Red White and Bluegrass

This annual gathering includes a bluegrass camp for kids (\$75 in advance), camping and tons of live music like Steep Canyon Rangers, Russell Moore & Illrd Tyme Out, Larry Sparks & The Lonesome Ramblers and more.

Catawba Meadows Park, Morganton, NC

Open June 30-July 4

Admission Advance tickets (until May 31) are \$60/ four-day pass; \$20/day pass and \$20/full-event camping with no hookups. Tickets from June 1-29 are \$25/day or \$75/four days. Gate prices are \$20/day, \$85/four days.

redwhiteandbluegrassfestival.com

JULY

SW Patriot Festival

It's a Fourth of July festival in all its red, white and blue glory, featuring food, family games, entertainment and fireworks. Bring blankets and lawn chairs.

Patriot Park in Pigeon Forge, TN

Open July 4

Admission Free

mypigeonforge.com/events_patriot-festival.aspx

SW Coon Dog Day Festival

Billed as "a homecoming and celebration for dogs and their people," this party for furry friends includes food, music, crafts, a street dance and a parade.

Downtown Saluda, NC

Open July 7

Admission Free

saluda.com

SE South Carolina Peach Festival

Who doesn't love peaches? Probably none of the more than 20,000 people who attend this three-day festival, which includes a dessert contest, eating contest, family fun fest and carnivals.

Downtown Gaffney, S.C.

Open July 12-14

Admission Most events are free.

speachfestival.org

NE Grandfather Mountain Highland Games

From the opening picnic and ceremony to the Celtic music jam, Scottish athletic demos, country dancing, mountain marathon, genealogy studies and sheep herding, this is one nonstop weekend.

MacRae Meadows on Grandfather Mountain, near Linville, NC

Open July 12-15

Admission Four-day all-inclusive advance ticket (through June 15) is \$55 adults/\$25 for children ages 5-12. Camping fees depend on tent or RV size.

gmhg.org

SW Festival of Native Peoples

Indigenous tribes from across the Americas come together to celebrate

heritage, take in demonstrations, check out craft and food vendors and explore native encampments.

Cherokee Indian Fairgrounds in Cherokee, NC

Open July 13-14

Admission \$10/person; children 6 and under admitted free.

cherokee-nc.com

SW Festival on the Square

This annual Clay County celebration provides three days of fun, including street dances, entertainment, vendors' booths and food stands.

Town square of Hayesville, NC

Open July 13-15

Admission Free

clayhistoryarts.org

NE North Carolina Blackberry Festival

Recipes will be sampled, competitive eaters will down a quart of berries, Caldwell County musicians will perform and a Blackberry Princess will be crowned.

Downtown Lenoir, NC

Open 10 a.m.-4 p.m. July 14

Admission Free

caldwellcochamber.org

FolkMoot

Like Disney's "It's a Small World" theme ride (only better), FolkMoot is a 12-day whirlwind of traditional costumes, cultural traditions and colorful dance performances. New Zealand, France, Serbia, Belgium, Puerto Rico, Phillipines, Ukraine, Indonesia, Hawaii and Peru will participate this year. Performance venues in Waynesville, Lake Junaluska, Maggie Valley, Canton, Clyde, Highlands, Bryson City, Cullowhee, Asheville, Columbus, Burnsville, Marion, Mars Hill, Flat Rock and Franklin (all in NC).

Open July 18-29

Admission Varies; some free public performances are part of the festival.

folkmooutusa.org

NE Floydfest

Alison Krauss & Union Station featuring Jerry Douglas, Michael Franti & Spearhead and Jackson Browne top the roster of artists playing this fun and friendly festival; there's also a healing

Want to visit one of our XX visiting centers?
Just scan the square to see
online at www.mountainx.com/getaway.



LET THE FESTIVALS BEGIN *continued*

arts village and a kids' universe.

Floyd, VA

Open July 26-29

Admission \$150/four-day weekend passes (Thursday-Sunday), \$130/three-day passes (Friday-Sunday), \$95/two-day passes (Saturday and Sunday), \$60/Sunday-only. Kids ages 6-12, \$30/all four days. Prices include primitive camping.

floydfest.com

AVL Bele Chere

The largest street festival in the Southeast takes over downtown Asheville each year during the last weekend of July. Three days of live music from local and national-known performers are combined with a juried art show, food and crafts vendors and kids' activities.

Downtown Asheville

Open July 27-29

Admission Free

AUGUST

AVL Mountain Dance & Folk Festival

Started by musician Bascom Lamar Lunsford in 1928, this weekend of mountain fiddlers, banjo pickers, dulcimer sweepers, dancers and balladeers keeps Appalachian tradition alive and in full swing.

Diana Wortham Auditorium in Asheville

Open 7 p.m. Aug. 2-4

Admission Ticket prices TBA

folkheritage.org/75thannua.htm

NW Jefferson County Fair

A county fair in the truest sense, you can snack on cotton candy, ride a ferris wheel, watch a tractor pull and stop by the 4-H poultry show and sale.

Fairgrounds behind Jefferson Middle School in Jefferson, TN

Open Aug. 2-11

Admission \$12/person plus \$5/parking (pony rides cost extra); children 3 and under admitted free

jeffersoncountyfair.com

NE High Country Festival of the Book

As the name suggests, this festival is all about books — from author panels and readings to book signings and an exhibition area.

Meadowbrook Inn, Blowing Rock, NC

Open Aug. 3-4

Admission Free; some events are ticketed

highcountryfestivalofthebook.com

SW Asheville Music Festival

Billed as a Messianic Jewish music festival, AMF aims to "set a high standard for mutual understanding, unity, and inclusivity for this festival and within our wider community." No pork or shellfish products allowed; merch will not be available on Shabbat, though food vendors will stay open.

Deerfields, Horse Shoe, NC

Open Aug. 9-12

Admission \$95/adults (presale); \$120/on site; children ages 5-12/\$35; 4 years old and younger are free. Two-day passes Friday-Saturday \$100/on site; one-day Saturday pass/\$50 on site. Fees include camping.

amf12.com

NE Sourwood Festival

A Mayberry-esque mix of locals and tourists decent upon idyllic Black Mountain for this small town celebration of food vendors, arts and crafts vendors and music.

Downtown Black Mountain, N.C.

Open Aug. 13-14

Admission Free

exploreblackmountain.com

NE North Carolina State Bluegrass Festival

Bring your own chairs to this outdoor festival under a campground pavilion. The lineup includes The Grascals, Doyle Lawson & Quicksilver, Rhonda Vincent & The Rage and more.

Tom Johnson's Camping Center in Marion, N.C.

Open Aug. 16-18

Admission Advance tickets (until Aug. 6) are \$30 per day or \$75 for three days for adults and \$15/\$40 for children ages 6-13.

adamsandandersonbluegrass.com/North-Carolina-State-Bluegrass-Festival.html

SE Dirty Dancing Festival

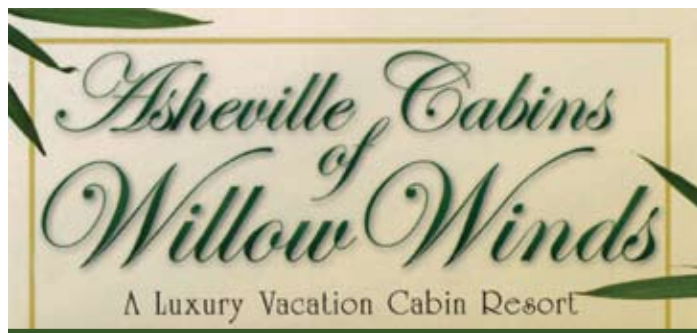
Nobody puts this Lake Lure festival in a corner! Held at the location where beloved film *Dirty Dancing* was shot, attendees have the times of their lives learning the Charleston and mambo (among other dances), carrying watermelons and trying new moves to live bands.

Held at venues around Lake Lure, N.C.

Open Aug. 17-19

Admission Tickets prices TBA.

dirtydancingfestival.com



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Plan a Getaway to Cherokee

SPRING/SUMMER EVENTS

April 21

**Chief's Horseshoe
Tournament**

April 27 - 29

**Summer Kickoff Trout
Fishing Tournament**

May 1

**Oconaluftee Indian
Village opens**

May 5

Mother's Day 5k

May 12

**Cherokee Visitor
Appreciation Day**

May 18-20

**Meet Me in the
Smokies Fly
Fishing Tournament**

June 1 - Aug 18

**Unto These Hills
Outdoor Drama**

June 8-10

Spring Rod Run

June 9

**Cherokee Voices
Festival**

June 12

**Oconaluftee Indian
Village - *Time of War*
Begins**

June 22-24

**US Junior National
Fly Fishing
Championships**

June 29-30, July 1

**37th Annual Cherokee
Pow Wow**

July 13-14

**8th Annual Festival of
Native Peoples**

August 4

**Talking Trees
Children's Trout
Derby**

August 3, 4, 5

Cherokee Dock Dogs

August 11

Volkswagen Show

September 1

Open Air Indian Market

September 14-15

**Southeast Tribes
Festival**

September 29

**Harvest Half
Marathon & 5K**



visitcherokeenc.com

CHEROKEE, NC

Trails of Legends and Adventure