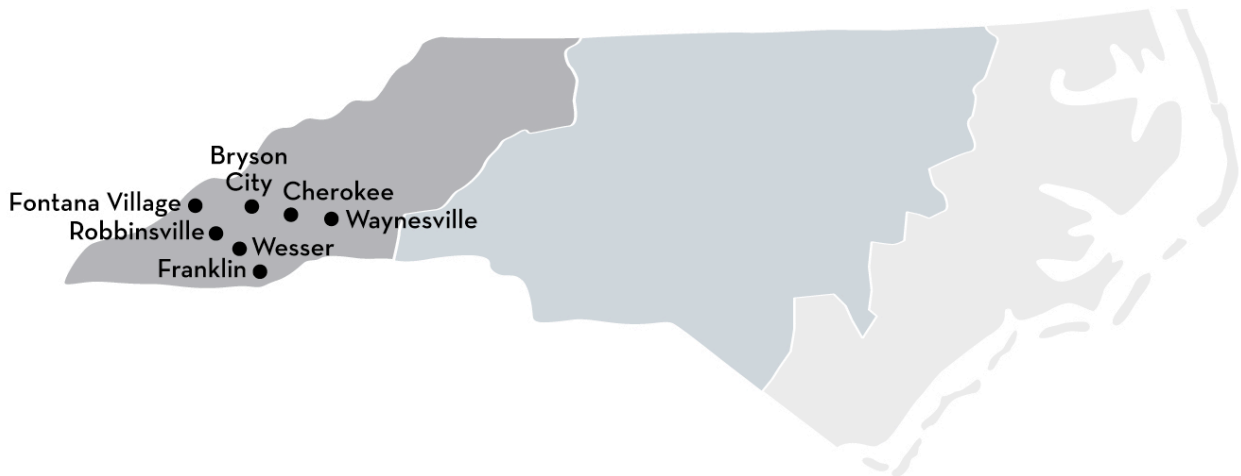


Family Adventure in the Southern Mountains of North Carolina

Hiking, picnicking, splashing around in cold mountain streams; what can be more fun than a family vacation in the North Carolina Mountains? Grab this three-day trip, pack up the kids and head for the hills.

3-Day Family Itinerary | Southern Mountains

With so much to see and do in the area, we recommend the following 3-day itinerary. Enjoy all the area has to offer by mixing and matching events to your particular interest. Be sure to check days and hours of operation for each venue.



Day 1

Gem Mine at Gem World (Franklin)
Franklin Gem & Mineral Museum (Franklin)
Museum of the Cherokee Indian (Cherokee)
Oconaluftee Indian Village (Cherokee)
Unto These Hills (Cherokee)

On your first day, spend the morning in **Franklin** mining for rubies, emeralds and sapphires. Bring a plastic bag to carry your treasures home or have your stones set by one of the local gemologists. The area is rich in minerals and you can learn more about them and precious stones at the **Franklin Gem & Mineral Museum** located in an circa 1850 jailhouse. Afterward, enjoy a relaxing lunch at **Gazebo Creekside Café** or pick up sandwiches and all the fixings from **Fat Buddies Ribs & BBQ** and stop along Highway 441 for a picnic lunch on your way to Cherokee.

Located at the base of the **Smoky Mountains** just outside the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, **Cherokee** offers the rich heritage of the Cherokee people in museums and in a living history venue. Learn about Cherokee history at the **Museum of the Cherokee Indian** and at **Oconaluftee Indian Village**, then shop for authentic Cherokee arts and crafts at the **Qualla Arts & Crafts Mutual, Inc.** Sample an Indian taco for dinner at **Paul's Diner** and cap your day with a performance of the outdoor drama, **Unto These Hills**, which traces the Cherokee nation from its beginning to the present.

Day 2

Great Smoky Mountains Railroad (Bryson City)
Nantahala Outdoor Center (Wesser)

On day two, take the "**NOC Rapid Transit**" to a full day's destination of fun by rail and by raft. After a breakfast of coffee and fresh-baked pastries at **Mountain Perks** in Bryson City, head across the tracks to the Great Smoky Mountain Railroad depot where you'll catch a morning train ride all the way through the **Nantahala Gorge**. The train will drop you off at the **Nantahala Outdoor Center** where you'll enjoy a deli-style lunch (included in the activities price) served on the banks of the Nantahala River.

After lunch you'll climb aboard a river raft along with your guide and shoot down eight miles of family-friendly white-water rapids ending in a big splash at **Nantahala Falls**. Be sure to bring a towel, a change of clothes and your sense of adventure. At day's end, you'll be transported by shuttle back to Bryson City where you can browse the shops and enjoy a leisurely dinner at the **Mountain Steakhouse** or the **Fryemont Inn**.

Day 3

Fly Fishing with Lowe Guide Service (Waynesville)
Flat water paddling at Nantahala Outdoor Center (Wesser)
Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest (Robbinsville)
Stecoah Valley Cultural Arts Center (Stecoah)

Start day three with mountain fly-fishing or enjoy a peaceful paddle in a kayak on **Lake Fontana**. Enjoy breakfast or lunch at **River's End Restaurant**, then journey to the **Appalachian forest** of times past and walk a trail that leads to ancient trees towering above a carpet of wildflowers and ferns. The Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest is named for American poet, Alfred Joyce Kilmer, most famous for his poem "Trees."

Afterward, head for the town of Stecoah and see the works of local artisans and enjoy a live performance of mountain music at the **Steocoah Valley Cultural Arts Center**. Watch the sunset over **Fontana Dam**, the tallest dam east of the Mississippi River, then enjoy dinner at the **Mountainview Bistro** or the **Wildwood Grill** in Fontana Village.

Where to Stay

Hemlock Inn, Bryson City: Family friendly rooms and cabins, including breakfast. Dinner is also available.

Fontana Village Resort, Fontana Village: Motel rooms, cabins, camping and houseboats. Wireless Internet is available in the Lodge lobby.

Nantahala Outdoor Center, Wesser: Motel rooms, cabins and camping. Some have hot tubs and some are pet friendly.

Where to Eat

River's End Restaurant (NOC) – breakfast, lunch, dinner

Mountainview Bistro (Fontana Village) – breakfast, lunch dinner

Across the Trax (Bryson City) – lunch, dinner

Everett Street Diner (Bryson City) – breakfast, lunch

For more information:

Swain County Chamber of Commerce

www.greatsmokies.com

1-800-867-9246

Franklin Chamber of Commerce

www.franklin-chamber.com

1-866-372-5546

Graham County Travel & Tourism Authority

www.grahamcountytravel.com

1-800-470-3790