

## The Ultimate Cherokee Culture And Adventure Experience

Welcome to Cherokee and the Qualla Boundary, a 100-square mile sovereign nation, centrally located in the Great Smoky Mountains and the Blue Ridge Parkway. Here you can experience history and culture as it is brought to life in hair-raising ceremonial dance, ancient artifacts, stirring legends, nationally renowned theatrical performances, and traditional Cherokee arts and weaponry made by today's Cherokee Master Artists. Nearby hiking trails, waterfalls and scenic drives will help get you back in touch with nature.

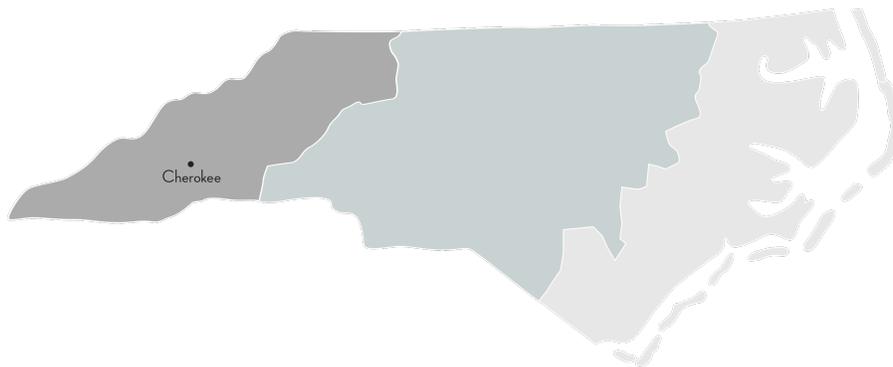
### 2-Day Itinerary

#### Day 1

Immerse yourself in the culture, art and history of the Cherokee Indians.

#### Day 2

Explore the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Hike to waterfalls, through fragrant forests and experience life like it was 100 years ago.



*With so much to see and do in the area, we recommend the following 2-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**

Begin your day at the **Museum of Cherokee Indians** where the entire 11,000+ year Cherokee history is presented with engaging, interactive flair. Discover how they fished, hunted, made tools and farmed thousands of years ago while browsing the extensive collection of Cherokee artifacts. Learn about ancient Cherokee myths and celebrations that are still observed today. State-of-the-art, interactive exhibits designed by Disney Imagineering will bring the experience to life for older kids, while pop-up books and graphic panels tell the story for younger children. Don't leave before seeing the beautiful and moving photographs depicting contemporary locations on the Trail of Tears.

Conveniently located across from the Museum you will find the home of an organization founded in 1946 to preserve and advance Cherokee arts and crafts and make them available to the world at large. At **Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual, Inc.** you will be able to view and purchase handmade authentic Cherokee arts and crafts from America's leading Native American cooperative. You will find pottery, baskets, sculptures, tapestry and other pieces of art that blend timeless tradition with individual expression.

Grab a cup of specialty coffee from **Tribal Grounds** while you contemplate which pieces of art you want to bring home. While you're downtown, keep an eye out for bears! Don't worry, these bears are totally harmless. **Eastern Band of Cherokee** artists have created **twenty-five colorful and boldly designed bears** that are scattered throughout the downtown area. Pick up a map to help guide you to each life-sized bear or make it a scavenger hunt and see how many you can find on your own.

Pack a picnic lunch or pick one up at any of several downtown restaurants and spread a blanket at **Oconaluftee Islands Park**. Named for the two islands that are created by the **Oconaluftee River** as it winds through downtown, this park has plenty of benches, picnic tables, grills and covered shelters, making it an ideal spot for lunch. The river originates from springs bubbling up and filtering through the ferns and moss in the neighboring **Great Smoky Mountains National Park** and calls out for you to wade, splash and play in the water. Kids use flat smooth river rocks to build dams and create personal wading pools. After spending time by the river, head out on a trail and experience the nine "Talking Tree's" that tell legends and explain medicinal uses of the trees and plants in this sanctuary.

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When you're ready to leave the park, it's time to experience an authentic 1750s Cherokee "living village" at **Oconaluftee Indian Village**. The village depicts daily life during a time of rapid cultural change. Guided tours run every 15 minutes or you can take a self-guided tour to explore dwellings, residents and artisans. Watch as medicine is created, canoes are hulled and art, such as masks, baskets, pottery and beadwork, is made. The village also hosts live reenactments, interactive demonstrations, arts and crafts classes and storytelling. Lose yourself in the legends of some of the tribe's greatest storytellers or get caught in the Time of War live reenactment.

For nighttime entertainment in the summer, settle into a seat in the beautiful **Mountainside Amphitheatre** and watch the United State's second oldest outdoor drama, "**Unto These Hills**". This drama, featuring a mostly Native American cast, has been staged every summer since its debut in 1950. Breathtaking costumes and exciting choreography help to tell the story of the Cherokee people, their forced march along the Trail of Tears and the survival of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

## **DAY 2**

Start your day in the **Great Smoky Mountains National Park** at the **Oconaluftee Visitors Center** located only two miles outside of Cherokee. Here you will find a bookstore and gift shop with maps, guides and souvenirs.

Adjacent to the visitor center is the **Mountain Farm Museum**. The log buildings that make up this museum were gathered from throughout the Smoky Mountains and preserved on this site. Get a sense of what life in the area was like 100 years ago by exploring authentic farmhouses, barns, smokehouses, applehouses, corn cribs and a working blacksmith shop. Seasonal demonstrations include historic gardening and agricultural practices including livestock.

After spending the morning imagining what farm life was like a century ago, hit the **Oconaluftee River Trail** and enjoy your beautiful current-day surroundings. This trail, which starts near the entrance of the museum, is an easy, 1.5-mile trek along the trail's namesake stream. This path is stroller accessible and both pets and bicycles are welcome. Keep an eye out for the more than 40 species of wildflowers that have been identified along the trail.

Before heading to lunch, make a stop at **Mingus Mill**. Only a half-mile from the visitor's center, this 1886 mill has withstood the test of time and still operates today. The Mingus family only paid \$600 dollars to have the mill built. The project was completed in three months and utilized new technology – instead of a water wheel, a water-powered turbine was used to power all of the machinery inside the building. During the summer, a miller demonstrates the process of grinding corn into cornmeal. Remember to purchase a bag of cornmeal on your way out.

After a lunch downtown, make sure your hiking boots are on and your camera is ready. First up is **Mingo Falls**, one of the tallest and most spectacular waterfalls in the Southern Appalachians. The entrance to the .4-mile path is at the Mingo Falls Campground, not far from the Oconaluftee Visitor Center. After climbing 161 steps to the top and crossing a wooden footbridge, take in the spectacular sights of this 120-foot tall majestic waterfall.

Once you've tackled that hike, sit back and enjoy the sights from your car. About 18 miles outside of Cherokee is **Newfound Gap**. Some people say that a trip on the Newfound Gap Road is like driving from Georgia to Maine in terms of the variety of forests and landscapes on display. You'll climb 3,000 feet, ascending through cove hardwoods and pine-oaks to arrive at a fragrant evergreen spruce-fir forest. Don't forget to bring a sweater or coat, depending on the time of year. Because of the elevation, Newfound Gap can be ten degrees cooler and much snowier than the lowlands.

Just south of Newfound Gap Road is Clingmans Dome Road. After turning on this road and driving for seven miles you'll reach a large parking area. At the top of a somewhat steep .5-mile trail is **Clingmans Dome**, the highest peak in the Smokies. A climb up the observation tower will reward you with spectacular views.

For additional information, please contact:  
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