



Smoky Mountain Trip '15

09.24.2015 - 09.27.2015

Resort: Elk Springs Resort

1088 Powdermill Rd,

Gatlinburg, TN 37738

(865) 233-2390

<http://www.elkspringsresort.com/>

Overview

The Great Smoky Mountains are a mountain range rising along the Tennessee–North Carolina border in the southeastern United States. They are a subrange of the Appalachian Mountains, and form part of the Blue Ridge Physiographic Province. The Great Smokies are best known as the home of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, which protects most of the range. The park was established in 1934, and, with over 9 million visits per year, it is the most-visited national park in the United States.

Goals

1. Maximize Awesomeness
2. Explore the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (which is massive)
3. Enjoy some local cuisine
4. Relax!

Resort

We will be staying at the Elk Springs Resort for the nights of September 24, 25, and 26 (Thur. - Sat.). I encourage you to check out [the FAQs page](#), but the gist of it is:

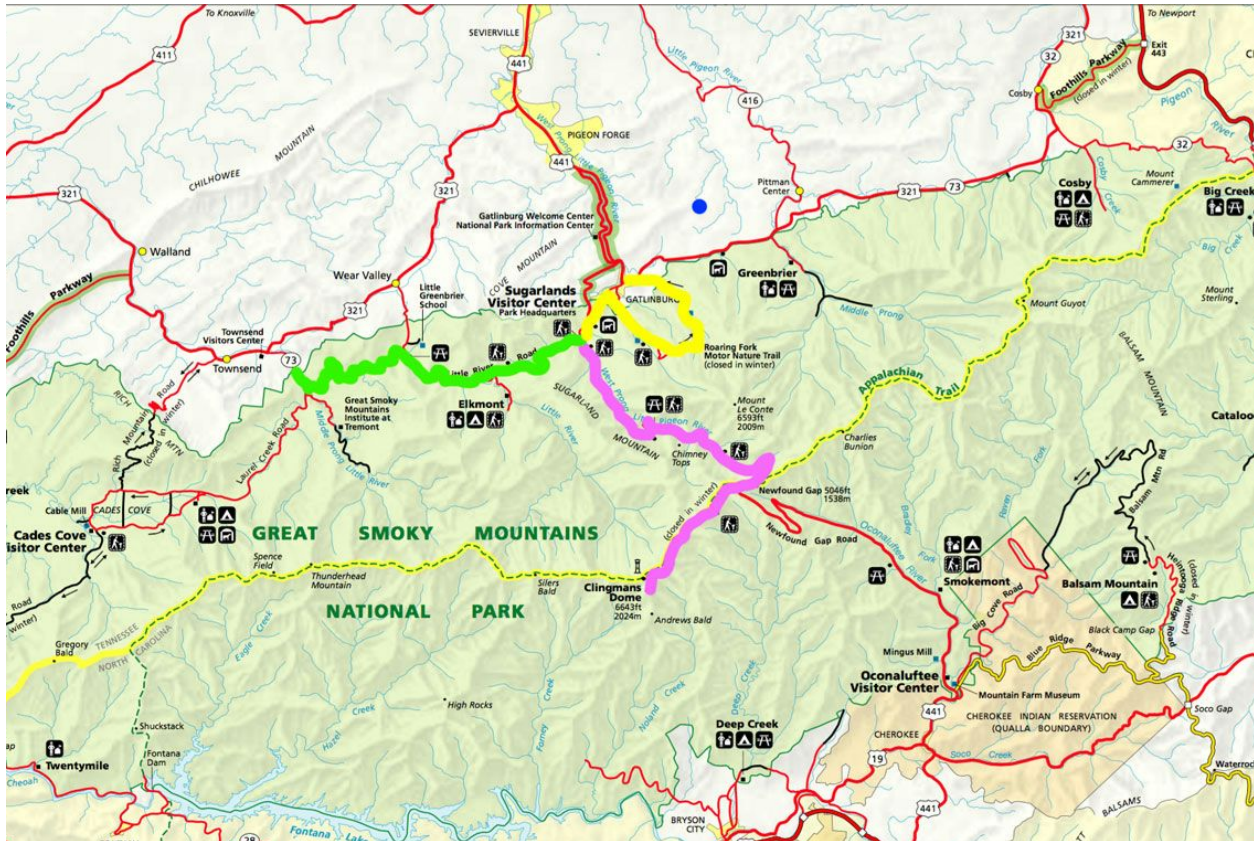
- Free wifi (though I encourage you instead to get in touch with nature),
- Basic toiletries are provided (towels, dish soap, TP, paper towels, etc.).
- Core set of pots and pans, blender, coffee maker, and toaster.
- Washer and dryer in cabin.
- No aluminum foil, plastic wrap, condiments, or things like that.

The location of our resort can be seen in the map below. It's the **blue** dot.

A "Food City" large grocery store is within 5 minutes of the resort, which is where we'll get groceries. We need enough food to cook 1 breakfast, 2 picnic lunches, 2 dinners, and snacks.

Location and Map

Our resort is a few miles north of the Smoky Mountains National Park (shown as the **blue** dot). Here is a map of the entire smoky mountains. The paths we'll be driving along are colored:



Downloadable Map

Here are downloadable versions of the map - with or without my custom markers:

1. [Map With Markers \(JPEG\)](#)
2. [Map Without Markers \(PDF\)](#)- this helps to see the actual path of the roads. And it's a PDF, so it's meant to be printed

Itinerary

I. Thursday, September 24

Check out Santa's Claus-et, get food at Food City, cook some dinner, check out that hot tub, and enjoy the cabin before we rest after a day of travel.

II. Friday, September 25

The highlight of this day will be two motor nature trails, as well as a picnic at a picnic pavilion on the latter of those trails. Motor means we drive them, and don't have to hike to see the pretty things. The two trails are:

- [Little River Road](#) (Shown in **green** in the above map)
 - More info [here](#) too:
 - This is an ~18 mile road which will take about 45 min one way to drive
- [Roaring Fork Road Motor Nature Trail](#) (Shown in **yellow** in the above map)
 - More info [here](#) too:
 - This is a ~6 mile short drive road which circles back to where it starts

7:45 - 8:00 am: Wake Up. Pack some snacks for the car. Depart for breakfast at 9:30. Get gas if we need to.

10:00 am: Find parking. Arrive at **Breakfast** - [Pancake Pantry](#)

11:00 am: Briefly visit next door candy shop.

11:30 am: Sugarland's Visitor Center (better go to the restroom here)

12:15 pm: Begin Little River Road motor trail. It's an 18 mile trail.

1:00 pm: Reach Townsend, TN - the end of the trail.

1:15 pm: Grab a coffee or other beverage at [The Artistic Bean](#) coffee shop.

1:45 pm: Begin drive back along Little River Road.

2:45 pm: Reach Sugarland's Visitor Center (but not go in, just drive past it)

3:00 pm: **Lunch** - Picnic at Twin Creeks Picnic Pavilion (at the beginning of Roaring Fork Road Motor Nature Trail)

3:45 pm: Begin the Roaring Fork Motor Nature Trail

5:30 pm: End of trail - drive back to cabin and relax.

III. Saturday, September 25

The big highlight of today will be driving through the forest a ways, ending up at **Clingman's Dome**, and stopping at **Newfound Gap** afterwards. Here's some information:

- <http://smokymountains.com/drives/clingmans-dome/>
- <http://www.clingmansdome.com/>
- <http://www.nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/nfg.htm>

Clingman's Dome is about a 1hr 10 min drive from our resort and is 29 miles away. We take a nice scenic drive through the core of the Smoky Mountain National Forest (shown in **pink** in the map above).

After we park at the visitor center, there is a **.5 mile paved walking trail** that leads to the tower. It is **very steep**.



7:45 - 8:00 am: Wake Up. Get ready and cook breakfast. Leave at 10:00. Get gas.

10:30 am: Park and arrive at [Donut Friar](#) for some confectionary treats for the car.

10:45 am: Continue walking around the shops at the Village

12:00 pm: Start driving to Clingman's Dome.

12:45 pm: Arrive and park at Clingman's Dome.

1:00 pm: Start picnic. **Note:** This might be a true picnic-style lunch with a blanket on the ground. Reviews indicate there may not be tables to eat at.

1:45 pm: Begin .5 mile trek to the dome, enjoy the view, and head back down.

3:15 pm: Pack up car and leave Clingman's Dome.

3:45 pm: Stop at Newfound Gap (Right at TN - NC state-line)

4:30 pm: Leave Newfound Gap

5:15 pm: Arrive back in Gatlinburg, TN and park near Smoky Mountain Brewery.

5:30 pm: [Ober Gatlinburg Aerial Tramway](#) - \$12/adult - \$9.50 5-11. 4 & under free

6:30 pm: **Dinner** at [Smoky Mountain Brewery](#).

7:45 pm: Drive back to resort. Pack things up and get a little bit of sleep.

IV. Sunday, September 25

Wake up super early and head back home! Layla and I's flight leaves at 6:15 am, so we'll be leaving the cabin at about 3am.