charlies bunion hike (on the At)

HIKING THE MOUNTAINS OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

Enjoy incredible panoramic mountain vistas on this popular day hike in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Charlies Bunion is a stone outcrop 0.1 just off the famed Appalachian Trail that bisects the GSMNP. After a steady hike north on the AT from Newfound Gap (follow the white blazes), you will find yourself on the literal ‘spine’ of the Appalachian Mountains. There are plenty of viewpoints, allowing you to take a break and recover your breath. Stop at Icewater Spring Shelter, noted for its ice-cold piped spring nearby on the Trail. (Be sure to treat water before drinking.) In less than a mile, look for a short side trail to Charlies Bunion. Use caution though. There are steep drops and the rocks can be slippery when wet. And, if you’re lucky, you might encounter a thru-hiker backpacking the 2180-mile epic AT journey from Georgia to Maine. Plan about 1 hour and 45 minutes to drive to the trailhead.

**Length**: 4 miles (about 8 miles RT)  
**Elevation Gain**: 1640 feet  
**Trail Type**: Out and Back  
**Skill Level**: Strenuous  
**Duration**: 5+ hours (depends on pace and duration of stay)  
**Highest Elevation**: 6122 feet

**Directions from Asheville**

1. Get on **I-240 W**.
2. Merge onto **I-40 W** via **EXIT 31B** toward **Canton/Knoxville**.
3. Slight right onto **US-74 W/Great Smoky Mountains Expy**  via **EXIT** **27** (signs for **US-19/US-23/Clyde/Waynesville/Maggie Valley/Franklin/Murphy/Atlanta**)
4. Merge onto **US-23 S/US-19 S/US-74 W** via **EXIT** **107** toward **E Jones Cove**.
5. Merge onto **US-19** via **EXIT** **103** toward **Maggie Valley/Cherokee**.
6. [**Option**: Take Blue Ridge Parkway about 12 miles west of EXIT 103. Stay on BRP for about 13 miles to Newfound Gap Road. Follow Steps 8-9 below. Shorter miles; but takes about the same time.]
7. Merge onto **US-441 N** via the ramp to **Great Smoky Mts/National Park/Cherokee**
8. Continue to follow **US-441**. (Becomes **Newfound Gap Road.)**
9. Drive on **Newfound Gap Road** to Newfound Gap parking lot which is 16 miles from **Oconaluftee Visitor Center**. The trailhead is to the left of the overlook, at the end of the parking lot near the restrooms.