

The Chattanooga Guides Series

# Guided Adventure and Exploration

**Read time:** 8 minutes

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**Seasonality:** Year-round; some outdoor tours seasonal (March-October)

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**Neighborhoods:** Downtown, Southside, North Shore, Signal Mountain, Chickamauga

**Best for:** Families, Adventure seekers, History buffs, Food lovers

**#tours**

On your last trip you're at your third tourist trap, lines couldn't be any longer, you're sure your tickets are in your back left pocket (where they always are darnnit!) but now your scrambling to filter your gmail for them. Your spouse is agitated, and if they're agitated then by all means you have ground to be piping hot!

Apologies for the projection. If you've been there before, let's you and I not let that happen again.

But we don't pass that torch to just anyone, we're handing it off to a professional Chattanooga. Someone who made it their mission to deliver a top-shelf customer experience on a topic they naturally feel passion towards.

Should you want to:

- Explore the famed Chattanooga outdoors without worrying if you're still on the right trail an hour in.
- Dine at local favorite restaurants without trying to figure out the best times and tables.
- Learn the cities history and take the sights of well known landmarks with the efficiency and enthusiasm of professional guide.
- See a bat cave via kayak, or ghosts via walking

Then there's a guided adventure out there for you. If none of those grabbed you we've included a few other options for your consideration.

## By Topic.

**City & History**

**Outdoor Adventures**

**Food & Entertainment**

## City & History.

**Chattanooga Trolley Tours.**

Take a journey on city tour in a nostalgic vintage tour bus. The captivating red and green colored trolley and wood lined interior provide an inviting environment to take in the city sights and sounds while you listen to your local guides descriptions of the city of Chattanooga.

Trolley tours can be anywhere from 75 minutes to up to 4 hours in length depending on the tour option you elect. You'll come away with intimate details on the stories, history, and maybe a few tall tales that have come to make Chattanooga what it is today.

For those visiting in the summer months rest assured the vehicle has A/C and is enclosed.

The Trolley is not short on tour options:

1. Trolley Tour with Train Ride. This is the big ticket item, it's a trolley tour followed by a ride through history on a train at the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museums.
  2. Folklore and True Crime Tour. Take the trolley on a different kind of Chattanooga tour, one for the true crime and haunted histories enthusiasts.
  3. One-Hour City Tour. A condensed version of the trolley tour for those in a time crunch.
  4. City Tour with Coker Automotive Museum Visit. Enjoy the classic trolley tour ride with an added visit to the Coker Automotive Museum for vintage cars and bikes exhibits.
- Nobody refers to these as 'the tour four' but they could be. If you're interested in getting to know the city and it's history in detail hopefully one of those piqued your interest.

Check [their website](#) for booking information as the tour schedules can vary.

You can also do your own private tour with advanced planning.

Boasting a 4.9 Google Review, this guided adventure is a fan favorite for people of all ages.

## Chattanooga Ghost Tours.

Chattanooga was grounds for prominent civil war battles, with cemeteries of the time still operating. The Trail of Tears, which the city played a large role in, added another tragedy passage to its complex history. Hauntings and paranormal are still rumored to this day from murders and events that occurred generations ago.

Those facts can only mean one thing, epic ghost tours. Okay maybe there's more than one conclusion to draw but you get the point. With this storied history comes some fun ghost tours etched in fact and folklore and one of the more popular businesses running these adventures is Chattanooga Ghost Tours.

Not only can you do a walking ghost tour, but they also offer ghost hunting options for some added excitement for the brave.

At the time of last update they have a Murder and Mayhem Haunted History walking tour, UTC + Cemetery Ghost Hunt, and a Walking + Hunt Combo tour for those who want the best of both worlds.

1. Murder and Mayhem Haunted History walking tour. Take two hours in your evening to explore downtown Chattanooga through haunted history and tall tales of Chattanooga's past.
2. UTC Cemetery Ghost Hunt (hunting equipment included). Are you really going to pass up an opportunity to ghost hunt? I hope you have a good reason. Otherwise take a 1.5 hour hunting tour around the UTC campus with a stop at the Citizens Cemetery (if ghost hunting was scary enough on its own).

3. Walking Ghost Tour/Hunt Combo. A 1.5 hour combined tour for the best of both worlds if you couldn't choose just one.

**Additional note:** They have a special Deluxe tour on Wednesday evenings where the tour stops at a couple of Chattanooga bars for virgin or alcoholic beverages.

The tours are designed for all ages. The walking ghost tours are rain or shine so be prepared with an appropriate jacket for any inclement weather conditions.

Tour available can be found on the [Chattanooga Ghost Tours](#) website.

# Outdoor Adventures.

## Bat Cave Sunset Kayak Tour.

Searching for outdoor activities in Chattanooga? How about Kayaking? How about Kayaking to watch up to 100,000 gray bats exit their cave for a nightly insect hunt?

If don't have a deep rooted bat phobia (chiroptophobia), and you are a seeker of outdoor novelty this could be your chance to create some lasting memories.

If you're in Chattanooga between March - October you can book this one of a kind tour. Their online reviews go on about what a fun experience this is, currently boasting a 5.0 star rating.

Keep your eyes open for other wildlife you might get lucky to see on the paddle such as bald eagles, deer, river otter, and osprey.

No previous kayaking experience for you or a group member? The 3 mile route is considered easy, and your guides will provide instructions. Anyone having difficulty can ask to be towed.

Still worried about your lack of Kayaking experience? Maybe [this review](#) from Mimi Maxwell can offer some relief "... Katie was our guide and she was wonderful. Our group had 2 who had never been in a kayak before and she was very patient and helpful."

Bring up to 20 people on your tour to share the adventure with your loved ones (or loved ones in the making, for the newly dating).

Some additional details:

- **Tour season:** Ongoing from March to early October
- **Tour time:** Tours run about 2 hours and start around 7:30pm
- **Meeting Location:** Maple View Recreation Area, Maplevue Rd, South Pittsburg, TN 37380
- **What to bring:** Rain jacket weather dependent, a pre-filled up water bottle
- **Individual ticket price:** \$75 (but subject to change)

Learn more about these tours and book yours on the [Chattanooga Guided Adventures](#) website.

**Bonus Idea:** If you end up loving the bat cav tour, or you don't happen to be in town in the right months, this same company runs a Sandhill Crane viewing tour from November through February where you can view thousands of seasonal cranes on Hiwassee Island on the Tennessee River. Learn about the once endangered species comeback and why they make a stop in our area on their migration.

For more self-guided outdoor adventures, check out our [Chattanooga Outdoors Guide](#) with 71 hiking, biking, and

paddling routes.

## Chickamauga Battlefield Tour Options.

Learn about this pivotal battle in the Civil War, which might still be an understatement. The battle of Chickamauga was a turning point in the war and the second most deadly battle next to Gettysburg. They have both guided and self guided tour options for you to explore and learn in this US National Park.

We have a dedicated guide to the [Civil War in Chattanooga](#) for those with a larger interest in the topic.

Tour times are subject to change depending on guide availability, but typically group tours run on Saturdays and Sundays at 10AM and 2PM and tend to last about 90 minutes.

The National Park Service has put together a guided tour that includes eight different points of interest. Drive or walk it, the grounds are beautiful, well maintained, and home to a lot of wildlife.

To access the tour download the National Park Service app on your mobile device search for the Chickamauga Battlefield.

Frankly, it's not the most user friendly app in the store. If you have trouble, the people at the [visitors center](#) can be very helpful, and they'll also provide you with a park map.

**Private Tour Option:** Robert Carter, an author and historian offers private tours of the park, learn more on [his website](#).

## Hiking Tours by Experience Chattanooga.

Not sure if you've heard the news but Chattanooga has a great outdoor scene.

If you're not exactly sure which trails and parks you want to explore on your visit (or days off work for our local readers), we suggest looking into guided hikes provided by Experience Chattanooga.

Nearing 200 5 star reviews, chances are it will be time well spent. They variety of options for exploration, but a few cherry picked ones include:

- Good Morning Mountains. For waking up early and starting your day with panoramic views of the city and Tennessee River Gorge. There's also a different offering that includes an Alpaca farm.
- Soul Therapy. For a hike and tour of one of Tennessee's top waterfall trails.
- Summer Views and Blues. If you're up for a swim this option will take you to one of Chattanooga's best blue water swimming holes. It's a considered a moderately difficult hike.

**Idea for Families:** Their Alpacas, Mountains and Coffee option offers an opportunity to feed alpaca's and grab a coffee after your morning hike at Rosie Mae's Alpaca Farm. You'll be picked up in the morning and all is concluded by lunchtime.

They have more offerings on [their website](#), check it out to book your tour and get more information.

All tours are private and run by two lifelong Chattanoogaans. A bonus included in your tour booking is professional photography throughout the trip, and you might like to know they donate a portion of their proceeds to the parks and communities in the area.



# Food & Entertainment.

## Trolley Pub Chattanooga.

Fresh air, city and mountain views, your favorite beverage or two, and some light exercise make for a heck of an afternoon on the Trolley Pub.

Bring your own elixir of choice and get out to explore the city in unique fashion.

While out getting your thirst fixers, make sure you download music in advance, the company operates on the Bring Your Own Playlist model. You can connect to their bluetooth speakers and play your groups favorite songs.

Your tour guide will point out interesting historic and modern day relevant landmarks as you drink, pedal, listen, and sightsee.

If you're worried about pedaling for two hours straight, we can offer some peace of mind. Along the way you'll take a multiple breaks stopping at some of Chattanooga's best bars and restaurants.

The pub is a popular group activity can fit up to fourteen people if you opt for a private tour, check out [their website](#) for scheduling.

Group tour pricing ranges between \$300-375 at the time of our last update.

Another option is to get individual tickets for their Mixer Tour, where you and a group of like minded party bikers will explore the city my pedaling together. At the time of last update these tickets cost in the range of ~\$25-30.

Trolley Pub events are rain or shine so be sure to check the forecast and bring appropriate clothing.

The Mixer Tours are for adults 21+ and for private tours the minimum age for passengers is 15. You may need to call a babysitter for a couple of hours for this one.

## Southern Belle.

One of Chattanooga's most popular date-night options or a place to bring family for dinner when they're in town is the Southern Belle.

Forget waterfront restaurant, take the water on the road with you as this historic paddle wheel riverboat leaves port traveling the Tennessee River for a scenic fun-filled evening.

The southern charm of the vessel will transport you in time to the early 19th century. When these vessels weren't used for transportation, they were luxury cruises only available to the wealthy class. The Southern Belle is a modern sightseeing tribute that moment in time.

The Southern Belle company offers many touring options that vary in length. One of the more popular is the Sunset Cruise which is a 1.5 hour river ride that includes live music, a moon pie, optional food and drink updates. This event is recommended for ages 3+.

Some of their other cruising options include a Whiskey Tasting Tour, Wine Tasting Tour, a romantic Sip and Sail event, amongst many other options for your party.

Check [their website](#) for more listings and availability.

## Food Tour.

Finding the right places to eat in any city can be an overwhelming task, why not leave it to a professional through Chatt Taste.

They provide private tours, events, and at the time of writing three distinct group tours for varied Chattanooga culinary experiences:

**Downtown Chattanooga Food Tour.** Explore downtown Chattanooga’s food scene and learn about our city exploratory adventure.

**Historic Southside Food Tour.** Explore Historic South sides food offerings in this two hour guided adventure.




**ChattaBrunch Food Tour.** Can you guess what this ones about? It’s hard to go wrong with a mid morning combination of food, art, history and mimosas.

More offerings and detailed information on the restaurants and individual tour details are available on [their website](#) linked below as they are subject to periodic change.

This is another tour company with a 5 star review set. Previous foodies rave about their experiences with the various hosts and call out their knowledge and friendliness.

If you’re thinking about signing up for one, and you can do so [here](#)

# Guided Tours Summary.

|  TOUR                      |  DESCRIPTION           |
|---|---|
|  Chattanooga Trolley Tours | Vintage bus tours covering Chattanooga history, folklore, or trains—great for families and history buffs. |

|  <b>TOUR</b>                           |  <b>DESCRIPTION</b>            |
|---|---|
|  <b>Chattanooga Ghost Tours</b>        | Spooky walking tours, ghost hunts with equipment, and even haunted bar crawls on Wednesdays.                    |
|  <b>Trolley Pub Chattanooga</b>        | Pedal-powered BYOB group tours with music and stops at local bars—great for adult outings.                      |
|  <b>Southern Belle Riverboat</b>       | Dinner and scenic cruises on a historic riverboat with options like sunset, wine, and whiskey tours.            |
|  <b>Bat Cave Sunset Kayak</b>          | Guided kayak trip to watch 100,000 bats emerge at sunset. Beginner-friendly and highly rated.                   |
|  <b>Chickamauga Battlefield Tours</b>  | Ranger-led or self-guided tours via the NPS app or with local historians through preserved battlefields.        |
|  <b>Experience Chattanooga Hikes</b> | Private hiking tours with photography and local guides. Includes alpaca visits, waterfalls, and swimming holes. |
|  <b>Chatt Taste Food Tours</b>       | Curated food tours of downtown and the Southside. Also offers brunch tours with art and mimosas.                |

## Other Guides.

- [Civil War History](#)
- [Cloudland Canyon State Park](#)
- [Outdoor Adventures](#)
- [Sweet Treats](#)