

Experience

Tennessee & North Carolina

The Appalachians Sampler

Larry Gore

Viewed from space the area around the Tennessee and North Carolina border would look as wrinkled as a prune. While wrinkles may be the bane of aging for people, wrinkles on the surface of our planet simply provide a fun playground for motorcyclists.

So much has been written about the Smokey Mountain National Park that many people seem to think that is all there is to the area around the Tennessee/North Carolina border – and the park certainly is one of our national treasures. But along

with the good, comes the bad in the form of overuse, congestion, traffic jams and too many people.

This ride, a little further east, provides all the beauty of the “Smokies” as you enjoy a sampling of what Appalachia has to offer.

The Appalachian Mountains stretch generally from the edge of Mississippi and Georgia up through parts of Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Ohio, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New York. It also includes the entire state of West Virginia.

Appalachia covers a total area the size of the United Kingdom and

is home to more than 20 million people.

In this area the Appalachian Range runs closely parallel to the Blue Ridge Mountains, separated by a beautiful valley that has hosted much of the history of the United States. The entire Appalachian area was so geographically isolated for so long that it developed its own unique cultures, customs, traditions and speech. The area has maintained a strong oral tradition in its music and song and a strong religious tradition.

The Appalachians Sampler Ride is a 144-mile loop that is easily accessible from Knoxville, TN, Asheville NC,

Experience: Tennessee & North Carolina

or the Tennessee/Virginia/Kentucky tri-state area.

The scenery on this ride is breathtaking as you enjoy the lushness of the mountain wilderness, the babbling streams that seem to always be cascading along next to the road. In the springtime the mountains are coming out of their winter sleep with awesome displays of flowers and new growth everywhere. By late September nature has begun to wrap the mountains with their fall coats of reds, oranges, yellows and brown as nature makes its own preparations for the coming winter.

Visit in winter, after a heavy snow and you will be part of a scene from a Currier & Ives lithograph.

This loop can be entered from any point, but for convenience we will start out in Johnson City, TN. From the intersection of US 19 and US 321 take US 321 east to Elizabethton – this will be the only real “city driving” that you will have on this trip. At Elizabethton again connect at US 19 and head south into the mountains.

For ease of directions you will stay on US 19 for the 121 miles until it brings you back once again to Johnson City, TN.

The loop wraps around the Pisgah National Forest. For side trips you might want to visit some of the towns inside the loop such as Bandana, Bakersville, Red Hill or Harrell Hill. Fill your tank before starting the loop.

Points of Interest

Roan Mountain is a typical Appalachian bald phenomenon. A bald is a mountain top treeless area that is usually either covered with rhododendrons or is a large grassy area. Unlike the Rockies the Appalachians never reach a high enough altitude to be above the tree line. The “balds” seem to not be different from other areas in terms of soil, climate or other factors – they just seem to have inherited their own version of male pattern baldness. In any event the treeless aspect of these peaks creates exceptional vantage points for some magnificent views.

Another somewhat mysterious feature of Roan Mountain is the



BRISTOL
TENNESSEE | VIRGINIA

Laying down Tracks...

Living up to Legends.

Nestled along the scenic Blue Ridge Mountains of NE Tennessee and SW Virginia lies Bristol, TN/VA. As the official Birthplace of Country Music, Bristol is one of seven major venues along Virginia's Heritage Music Trail – The Crooked Road. Bristol is also home to NASCAR racing's Bristol Motor Speedway. Explore Historic Downtown Bristol's NEW Interactive Walking Tour! With a thriving historic downtown, nightly music venues, and an abundance of events held daily at the Speedway, Bristol is truly *Layin' Down Tracks and Livin' Up to Legends.*

For a FREE Bristol Visitor Guide call (423) 989-4850 or book your hotel online at www.bristolchamber.org

TENNESSEE
THE STAGE IS SET FOR YOU
www.tnvaction.com

Virginia 
is for Lovers™
www.virginia.org

humming or buzzing noise that is frequently heard. A sound akin to either high-tension wires or, as some have described it, the buzzing of a swarm of bees. No one is sure of the source of the sounds although the most likely cause is electrical charges passing between the ground and the sky.

The panoramic view from Roan includes the Blue Ridge to the east and the south and the Great Smokies to the north and the west. You will definitely want your camera for this one.

Kona, NC marks the burial sites of Charles Silver who, at 19, was mur-

dered with an ax by Frankie, his 18-year old wife. Part of his body was recovered and buried, then another part was found. Not wanting to disturb his resting place a second burial site was added. Then a third portion was found, resulting in three separate graves. Frankie was arrested, tried and hanged for the murder, although later investigation seems to make a good case that it was self-defense.

This murder is considered by many to be the origins of the Ballad of Frankie and Johnny.

Brown Mountain Lights. For hundreds of years the presence of strange lights have been reported on Brown Mountain. They appear along the ridges of this mountain on a regular basis and are faithful enough that in clear weather, you can see them just about any night any time of the year. Many explanations have been offered over the years but, so far, none have adequately explained this mystery.

Gas. Although the distance isn't great these are small towns and the hours of operation for gas stations may not be what you are accustomed to.

Roads. Some of the towns inside the loop are quite remote. Check road conditions before heading further into "the hills". Logging is big business in the area and the heavy trucks can turn even a moderately good road into a gravelly nightmare. It is always best to travel with other motorcycles in case of problems. The roads within the loop can be

VACATION & EXECUTIVE RENTALS of Chattanooga Tennessee

Pets Allowed

1-6 bedroom homes, cabins, and cottages
perfect for family vacations, honeymoon, or business needs.

Locations on Lookout Mountain, Tennessee River, and surrounding areas assure
convenience to area attractions and shopping.

Hot tubs, boat dock, fireplaces, fishing, nature trails, washer/dryer, fully-equipped
kitchens.

2-night minimum -- weekly rates available.



Vacation Rentals - Chattanooga
6808 Jesse Conner Rd.
Chattanooga, TN 37421
Downtown Phone: (423) 886-6130
Fax: (423) 892-3233
Website: [www.chattanoogacabins.com](http://www.chattanooga cabins.com)



very isolated with not much traffic to help in case of a problem. NC 226 and NC 80 have some very good twisties and only a minimal amount of traffic. If you do venture inside the loop be sure to visit the Roan Mountain Visitors Center.

Cell Phones. Service is unpredictable, at best. I have never seen the "can you hear me now?" guy do an ad from these hills and hollers.

We hope you enjoy this small taste of Appalachia and that you take a trip to the area along the border of Tennessee and North Carolina. If you do you will want to go back again and again to visit more of Appalachia.

Maggie Valley Inn & Conf. Center
Maggie Valley, NC
www.MaggieValleyHotel.com

Mountain View Lodge & Cabins
www.mtnviewlodge.com
1-800-903-6811

Abbey Inn Motel
Maggie Valley, NC
www.MaggieValleyInn.com

Gatlinburg Motorcycle Clubhouse
www.wolfbay.com/cherokee.html
reservations@gatlinburgresortchalets.com

Rocky Top Campground & RV Park
Blountville, TN
800-456-6456

Iron Mountain Inn

Enjoy an Appalachian Mountain Vacation. Ride "the green-eyed snake" aka SR 42. Luxury at the Inn, Creekside Chalet w/hot tub, or the Cottage on Watauga Lake. Safe parking for bikes.

888-781-2399
www.IronMountainInn.com

Smokey Shadows Lodge

Rustic lodge built of hand-hewn log & stone on 4500 ft. bluff - most magnificent view in all of **Maggie Valley, NC!** Continental breakfast included, candlelit family style dinners by reservation.

866-926-0001
www.smokeyshadows.com

3rd Annual
Quake Lake Motorcycle Rally
A Family Event

September 21-23, 2007

\$2000 - 2 Day Dice Run

50/50 · Bike Games · Guided Scenic Rides
Pontoon Ride (Friday Night)
Bonfire · Music · Door Prizes

Proceeds to Charity

www.reelfoottourism.com/quake_lake.htm

SUBSCRIBE ONLINE

VISIT TODAY
GETONThEROADAGAIN.COM