

# Franklin & Nantahala

NORTH CAROLINA



**DISCOVER FRANKLIN**



*Courtesy of the Franklin Chamber of Commerce*







*Franklin Welcome Center*  
98 Hyatt Road  
Franklin, NC 28734  
800-336-7829

The Franklin Area Chamber of Commerce and Welcome Center officially opened the doors of our new building in June of 2017, beginning a new chapter in the way we are able to inform visitors who are coming in for the first time, just passing through, or those who have been making Franklin an annual trip. We're here to welcome you to Franklin and make sure you find what you're looking for!

Our new location, at 98 Hyatt Road, offers an immersive experience for visitors to the area. As soon as you walk in the door, you realize that you're not in a run of the mill Welcome Center. As you step in, you're greeted with a smile and immediately see our Area Attractions Hallway, where some of our many popular area attractions have come in and set up 3 dimensional displays, highlighting their activities. From ziplining, to gem mining, to Lake Nantahala, and the Smoky Mountain Center for the Performing Arts, to name a few, the displays are fun and informative, something we're very proud of. Just before you step out of the hallway, you'll find our Hiking & Waterfalls displays, with free maps and guides, that will give you the keys to finding the right adventure for you.

As you walk out of the Area Attractions Hallway, you step into our Information Center, where you'll find brochures, rack cards, business cards, along with information on where to shop, eat, play, stay, and so much more! Take a look at the wall posters and you'll understand that the Area Attractions Hallway was just the tip of the iceberg in what the area has to offer! We even have a video kiosk that allows the viewer to sit down and learn about the

Franklin & Nantahala Area and introduce you to some of our local business owners as well. After seeing all of this, you may decide that you'd like to make a change and explore the possibility of moving to the area. We've got you covered! Our Relocation Center has contact information for local realtors, along with real estate guides for you to take.

Stepping back out towards the Main Lobby, you find yourself in our spacious Retail & Souvenir Area, where we offer so many unique Franklin area souvenirs and merchandise. From seasonal clothing, t-shirts, stuffed animals, walking sticks, local books and so much more, it's the perfect place to find gifts for your family or for you to take a part of Franklin home with you. We're very proud of our local crafters and offer many locally made items for sale as well!

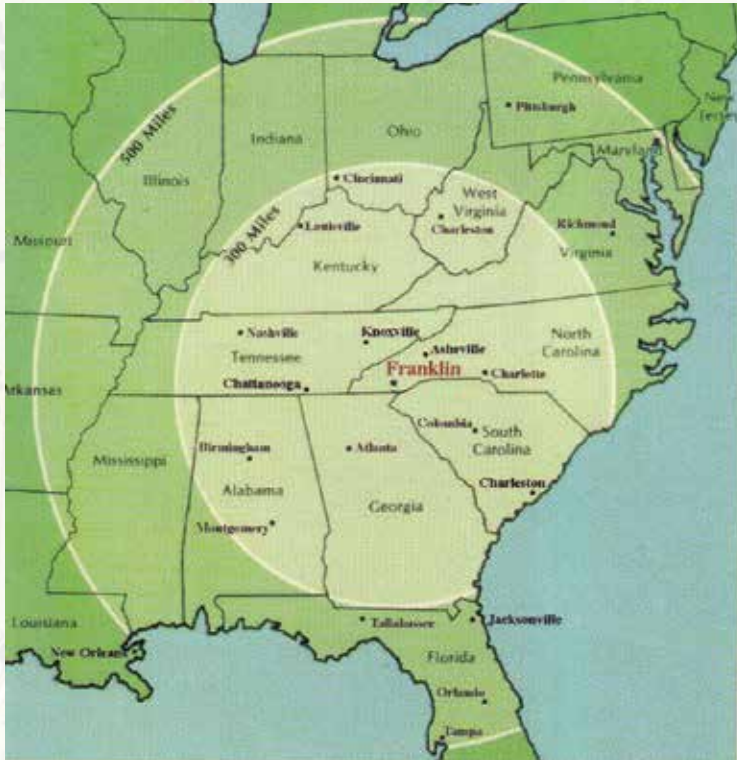
Across from the retail area, we have a lovely hand crafted large wooden table in our snack and concession area. With drinks, snacks, coffee, and hot chocolate, it is the perfect place to stop in and refresh yourself with a snack and enjoy our Free Wi-Fi access. We also have restrooms available, and a place for the kids to play while mom and dad get a much-needed break from the road.

Whether you're in town for a short time or you're here for a season, we want you to know that you're always welcome here at the Franklin Area Chamber of Commerce & Welcome Center! We're here to make your time in the area a memorable experience that you'll want to come back to again and again!





# Driving Directions to Franklin, NC



## From Asheville:

Take I-40 West to Exit 27 (23 South/74 West). Stay on 23/74 to Exit 81 (U.S. 441/23 South). Approximately 18 miles to Franklin from this exit. Approximately 65 miles.

## From Atlanta:

Follow I-85 North to I-985. Left on I-985 which becomes 23/365 North. 23/365 becomes 23/441 North. Follow straight into Franklin. Approximately 125 miles.

## From Greenville, SC:

Take I-85 South to Exit 19 (Clemson). Follow 76 West to Clayton, Georgia. Take U.S. 441 North straight to Franklin. Approximately 110 miles.

## From Knoxville, TN:

Interstate: I-40 East to Exit 20 (Hwy 276 South). Stay south on 276 until reaching 23/74 South. Follow to Exit 81 (U.S. 441/23 South). Approximately 18 miles to Franklin from this exit. Approximately 130 miles.

Scenic: Take U.S. 441 South from Knoxville to Sevierville (approximately 25 miles). Remain on 441 South to Pigeon Forge/Gatlinburg. Take by-pass around Gatlinburg. Remain on 441 South through the Great Smoky Mountains National Park to Cherokee. Stay on 441 South to Franklin (35 miles from Cherokee). Approximately 110 miles.





Our small mountain town and surrounding area is just full of surprises waiting to be discovered. Here is just a sample of what makes Franklin, NC truly unique.

# FRANKLIN sampler



## Gem Mining

Gem mining is still one of the most popular activities in the Franklin area. Mining for precious stones began in 1870. Ruby and sapphire are still the most sought after today. Tiffany's and other companies showed an interest in the area in the 1890's hoping to find the source of the rubies found in the corundum mines. The search ended in the early part of the 20th century. Try your hand at any of the seven gem mines in our area. See page 36 for more info.

## Smoky Mountain Center for the Performing Arts

This 1,500 seat, state-of-the-art facility presents the finest in performing arts in our area. Performances include passion plays, musical productions, professional drama troupes, dance and choral festivals, recitals, and various genres including country, bluegrass, gospel, pop, contemporary Christian, and more. The stunning architecture, technical facilities, and impeccable acoustics provide the highest professional standards for both the audience and performers. With the main focus on family entertainment, this is a place to come and enjoy a good time.

[www.GreatMountainMusic.com](http://www.GreatMountainMusic.com)  
828-524-1528



## Little Tennessee River Greenway

For a great change of pace, take a stroll or a bike ride along the Little Tennessee River Greenway. This four-mile, 13-foot-wide trail winds its way through Franklin along the Little Tennessee River. See Greenway map on page 18 in this guide.

## Canoeing, Tubing, Rafting, Kayaking

Canoeing, tubing, and kayaking on the Cullasaja, Little Tennessee and Nantahala Rivers offer a great way to cool off on a warm day or enjoy the scenic beauty of the area from a different point of view. Several canoe and tube put-ins are located throughout the area. The Nantahala River is famous for its whitewater rafting. Several outfitters are available for guided trips and rentals in the area.

See listings for rafting on page 75.

## Hiking

This area is rich in a variety of hiking trails. The Appalachian Trail passes just a few miles west of Franklin and can be accessed at many places. The Bartram Trail also passes through Franklin, going east and west, and offers many highlights. There is a wide variety of trails offering hikes of different lengths listed on the chamber's website and on page 26-27 of this guide.



## Waterfalls

Western North Carolina is the home to many beautiful waterfalls. A guide to 16 scenic waterfalls is listed on the chamber's website and on pages 20-21 of this guide.

## The Factory & Jump Factory

Located south of Franklin on Highway 441, The Factory is Western North Carolina's award winning destination for family friendly entertainment. Enjoy hours of fun for kids of all ages. The Factory features over 100 arcade games, mini-golf, go-karts, laser tag, and now a new feature, the Jump Factory - a trampoline park. Plus, there's even an area with fun just for the little kids. Hungry? Be sure to stop by the Pizza factory. Open Monday - Saturday. 1024 Georgia Road.

TheFactory.bz 828-349-8888

## Cycling

Enjoy all types of cycling in these beautiful mountains. Visit the chamber's website at [VisitFranklinNC.com](http://VisitFranklinNC.com) for road bike routes and mountain bike trails, as well as, suggestions for motorcycle trips. See Bicycle Shop listing on page 69.





# Discover Our History

## Scottish Tartans Museum

As the only one of its kind in the United States, this museum is a direct extension of the Scottish Tartans Society in Scotland. The museum not only displays Scottish Tartans, but covers various aspects

of the Scottish experience - culture, history, dress, migration and military. Visitors are invited to view their family tartan, connect with their clan, and learn about the history of Highland dress. The gift shop is open to the public. Admission to the Museum: \$4 plus tax adults, 12 - 7 years old - \$2 plus tax and 6 and under free. Open year round. Tuesday - Saturday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

**86 East Main Street ♦ 828-524-7472**  
**[www.scottishtartan.org](http://www.scottishtartan.org)**

## Macon County Historical Museum

Located on Main Street in downtown Franklin, this museum is housed in the J. R. Pendergrass building which is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places. The building is an excellent and little altered example of early twentieth century retail store design. The building is complemented by original fixtures from the old store and a fascinating variety of artifacts and photographs illustrating Macon County's past. Admission is free. Visitors are always welcome and conducted group tours can be arranged on request. Open year round.

**36 West Main Street ♦ 828-524-9758**  
**[www.maconnhistorical.org](http://www.maconnhistorical.org)**

## Ruby City Gem Museum

This museum located in downtown Franklin has specimens, artifacts, ivory carvings, rare gems and more. You can see hundreds of spheres handmade from different types of stone by the founder of the store. "The World's Largest sapphire" weighing 385 pounds, as well as, one of the largest gem quality rubies found in the area (162 carats) are on display. Be sure to see an authentic shrunken head, a section of local arrowheads and the black-light section is a must see. Free to the public and cameras are welcome. Open Year Round with winter hours during January and February.

**130 East Main Street ♦ 828-524-3967**  
**[www.rubycity.com/museum.html](http://www.rubycity.com/museum.html)**

## The Franklin Gem & Mineral Museum

Located in Franklin's historic "Old Jail" on Phillips Street across from the Macon County Courthouse, this museum has thousands of specimens on display including a local ruby weighing 2 pounds! There are six rooms dedicated to the cataloging and preservation of gem and mineral specimens from around the world, as well as, North Carolina and of course Macon County - home to the famous Cowee Valley where rubies and sapphires have been found for over 100 years! Admission is Free. Open May - October

**25 Phillips Street ♦ 828-369-7831**  
**[www.fgmm.org](http://www.fgmm.org)**

## Wilderness Taxidermy

Let your next adventure begin with a visit to Wilderness Taxidermy located on Highlands Road in Franklin. Their state of the art wildlife museum houses a collection of animals from throughout the world. Do not miss your opportunity to see quality taxidermy in a beautiful setting. The facility is open everyday except Wednesday and Sunday. Hours are 8 am - 5 p.m. except Saturday - 8 a.m. to noon.

**5040 Highlands Road ♦ 828-524-3677**  
**[www.wildernesstaxidermy.com](http://www.wildernesstaxidermy.com)**

## Cowee School Arts & Heritage Center

Built in 1943 on the site of a Civilian Conservation Corps camp by the WPA, Cowee School served thousands of students until it was closed as a school in 2012. It continues as an institution of learning, an exciting outdoor venue for music and the arts, and host to a number of affiliates, classrooms, and programs. There is so much to do at Cowee School.

**51 Cowee School Drive ♦ 828-349-1945**  
**[www.coweeschool.org](http://www.coweeschool.org)**

## Down Memory Lane Toy Museum

This museum contains the toys collected for over 60 years. The collection consists of a large selection of Studebaker cars, truck, military and construction equipment. There is also a sizeable collection of other toys, dolls and accessories and pedal cars. This museum is located in the Cowee School Heritage Center.

**51 Cowee School Drive ♦ 828-421-7280**  
**[www.dmltoymuseum.org](http://www.dmltoymuseum.org)**



# Franklin's Haunted History Tour



Did the aging hands of Confederate Captain Stephen Whitaker tremble in anger or relief as he signed the formal surrender, folded the final flag and handed over the last sword of the war to the grinning, arrogant Union Colonel George W. Kirk? Did the two men lock eyes? Were there any pleasantries exchanged? Was there sun or rain when the final surrender of the American Civil War occurred on Franklin, North Carolina's dusty main street in May of 1865?

Did Willie McMahan cry or plead or remain stoic when the noose was looped around his head, tightened and fixed in place? Did Sheriff Higdon allow him any last words, any final thoughts? Did the family of the innocent man he'd shot to death stand nearby with clenched fists and tear-filled eyes? Did everyone present at the hanging gasp or hold their breath when the Governor's aid rode up on a foaming stallion with a paper raised high in the air? And what did the paper say?

Did the three doctors talk to each other at all as they stood in the fast-falling night? Did they discuss their task at hand or simply wait on the moon to paint their pursuits? Were they nervous, scared or even terrified that the old witch might beat them to their work? Did they sprint or casually stroll to the grave of Bayless Henderson after the gravediggers had gone? Did one listen for footfalls in the woods as the

other two dismembered the corpse of the freshly-buried killer with their Civil War era amputation kits? Who won the race to the dead man, the witch or the doctors?

Why did cabins in Franklin, North Carolina have funeral doors? Why did mountaineers cast silver bullets? For what reason did Franklin residents cover mirrors, stop clocks, rearrange furniture and open doors when loved ones died? Why did Mountaineers fear the screech owl, burning the spider web or waking in the morning with mud, cuts and bruises upon their bodies?

Did the ground tremble in Franklin, North Carolina when thousands of ghostly Indians poured forth from the side of the Nikwasi Mound, one of the oldest earthen mounds on the North American continent? Did their lonesome wails and cries of war hush the birds and still the day? Did they leave footprints in the dust and in time?

Whose smile or nefarious scowl was the last witnessed by the eyes of Francis Bulloch as she died such a gruesome death 55 years ago? Why did all crime scene evidence disappear? Why does her ghost still wander the halls of her earthly home?

The greatest gift anyone can be given is the gift of an experience, something that can't be stripped away,

something that can never be stolen.

Where Shadows Walk, Historic Ghost Tours of the Carolinas are such gifts. With 10 amazing tours to choose from, guests will be draped in history, saturated by legend and lore, drown in tales both macabre and dark and fed more true ghost stories than they'll be able to swallow.

Join our team of historians, teachers, storytellers and experts. Come feel the past live again where the mist is still rising, the wind still whispers secrets and the shadows are forever walking in Franklin, North Carolina.

*Where Shadows Walk*  
Historic Ghost Tours of the Carolinas

828-371-6958  
[www.WhereShadowsWalk.com](http://www.WhereShadowsWalk.com)



# Cowee School Arts & Heritage Center

Built of local stone in 1943 on the site of a former Civilian Conservation Corps camp, the Cowee School educated area youth for nearly seven decades. The historic structure, in the heart of the Cowee-Wests Mills Historic District, is now an arts and heritage center serving Western North Carolina residents and visitors.

Within a half mile of thousands of years of history, from the ancient Cowee Mound to the Rickman Store, the Cowee School Arts and Heritage Center is the hub of the Nikwasi-Cherokee Cultural Corridor. The center offers classes in the arts, pottery, weaving, shape-note singing, clogging, and mountain music among others. Rental space offers families and groups a place for weddings, reunions, and meetings.

Cowee School is known for its events. The Annual Franklin Area Folk Festival, held on the third Saturday in August and organized through a partnership with the Folk Heritage Association of Macon County, draws thousands of visitors from all over to enjoy cultural arts,



music, folk demonstrations, and food. The Cowee School Summer Concert Series, beginning in May and running through October, offers high quality entertainment from several genres of music, with an emphasis on traditional styles such as bluegrass, Americana, and folk. Except for one up-and-coming band each year, the series includes award-winning musicians and bands, both national and international.

## Cowee School Arts & Heritage Center

- Painting lessons
- Toy museum
- Art galleries
- Pottery school
- Textiles and weaving
- Genealogy
- Concerts
- Eastern Band of the Cherokee display



*Michael Cleveland & Flamekeeper*  
MAY 19



*Contra Dances*  
MARCH 10, MAY 12  
JULY 28, & SEPTEMBER 22



*Franklin Area Folk Festival*  
AUGUST 18



*Cowee Christmas*  
DECEMBER 1







# Nantahala

## NATURE'S PARADISE

The Nantahala community and Lake Nantahala are located on the western boundary of Macon County. The town of Franklin, county seat of Macon County, is approximately 18 miles east and is known for its gem mining, antique shops, art galleries, museums, shopping and fine restaurants. The Great Smoky Mountain Railroad, Cherokee Indian Reservation and Great Smoky Mountains National Park are about an hour away.

Nantahala means "Land of the Noonday Sun." It's the name of a National Forest and the 1600 acre Lake Nantahala, located in southwestern North Carolina near the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The Nantahala National Forest, established in 1920, is the largest of the four national forests in North Carolina, and has elevations that range from 1,200 to 5,800 feet. Here, the mountains stand guard over the sparkling streams, pristine forest and beautiful Lake Nantahala, making it a perfect place for a quiet and relaxing vacation.

Nantahala Lake was created in 1942 by Nantahala Power & Light Company to provide electricity for the war efforts. The town of Aquone once occupied the land now covered by the lake. The lake is at 3012' elevation, one of the highest mountain lakes east of the Rocky Mountains. It has 29 miles of shoreline. This lake is regulated and maintained by Duke Energy. There are two public boating access areas, which are maintained by the NC Wildlife Resources Commission. Many anglers enjoy fishing the Nantahala reservoir due to the low number of boaters, the breathtaking scenery and the clear pristine waters. Fish in the lake include walleye, crappie, sunfish, trout and bass. Primitive camping is allowed on public National Forest Lands except where signed, no camping. Activities on Lake Nantahala include swimming, boating and fishing, with hiking, mountain biking, rock climbing and camping available nearby.

The Nantahala River, to the north of the lake, is one of the country's prime white water rafting rivers, and consists of eight miles of waves and swift currents. The trip down the river takes a little over three hours and is almost continuous Class I and Class II rapids, with an optional Class III at the end, over a three foot high waterfall. The Nantahala River, both to the south and north of the lake, is also popular for fly-fishing and spin casting.

The drive from Franklin to Nantahala is a beautiful, scenic drive which is designated as a National Scenic By-Way, known as the Mountain Waters Scenic By-Way. Between Franklin and Nantahala, a side trip to Wayah Bald is recommended. This is a mile-high overlook from an old stone fire tower; four states are visible from the tower which gives you a panoramic view in all directions.

The Nantahala community has extraordinary accommodations available for rent both on the lake and in the mountains. These will range from large, elaborate, modern homes overlooking the lake to beautiful log cabins located in the heart of the mountains or on a mountain stream. Some will come complete with a dock and your own private boat for your dream vacation. See the list of accommodations with contact information on next page. There is also a listing of accommodations and more information about Nantahala at [www.visitnantahalanc.com](http://www.visitnantahalanc.com).







## Get A Bird's Eye View of The Mountains

Are you adventurous and always looking for your next big thrill!? If you didn't already know, ziplining delivers an adrenaline rush you will be hard pressed to beat! Not to mention the uniqueness of being able to see your surroundings, high off the ground, while soaring through the trees! There are so many ways to explore the mountains, but none quite as unique and exhilarating as strapping in for a bird's eye view of scenery that can't be viewed from the ground!

A zipline is a wire cable that's strung up between two trees, poles or other sort of anchor. After your guides assist you in gearing up in your harness, you will be attached to the zipline using a tether. The tether is attached to the harness at one end and a zip trolley rated to hold 18,000 lbs. at the other. Now, you are free to fly! The 8 ziplines on the World Class Canopy Tour at Highlands Aerial Park range from 10 feet off the ground to 220 feet, and 110 feet long to 1,550 feet, offering an unparalleled perspective of the forest and surrounding mountains.

For the safety conscious, you'll be glad to know that each piece of equipment utilized, as well as the entire course, are inspected on a daily basis. At Ground School, you will receive training on all the dos and don'ts while you are ziplining.

Closed toe shoes are required,

and it is recommended that you wear footwear that you will be comfortable traversing rugged terrain and that helps you stay comfortable during long periods on your feet. The World Class Canopy Tour can last up to 2.5 hours. Dress appropriate for the season and weather, including rain, and layer clothing so that you can adjust your layers just prior to gearing up. Yes, guests at Highlands Aerial Park may get to zip n' drip, so bring a rain jacket if precipitation is in the forecast! Tours are rarely canceled for weather, but when they are it is usually do to lightning or high winds.

George Powell, owner of Highlands Aerial Park Zipline Canopy Tours says, "Our park is an ecological experience covering over thirty-five acres of virgin woods with fifty-mile views of the Nantahala Mountains offering ziplines from tree to tree over lush forest, waterfalls, gorges, swinging bridges, boulder formations and native flora and fauna. Children and family members 5 and over can enjoy the kid-friendly challenge and zipline course known as the Brave Indian, in which they can zip to their heart's content while learning about the region's settlers, the Cherokee, native botanicals, indigenous animal life, coupled with entertaining tales about moonshiners, forerunners of

speedway racers and so much more.

Up for even more heart stopping, adrenaline pumping adventure?! Check out Highlands Aerial Park's Giant Mountain Swing, offering up the most sudden and breathtaking thrill at the park. After being harnessed and attached to the swing, up to 3 riders are wrenched 4 stories high, where one brave rider is charged with pulling the ripcord as the bottom falls out into an 80' arc through the trees.

Not interested in ziplining? Enjoy one of Highlands Aerial Park's many nature trails, free of charge. This provides an opportunity for parents and grandparents to spend quality time with little ones and show them natural wonders, including old growth trees, a mountain bog, and even a bear's den! Along the path are four bridges to eliminate steep climbs for smaller limbs and senior legs.

Come enjoy a great new adventure in our beautiful mountains and make memories that will last a lifetime and experience the love from above! *(Excerpts taken from story in The Laurel Magazine by Donna Rhodes)*





## COME HEAR THE ORIGINAL ROCK MUSIC

*This is a guide to 16 scenic waterfalls in Southwestern North Carolina, including areas of the Nantahala National Forest, Pisgah National Forest and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.*

*We've also included a waterfalls map to help you get there.*

**1. Cullasaja Falls** - Visible from U.S. 64, in Cullasaja Gorge, 11 mi. east from Franklin, 9 mi. west from Highlands. Height 250 ft. Accessible by foot trail, a half-mile through steep, rough terrain.

**2. Dry Falls** - Located near U.S. 64, 3.5 mi. west from Highlands, 16.5 mi. east from Franklin. Paved walkway leads to falls from parking area. Walk underneath the 75 ft. falls.

**3. Bridal Veil Falls** - 2.5 mi. west of Highlands on U.S. 64. Visible from the highway, which at one time routed traffic under the falls. Height 120 ft.

**4. Glen Falls** - From Highlands, travel 3 mi. south on NC 106. Turn left on U.S. Forest Service Rd. with "Glen Falls" marker. One-mile trail to falls is steep and rough. Consists of three large falls, each dropping approx. 60 feet.

**5. Whitewater Falls** - At 411 ft., the highest falls in Eastern America. From Cashiers, take U.S. 64 east, 10 mi. to "Whitewater Road." Falls are located 10 mi. south on Whitewater Rd., near the NC-SC state line. Drift, Horsepasture and Rainbow Falls are also accessible from Whitewater Rd. Whitewater Falls can also be reached from N.C. 107, south of Cashiers.

**6. Rainbow Falls** - From Cashiers, take U.S. 64 to N.C. 281 South. The trail to the falls is two miles from this intersection.

**7. Toxaway Falls** - This falls can be seen from your car as you cross the Toxaway River on U.S. 64 East near Rosman.

**8. Courthouse Falls** - Take US 64 East to N.C. 215 North. Travel 10 miles and take right on Courthouse Creek Road. Trailhead well marked.



**9. Sliding Rock** - This natural waterslide is a favorite of many people. Just jump in the water at the top of the falls and slide down the rock face to the bottom. 11,000 gallons of 50 to 60 degree water rushes down the rock every minute. Take 276 North from Brevard. 7 Miles north of the Ranger Station.

**10. Looking Glass Falls**

Take 276 North from Brevard. Falls is approximately 4 miles north of Ranger Station. Parking area is well marked. Short walk to falls

**11. Indian Creek Falls** -

From Bryson City, take "Deep Creek Rd." north 3 mi. to Deep Creek Campground in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. One-mile hike to falls is classified as "easy". Height 60 ft.

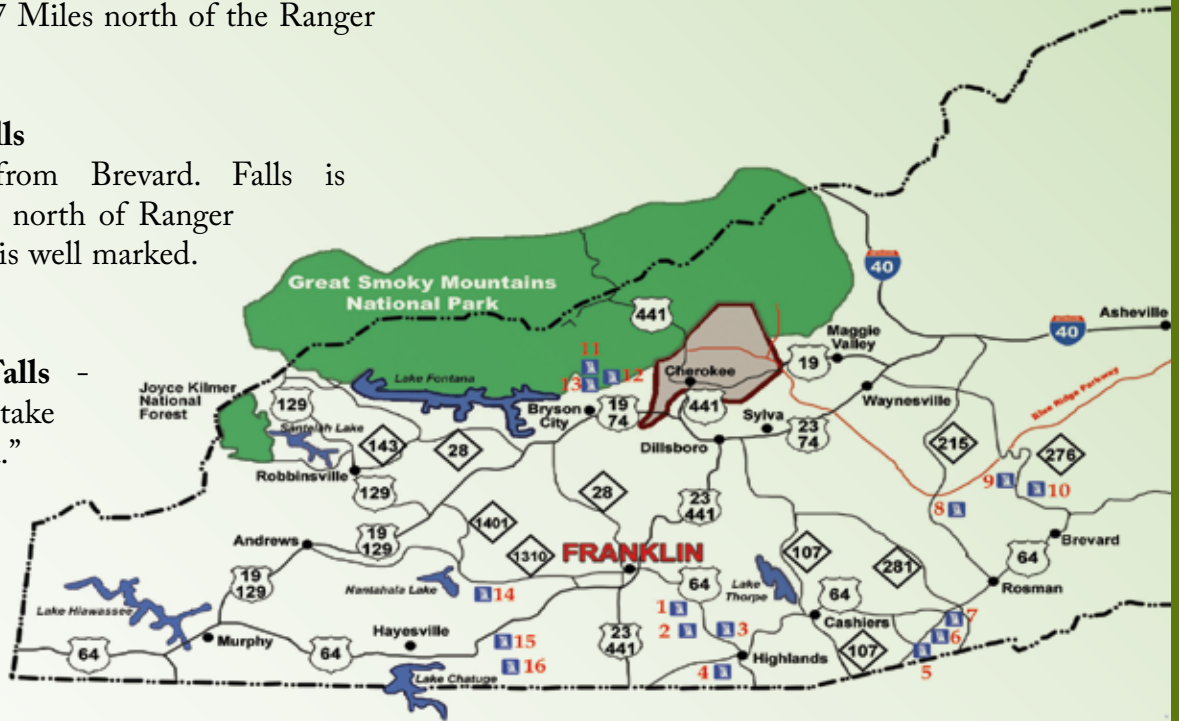
**12. Juneywhank Falls** - Follow directions to Indian Creek Falls. Juneywhank Falls are one-quarter mile downstream from Indian Creek.

**13. Tom's Branch Falls** - See directions to Indian Creek Falls. A quarter-mile walk from Deep Creek Campground.

**14. Rufus Morgan Falls** - This easy one mile loop trail is named after Rufus Morgan, a naturalist who was instrumental in developing the Appalachian Trail. Take U.S. 64 for 3 miles west of Franklin. Turn right at Wayah Bald directional sign. Take first left onto Wayah Road (S.R. 1310). 6.6 Miles and then left of F.S. Road 388. Trail 2.2 miles on right.

**15. Big Laurel Falls** - Go 9 miles west on U.S. 64. Turn left on Wallace Gap Road (Old U.S. 64) and go 1.5 miles. Turn right on F.S. Road 67 (toward Standing Indian Campground) and go 7 miles (5 miles past Back Country Information Center). Trail runs along an old railroad grade. After passing over bridge, it splits; right ends at Big Laurel Falls.

**16. Mooney Falls** - See directions to Big Laurel Falls, continuing for .7 mile past Big Laurel Falls trailhead. A very short trail descends to Mooney Falls. Roadside parking available.



Cullasaja Falls





# GEM MINING

Gem Mining is still one of the most popular activities offered in the Franklin area. Mining for precious stones began in Macon County in 1870. Ruby and sapphire are still the most sought after today. Tiffany's showed an interest in the area in the 1890's but two other companies, America Prospecting & Mining Company and U.S. Ruby Mining Company and U.S Ruby Mining Company began work hoping to find the source of the rubies found in the corundum mines. Both companies ended the search in the early part of the 20th century leaving the area open to rockhounds and gem enthusiasts. The source hasn't been found --- yet.

While visiting our area, families from all over the United States enjoy mining in our local mines. Mining is one of the most popular activities for kids and adults of all ages. Be sure to wear clothing you don't mind getting dirty.

**What To Bring To The Mines** Bring ziploc bags or a plastic butter dish to take your stones home in (no glass). Rubber gloves are handy if it's chilly or you have a nice manicure. Wear a hat and some sunblock if it's sunny although many mines provide cover on the "flume". The wooden benches get hard as the day goes on so you might need a cushion to sit on or old towels work well too and you can use them to wipe your hands. Wear old clothes and tennis shoes or boots and bring a plastic bag to put your muddy shoes in and an extra pair to wear in the car. Bring a picnic lunch, most mines provide a place to eat out of rain or sun, plan to spend the day! Don't forget to bring the camera for those pictures to show your friends the beautiful gem stones you found in Franklin, North Carolina.

**How To Mine** Most mines sell gem dirt in a bucket or bag (few allow digging) and you may have to pay an admission fee for the day. You are provided with a screen for washing and there is a flume - a trough of running water - with a bench along it's length. The dirt goes in the screen, the screen goes in the water and the mud is washed away. Well, it's not quite that easy but it is completely safe and mine operators are on hand to help with technique and identification.

**What To Look For At The Mines** The "3 c's" of gem mining are Color, Clarity and Crystals. Gemstones come in every color from white to black. Garnets are glassy red, pink or reddish brown. Rubies are silky red, sapphires are every other color, and both have a crystal formation with 6 sides. Moonstones are pearly white to gray and peach to chocolate brown with a flat box-like shape. Quartz comes in many forms, sometimes clear colors like Amethyst and Citrine, sometimes opaque colors with mica flecks like Aventurine and of course clear with sides - quartz crystals. That's just a few of the many gemstones found at local mines.



**Gemborees** Each year rockhounds from all across the United States descend on Franklin for three gem & mineral shows. Held annual on Mother's Day weeked, in July and during the fall color season in October, our "Gemborees" are known as some of the finest in the nation. These shows feature everything from fine jewelry to rough and cut gems & minerals, fossils, lapidary equipment and more. Two shows are produced in conjunction with the Franklin Gem & Mineral Society. For complete information visit us online at [www.visitfranklinnc.com](http://www.visitfranklinnc.com) or call toll free 800-336-7829.



# A MECCA FOR GREAT MOTORCYCLE ADVENTURES

Franklin is located at the crossroads of several great motorcycle rides in Western North Carolina. US 64 passes through Franklin going East or West and Wayah Road is just 5 miles to the West of town. This is a classic ride over Wayah Mountain into the Nantahala River gorge. US 441 North out of Franklin takes you to Cherokee, NC and the start of the famed Blue Ridge Parkway or through the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (the most visited National Park in North America). We are less than an hour away from a number of great motorcycle rides in the North Georgia mountains as well.

**Moonshiner 28** is a 103 mile trail that begins at the Tail of the Dragon on US 129 at Deals Gap and winds southeastward along NC 28 through Franklin and Highlands North Carolina. It then continues southward on NC 28 into North Georgia and ends in Walhalla, SC. The Moonshiner 28 got its name from Moonshine runners traveling from South Carolina to Tennessee on the twists and turns of this backroad to avoid the police. This is a great alternative to other more crowded routes with sections every bit as twisty as the most popular trails. There are also great views and scenic attractions along the way including three of Western North Carolina's most popular waterfalls between Franklin and Highlands, NC ( Cullasaja Falls, Bridal Veil Falls and Dry Falls).

**Moonshiner 28** is fast becoming one of the great must do roads of Western North Carolina. Come spend a day or a week exploring this area, whether riding a motorcycle, driving a sportscar or bringing your family in a van you are sure to enjoy the beautiful scenery that surrounds you.

Map and Photos courtesy of Ronald Johnson







# Hiking Our Mountains

## THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL

No matter whether you are a novice hiker or veteran ridgerunner, the Appalachian Trail offers unparalleled opportunities to explore, experience and connect with nature. Approximately 60 miles of the AT run through this area beginning at the Georgia state line and meandering northward to the Nantahala River at Wesser, North Carolina.

## SHOT POUCH

Go three miles on U.S. 64 and turn right at Wayah Bald directional sign. Take first left onto Wayah Road (SR 1310), go nine miles to Wayah Gap. Following sign, turn right on gravel road (FS 69) and go 0.9 miles. Trail sign is on the right. Unblazed trail crosses AT, turns onto grassed logging road, and ends at a wildlife opening. 1.0 mile easy.

## CHUNKY GAL TRAIL

Blue-blazed, 5.5 miles. This little-used trail (scenic when leaves are off) follows the ridge of Chunky Gal Mountain. Trailhead is on US 64 in Glade Gap, at the top of the long climb out of Shooting Creek Valley. The beginning is marked with small signs and blazes but is not easy to locate. The trail ends at the AT 3.0 miles south of Deep Gap.

## WAYAH BALD

Go three miles on U.S. 64 and turn right at Wayah Bald directional sign. Take first left onto Wayah Road (SR 1310), go nine miles to Wayah Gap. Turn right on gravel road (FS 69) and go approximately 4.5 miles to the bald. Paved trail, suitable for handicapped, leads to the Wayah Bald lookout tower, which is a National Historic Landmark offering breathtaking, panoramic views of the area.

## SILER BALD

Go three miles on U.S. 64 and turn right at Wayah Bald directional sign. Take first left onto Wayah Road (SR 1310), go nine miles to Wayah Gap. Park at Wayah Crest to the left, walk through picnic area to AT (white blazes) and turn right. Follow AT to a big grass hill and turn right (watch for Snowbird Gap sign). Head up to the top of Siler Bald. Check out the 360 degree view and the ground marker. The hike is 1.8 miles from Wayah Gap.

## YELLOW MOUNTAIN FIRE TOWER

The recently restored tower is located on the Macon-Jackson County line. It offers panoramic views. It can be reached by foot on an 4.8 mile (one way) trail from Cole Gap on Buck Creek Road. Take U.S. 64 East approximately 3 miles from Highlands and turn left on Buck Creek Road (S.R. 1538). Go 2.3 miles and look for a pull-off

and a path going straight up the bank on the right side of the road.

## BARTRAM TRAIL

The Bartram Trail, when complete, will be continuous from South Carolina to Cheoah Bald. Described here is the section between Franklin, N.C., and Nantahala Lake. Bartram Trail Blazes are yellow.

Miles: 0.0 - Trailhead on Wallace Branch, on N.C. 1315, 1.7 miles from its junction with "Old 64" on the outskirts of Franklin, near the Wayah Ranger District of USFS.

1.3 - Reach junction with old Trimont Trail from Franklin to Wayah Bald. Bartram Trail turns left.

10.0 - Reach junction with AT, 0.2 miles north of Wayah Bald.

12.1 - Bartram Trail turns right and leaves AT. Descend west on McDonald Ridge.

14.1 - Reach paved USFS 711 at Sawmill Gap. Bartram jogs left across road, then continues to N.C. 1310 on the shore of Nantahala Lake.

## ROCK GAP

From Franklin, follow US64 West 11.4 miles (from overpass where US23 goes South to Atlanta) to left turn at sign saying "Appalachian Trail" and "Standing Indian Campground". Follow this road (Old Rt. 64) 1.9 miles to sign reading "Standing Indian Campground" and turn right on paved road



(FS67). Follow road for one-half mile to parking area with sign "Rock Gap". The AT passes through area without crossing road, go left for Northbound, right for Southbound.

### STANDING INDIAN AREA

Access trails - (South to North) For all these trails, follow directions given for Rock Gap above, then CONTINUE on FS67 (when open) to these trailheads.

Trails 1,2,and 8 leave from the "Backcountry Information Area", which is a parking area at the end of the paved part of FS67. Follow FS67 past Rock Gap Parking area for 1.6 miles, bearing left at the Y at the entrance to Standing Indian Campground.

1) **Kimsey Creek Trail:** Blue-blazed, 3.7 miles. This popular trail follows the course of Kimsey Creek from the campground to Deep Gap. It begins at the Backcountry Information Center, crosses the river on the campground road, then turns right and skirts the campground on the north side. At 0.3 mile, it turns left and leaves the trails that follow the river. At 0.9 mile, it enters a clearing, where it turns right along a gated road following the creek. At 2.1 miles, it crosses a log bridge over a side creek. The trail enters Deep Gap through the old picnic and camping area. Standing Indian Mountain can be reached by turning left on the AT.

2) **Lower Ridge Trail:** Blue-blazed,4.2 miles. This trail is the most direct (but a strenuous) way to reach Standing Indian Mountain from the Standing Indian Campground. It originates at the Backcountry Information Center, crosses the Nantahala River on the main campground road, skirts the campground area, then climbs rather steeply up Lower Ridge directly to the mountain. It crosses the AT near the top of the mountain and continues 0.1 mile to end at the summit clearing.

3) **Beech Gap Trail:** Blue-blazed,2.8 miles. Trail starts at Beech Gap parking area on USFS 67, four miles south of Backcountry Information Center. At 0.5 mile, Big Indian Horse Trail (orange blazed) approaches from the right. At 2.0 miles, reach Big Indian Road (also horse trail, orange blazes) and turn left. Reach AT at Beech Gap.

4) **Timber Ridge Trail:** Blue-blazed, 2.3 miles. This trail starts at the Timber Ridge-Big Laurel Falls parking area on USFS 67,4.4 miles south of the Backcountry Information Center. It passes through a charming variety of different woodlands while climbing to meet the AT. After Crossing a log bridge over a large brook, trail turns left and climbs through rhododendron, then enters a beech woods area. About halfway, it crosses Big Laurel Branch on a wood foot-bridge, then climbs through mixed woodlands to Timber Ridge, where it proceeds through open, fern-carpeted woods to the AT, 0.4 mile south of Carter Gap.

5) **Betty Creek Trail:** Continue on FS67 for 8.3 miles past Rock Gap. There is a clearing/camping area at this trailhead. The beginning of the Betty Creek trail is poorly marked -- it starts at an opening in the East side of the clearing, and almost immediately crosses a small creek. Past the creek follow the blue blazes for about a half mile to the AT at Betty Creek Gap.

6) **Mooney Gap:** Continue on FS67 for 9 miles, then turn right on FS83 for 0.5 mile. Mooney Gap a is small camping/parking area where AT crosses road.

7) **Albert Mtn/Bigspring Gap:** Follow FS67 for 11 miles to it's end at a parking lot. At the far end of the lot, an old gated road leads about 1/3 mile to the AT between Albert Mtn. and Bigspring Gap. Turn right uphill for Albert, left for Bigspring Gap and shelter.

8) **Long Branch Trail:** Blue-blazed, 2.0 miles. One of many connecting trails between the Standing Indian Campground area and the AT. The trailhead is across the road from the Backcountry Information Center (a bulletin board) on USFS 67 near the campground. It ends on the AT at Glassmine Gap, after climbing through hardwood forest on the south of slope of Long Branch Creek. It intersects an orange-blazed horse trail and crosses the creek near the upper end.

### BEAR PEN TRAIL

Blue-blazed, 2.5 miles. This charming connector trail starts on USFS 67, three miles south of Backcountry Information Center (a bulletin board and parking). The lower 0.4 mile follows a grassed logging

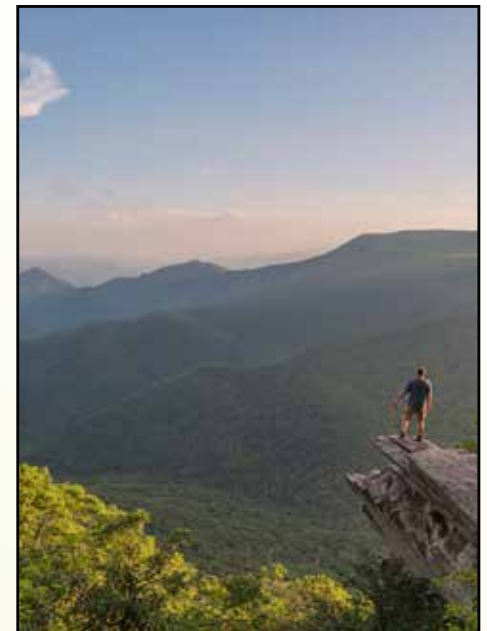
road. Watch for easy-to-miss turn-off road into woods. The rest of the Trail traverses several different kinds of woodland while climbing to meet the AT at the southern end of Albert Mountain.

### PICKENS NOSE

Go nine miles past the Back Country Information Center at near Standing Indian Campground, to intersection for FS 67 and FS 83. Turn right and follow FS 83 to sign at trailhead. Trail has three scenic overlooks including one of Northern Georgia. Trail is 0.7 mile and passes through mature oak forest with an understory of laurel and ivy.

### WHITESIDE MOUNTAIN

Whiteside Mountain stands as a landmark along the eastern continental divide. It rises more than 2,100 feet from the valley floor to the summit at 4,930 feet. The south face contains magnificent granite cliffs ranging from 400 to 750 feet high. A 2 mile loop trail takes hikers along the ridge of the mountain to spectacular views to the east, south and west. Rock climbing is permitted from August 15 to January 15. The other months are restricted to provide nesting habitat for the peregrine falcon, which has been reintroduced to the area. Go 5 miles east of Highlands on U.S. 64. Turn right on Whiteside Mtn, Road (S.R. 1600). Go 1.5 miles and the parking area will be on the left.







Fly fish for Brown, Rainbow and Wild Brook Trout with local guides who are familiar with the area's local water. Explore rivers such as the Nantahala River, Tuckasegee River, Cullasaja River and the Little Tennessee River. Learn how to read water, spot fish and choose the right fly pattern. Trips packages are available. Reservations are suggested but not required. Visit [www.WesternNCFlyFishingGuide.com](http://www.WesternNCFlyFishingGuide.com) and [www.EndlessRiverAdventures.com](http://www.EndlessRiverAdventures.com) for more information.

## **NANTAHALA RIVER**

The Nantahala is a freestone river that is 32 miles from Franklin. It is stocked with Brook, Brown, and Rainbow Trout with Brown and Rainbows holding onto the stream born population. This is classic trout water full of runs, pools and pocket water, which is great for the beginning fly angler to learn to read water. Nantahala also has wonderful hatches of both mayfly and caddis offering anglers great dry fly fishing in the spring and fall. There is a delayed harvest section of the river from October 1st through June 1st but it is on hatchery regulations the rest of the year, Directions: Take Highway 64 west for 6 miles until you get to Old Murphy Road (across from Mt. Hope Baptist Church) and turn right. Go down Old Murphy Road for 100 yards until you get to a small gas station then turn left on Wayah Road. Follow Wayah Road over the mountain and down the other side past Nantahala Lake until the road comes in contact with the river.

## **CULLASAJA RIVER**

The Cullasaja runs between Franklin and Highlands on Highway 64 East. It is a beautiful and scenic river full of waterfalls, deep pools and slow glassy runs. The river is stocked with Brook, Brown and Rainbow trout, but Browns and Rainbows seem to be the majority of the stream born population. The area between Gold Mine Bridge (approximately 10 miles from Franklin) and Turtle Pond Bridge (approximately 13 miles from Franklin) offers numerous pull-offs with easy access to the river. Across the road from Turtle Pond Bridge is Cliffside Lake. Stocked trout can be taken by bait, spinner or fly for a small usage fee. The Cullasaja should be waded in extreme caution around waterfalls and during high water times. Directions: From Franklin take Highway 64 East toward Highlands.

## **LITTLE TENNESSEE RIVER**

The Little Tennessee River becomes very fishable from the center of Franklin all the way to the mouth of Lake Fontana. The fly fisher can expect to catch bass, bream and the occasional trout. The greatest population of trout would be below Tellico Creek. This scenic river is accessible via some spots along Bryson City Road (Highway 28) and Needmore Road. The LTR is relatively easy to wade. An aggressive smallmouth bass on a fly rod is a moment to remember.

## **TUCKASEEGEE RIVER**

The Tuckasegee or "Tuck" is a dam controlled river with power generation dams located on the east and west forks of the river upstream of the "delayed harvest" section. From October 1st until June 1st, the 6-mile section from Western Carolina University to Highway 441 in Dillsboro is super stocked with large hatchery fish. During this period the regulations are catch and release only. During early spring, 30 to 40 fish days are not unusual. From June 1st to October 1st normal general trout water regulations prevail allowing anglers to keep 7 fish any size and quantities of fish decline rather quickly. Use caution as water levels may change at any time. Lake levels, generating schedules and (on the Tuckasegee River only) flow arrival and recession times are online at [www.duke-energy.com/lakes/nantahala/nantahala-lake-levels.asp](http://www.duke-energy.com/lakes/nantahala/nantahala-lake-levels.asp) or call 1-800-829-LAKE. Directions: 441 North to bridge over Tuckasegee at Dillsboro. Take 1st right just after bridge onto River Road.



# Join the Journey on the Appalachian Trail

The most famous foot trail in the world is just minutes from downtown Franklin in Macon County. The Appalachian Trail (AT) crosses Route 64W at the parking area just past the big rock cut at Winding Stair Gap 11 miles from Franklin, a newly designated Appalachian Trail Community. You can put your feet on this trail here or at several access points in Macon County.

The Appalachian National Scenic Trail, known as the AT, runs from Springer Mountain in Georgia for 2,181 miles to Mount Katahdin in Maine's Baxter State Park. The trail is blazed (marked) along its whole length by white rectangles 2 inches wide by 6 inches high usually painted

chest high on trees. Forty-seven of those miles are located here in Macon County and sixty miles are maintained by our local Nantahala Hiking Club (NHC), one of 31 maintaining clubs of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC). Over the years the ATC has aspired to connect the human spirit with nature and to preserve the delicate majesty of the Trail as a haven for all to enjoy.

Get away and experience the serenity and camaraderie of hiking a nature trail that is open only to walkers, hikers, backpackers—and dogs. You won't find the crowds you may have encountered in other National Parks across the country. While some hikers do hike the entire AT, the vast majority of hikers choose to enjoy smaller sections of the Trail. From several access points in Macon County, you can join the journey and hike the southern Appalachians in the Nantahala National Forest and you don't have to be a serious hiker. Enjoy the beauty of the AT when spring wildflowers are blooming, or in the fall at peak color foliage season, or in winter when leafless trees offer magnificent long range views, or any time during the year just for the simple pleasure of being outdoors.

Winding Stair Gap is the simplest access point to the AT from Franklin, but there are several other ways to get to the Trail. The AT passes just in front of the Rock Gap parking area which is on USFS 67 approximately 0.6 miles from Wallace Gap on "Old 64" at the entrance road to Standing Indian Campground. "Old 64" is a left-hand turn approximately 1 mile further west from Winding Stair Gap on 64W. Once you make the left-hand turn you will reach Wallace Gap in 2 miles. You can see an AT shelter just 0.1 miles right of the parking area. Another access point is Wayah Crest which is reached from US 64 West. Starting from the US 441- US 64W intersection, travel 3 miles on US 64 W and turn right at Wayah Bald directional sign. Take first left onto Wayah Road (SR1310) and go 9 miles to Wayah Gap. Turn left and park at Wayah Crest. Walk through the picnic area to the AT and turn right/north. If you follow the AT for 1.7 miles you will find the base of Siler Bald (elevation 5,216 feet). Walk up the spur trail to the west and on a clear day you can see points in Georgia and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Another way to reach the AT is at Deep Gap located 14.6 miles from the US 441 – US 64W intersection on 64 W. Turn left just past the Clay County line and travel on Deep Gap Road USFS 71 for 6 miles.

The road ends at a parking area which is Deep Gap. The A.T. crosses this area from Georgia (AT south/right), going to Standing Indian Mountain (AT north/left). The summit area of Standing Indian Mountain (elevation 5,498 feet) offers superb views of the Georgia Blue Ridge.

Side trails are another outstanding feature of the AT in the Nantahala mountains. A wide variety of loop hikes of one day to several days can be made. Plan a day hike or an overnight backpack.

So, put on comfortable walking shoes, grab some water, take a lunch, and contact one of the following to find out more information on AT access points: Nantahala Ranger District (828-524-6441), Nantahala Hiking Club ([www.nantahalahikingclub.org](http://www.nantahalahikingclub.org)), or one of the two local outfitter stores located in the business directory in the back of this magazine.



BEST SMALL TOWN

**FRANKLIN, N.C.**

Franklin, NC celebrates the designation by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy as the first Appalachian Trail Community. This program highlights the value of trailside communities and towns as a driver for sustainable economic development and the importance of the towns to the A.T. as agents in protecting its complex recreational, volunteer, educational and environmental resources.







Pickin' On The Square Concerts  
Saturdays May - October



Taste of Scotland Festival  
June 16



Appalachian Heritage Festival  
July 14



Mountain High BBQ Festival & Car Show  
August 10 & 11



Macon County Agricultural Fair  
September 12 - 15

# Event

**MAY THRU OCTOBER**  
(Every Saturday evening)  
Pickin on the Square

**MAY**  
Mother's Day Weekend Gem Show  
Airing of the Quilts  
G & LW Wholesale Gem Show

**JUNE**  
Taste of Scotland  
Blue Ridge Gospel Weekend

**JULY**  
4th of July Fun Day & Fireworks  
4th of July Parade  
Sweet Corn Festival  
Appalachian Heritage Festival  
Macon County Gemboree  
G & LW Wholesale Gem Show  
Folkmoot

For a complete Calendar of Events



Pumpkin Fest  
October 20





4th of July Parade on Main  
July 4



4th of July Fireworks in the Park  
July 4

S

**AUGUST**

Mountain High BBQ Festival & Car Show  
Smoky Mountain Shrimp Boil  
Folk Festival

**SEPTEMBER**

Gem Capital Auto Club Car Show  
Macon County Fair

**OCTOBER**

Autumn Leaves Craft Show  
Leaf Lookers Gemboree  
Pumpkin Fest

**NOVEMBER**

Veterans Day Parade  
Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony  
Annual Christmas Parade  
Winter Wonderland

**DECEMBER**

Winter Wonderland



Gems Shows  
May 11-13 ♦ July 26-29 ♦ October 19-21



Folk Festival  
August 18

visit [www.VisitFranklinNC.com](http://www.VisitFranklinNC.com)



Christmas Parade  
November 25



Winter Wonderland  
November 24 & December 1