

# blue ridge parkway

## north carolina virginia

Blue Ridge Parkway, a unit of the National Park System, extends 469 miles through the southern Appalachians, past vistas of quiet natural beauty and rural landscapes lightly shaped by the activities of man. Designed especially for motor recreation, the parkway provides quiet, leisurely travel, free from commercial development and congestion of high-speed highways. No ordinary road, it follows mountain crests to link Shenandoah National Park in northern Virginia and Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina and Tennessee.

You travel the Southern Highlands, a land of forested mountains, exquisite during the flowering spring, cool in the green summer, colorful in the red autumn. Views are enlivened by highland farms, whose split-rail fences, weathered cabins, and gray barns compose the "hill culture."

Rhododendron, azalea, white pine, and other native plants border the roadsides. Overlooks, campgrounds, picnic areas, trails, and wayside exhibits all contribute to make your visit a memorable motoring adventure.

The Appalachian Mountains, reaching from Maine to Georgia, are a broad ribbon of many parallel ranges connected by cross ranges and tumbled mountains and hills. From Shenandoah National Park for 355 miles, the parkway follows the Blue Ridge Mountains, eastern rampart of the Appalachians. Then, skirting the southern end of the massive Black Mountains, it weaves through the Craggies, the Pisgahs, and the Balsams to the Great Smokies. This is a region of ancient, rugged mountains and deep, narrow coves and valleys.

People of the hills. The physiography of the Southern Highlands has directly influenced the history of its inhabitants, dictating where the Indian should live and turning the tides of white immigration between its hills. The first pioneers settled in the valleys and became prosperous. Those arriving later took up progressively more isolated homesteads. They cut the trees, allowing the rich topsoil to wash away. Thus was set in motion a process which gradually impoverished both land and settlers.

Blue Ridge Parkway "tells" the story of these fiercely independent people, a story still being



ARNOLD'S VALLEY, MILE 75.2

written on the face of this land where crops and cabins hang on the hillsides. The mountain people sang their ballads and passed them from parent to child by word of mouth. Their musical instruments were the fiddle, banjo, and guitar, which are still used to accompany songs and folk dances. The crossroad country store is the hub of community life during the week, while the rural church becomes the center on Sunday.

Improved roads, electricity, radios, and television have changed the way of life in the mountains, but centers have been established where the old handicrafts are taught and practiced. Handicraft articles, in great demand, are available at outlets along the parkway.

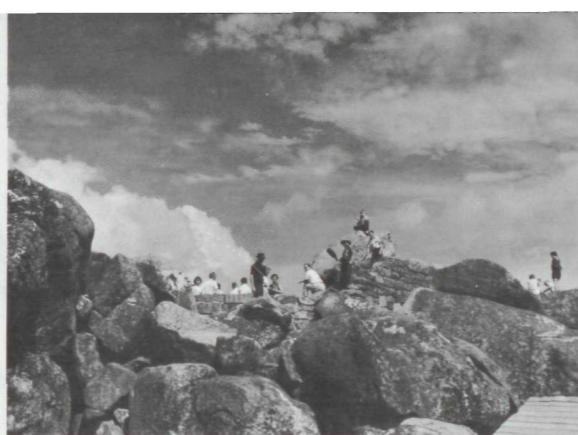
Wild animals abound along the parkway. When the sun is high, chipmunks and squirrels chitter and chat. At night, striped skunks, bobcats, foxes, opossums, and raccoons forage along roadsides and in forests. White-tailed deer and black bear are easily recognized but seldom seen. Watch for them in early morning or early evening.

The parkway lies along a major bird migration route. In early spring more than 100 species, including many warblers, grace forests and fields. Some migrants join the year-round residents and remain to rear young, while others continue northward.

Wild animals are a delight and a privilege to observe. Treat them with respect; after all, we are the guests.

When to visit. Because of its length and range in elevation, the whole parkway seldom experiences the same weather at the same time. Most visitors come in summer, but spring and autumn are pleasant, too, and the parkway is less crowded then.

Campgrounds, picnic areas, and other visitor accommodations are open May 1 through October. Guided and self-guiding walks, evening nature



SUMMIT OF SHARP TOP, PEAKS OF OTTER

talks, museum and roadside exhibits, and other forms of interpreting the parkway comprise the naturalist program. The full program is in operation June through Labor Day.

A visit in winter can be delightful, but snow or ice may cause temporary closure of the parkway. The entire road may be closed for longer periods in winter when hazardous driving conditions exist.

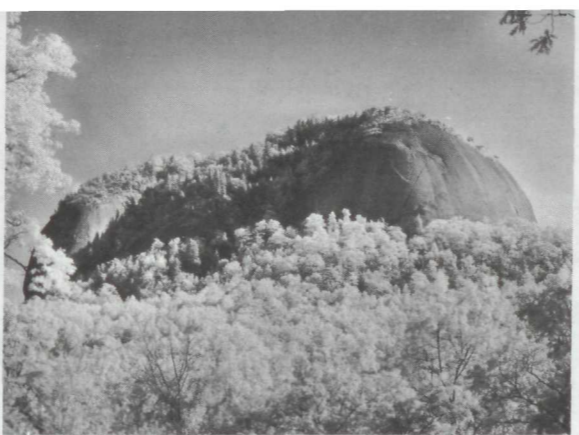
The flowering season. Spring is slow to arrive along Blue Ridge Parkway. The forests are bare when dogwood blooms late in April. Gradually the trees leaf out and by mid-May they are green to 4,000 feet elevation. Fraser magnolia blooms a creamy white. Each day widens the band of green, until suddenly, spring is everywhere.

Azalea, rhododendron, and mountain-laurel abound in the Southern Highlands. Because of the wide range in elevation (649 to 6,053 feet), peak blooming occurs at different times and places along the parkway.

If you visit in mid-May, or a little before, flame azalea will most likely be at its best south of Roanoke to Rocky Knob—the fine display in the high mountains west of Asheville occurs about the middle of June. In mid-May you might also see mountain-laurel in bloom along Otter Creek north of James River—elsewhere in the parkway it blooms during the first 2 weeks in June.

During the first week in June, dense thickets of catawba rhododendron overflow with purple north of Peaks of Otter to Onion Mountain and along the bluffs of Doughton Park. In Craggy Gardens and through the Balsams, however, the bloom comes soon after mid-June. White rhododendron is showy from the end of June to late July.

Wildflowers are colorful throughout spring, summer, and autumn.



LOOKING GLASS ROCK, MILE 417

Autumn brings color in late September when dogwood, sourwood and blackgum turn deep red. But most of the forest remains green until early October. Then, bright patches grow each day as color advances to a mid-month peak.

Early in October, birch, buckeye, poplar, and beech become masses of yellow. Leaves of the tuliptree are blends of brown and yellow; sassafras turns a vivid orange. The bright red berries of mountain ash are conspicuous. No tree adds more brilliance than red maple. "Color King of the Southern Appalachians." On mountaintops and ridges, hickories have a leathery sheen. Late in October, when other trees begin to fade, oaks add the final tones of red.

Visitor-use Areas	Mile	Facilities								
		Food	Gas	Lodging	Camping	Picnicking	Hiking	Fishing	Visitor Center	Walks & Talks
Humpback Rocks	5.8					X	X	X		
Whetstone Ridge	29	X	X							
Otter Creek	60.9	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Peaks of Otter	86	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Roanoke Mountain	120.4					X	X			
Smart View	154.5					X	X			
Rocky Knob	169		X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Mabry Mill	176.1	X								X
Cumberland Knob	217.5					X	X			
Doughton Park	241.1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Cherry Hill	257	X	X							
E. B. Jeffress Park	272					X	X			
Moses H. Cone Mem. Park	294.1							X	X	X
Julian Price Mem. Park	297.1					X	X	X	X	X
Linville Falls	316.4					X	X	X		X
Crabtree Meadows	339.5	X	X			X	X	X		X
Craggy Gardens	364.6					X	X	X		X
Mount Pisgah	408.6	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X



THE FENCES, GROUNDHOG MOUNTAIN, MILE 188.8



Visitor-use areas are marked by this emblem. In them may be located picnic areas and campgrounds, visitor centers, exhibits, trails, food, gas, lodging, and comfort stations. See map narrative for facilities in a particular place.

Restaurants, gas stations, and lodging are available along the parkway May 1 through October, except for Peaks of Otter Lodge which is open all year. Reservations for lodging are advisable.

FACILITY	CONCESSIONER	ADDRESS
Peaks of Otter Lodge	Virginia Peaks of Otter Co.	Box 489, Bedford, VA 24523
Rocky Knob Cabins (June through Labor Day)	National Park Concessions, Inc.	Meadows of Dan, VA 24120
Bluffs Lodge (In Doughton Park)	National Park Concessions, Inc.	Laurel Springs, NC 28644
Pisgah Inn	Pisgah Inn, Inc.	Route 2, Box 375 A, Canton, NC 28716

A wide range of accommodations is available in towns and cities near the parkway.

Camping. The nine parkway campgrounds are open May through October only, but limited camping facilities are available in winter at Otter Creek, Roanoke Mountain, Price Park, and Linville Falls.

Drinking water and comfort stations are provided, but no shower or laundry facilities are available. Sites in each campground are designated for trailer use, but none is equipped for utility connections. Sanitary dumping stations for trailers are provided at



HIGHLAND MEADOWS, DOUGHTON PARK

Otter Creek, Peaks of Otter, Roanoke Mountain, Rocky Knob, and Mount Pisgah campgrounds. Each campsite has a table and fireplace.

Limited camping supplies are available at most parkway gas stations. Camping is limited to 14 days and campsites may not be reserved.

Picnic grounds with parking spaces, tables, fireplace, drinking water, trash cans, and comfort stations are provided in most of the visitor-use areas.

Picnic tables are also placed in a number of parking areas north of Roanoke and west of Asheville. Watch for the overlook-ahead symbol: a "Picnic Table" sign under it indicates table locations.

Trails. The word "trail" under an overlook-ahead symbol is your invitation to leave the car for a walk through the woods. Some of the trails are short leg-stretchers and take only 10 to 20 minutes round trip; others will take the best part of an hour, or longer. The longer trails may be steep in places, but young and old walk them without difficulty. Self-guiding trails begin at some of the overlooks; you will know them by the squirrel-rifle-and-powder-horn symbol on the trail sign. They offer explanatory markers or a booklet with notes keyed to numbered stakes. Trails are described in the mile-post guide of this folder.

Many miles of excellent hiking are available at Peaks of Otter, Rocky Knob, Doughton Park, and Cone Memorial Park. Gully Creek Trail at Cumberland Knob is a favorite during the autumn.

The Appalachian Trail roughly parallels the parkway from Mile 0 at Rockfish Gap to Mile 103, where the trail takes a more westerly route toward the Great Smoky Mountains and Georgia. Shelters, 1 day's hike apart, are available on a first-come, first-served basis all along the Appalachian Trail. Information about the trail may be obtained from the Appalachian Trail Conference, P.O. Box 236, Harpers Ferry, WV 25425.



MILE HIGH OVERLOOK, MILE 458.2

Fishing. Streams and lakes along the parkway are primarily trout waters. State fishing licenses are required and State regulations apply. Temporary licenses can be purchased by parkway visitors.

Six visitor centers are focal points of the naturalist program. Each center features a different part of the region's natural or human history, and has detailed information about that section of parkway and general information about the entire parkway.

Visitor centers are open May through October—daily, mid-June through Labor Day, and part time during the rest of the season. Park rangers are on duty to help you.

Interpretive activities. In summer, guided walks are conducted and special living history programs are presented at points of interest along the Parkway. You are also invited to attend evening talks. Activities are listed in the free visitor activities folder. Obtain a copy at any visitor center.

Craft demonstrations and sales. Mabry Mill (Mile 176.1) is an operating, water-powered gristmill with a blacksmith shop. Apple butter and sorghum molasses are made the oldtime way during autumn weekends. Brinegar Cabin (Mile 238.5), in an authentic setting, offers demonstrations of weaving on an old mountain loom. Textile handicraft articles are for sale.

Northwest Trading Post (Mile 258.6) is a country store, displaying and selling native handicrafts and produce of the surrounding region.

Parkway Craft Center (Mile 294) from time to time presents demonstrations of weaving, rugmaking, gemcutting, and other crafts by members of the Southern Highland Handicraft Guild. In the Pioneer Museum are displayed weaving, basketry, furniture, kitchen utensils, and tools of the cottage crafts. The guild also has handicraft articles for sale.

Facilities for swimming are available in nearby U.S. Forest Service recreation areas, State Parks, and mountain resorts. The lakes, ponds, and streams along the parkway are for fishing and scenic beauty; they are not suitable for swimming.

Boats without motor or sail are permitted on Price Lake, but boats are not permitted on any other parkway waters.

Your safety. Do not allow your visit to be spoiled by an accident. Efforts have been made to provide for your safety, but there are still hazards which require your alertness and vigilance. Exercise common sense and caution.

Help protect the parkway. This is your parkway. Help us in protecting it. Leave shrubs and wild flowers for others to enjoy. Drive carefully. Speed limit is 45 miles per hour. Report any accident to a park ranger. Vehicles being used commercially are not allowed on the parkway.

Please do not throw trash from your car. Use the receptacles at parking and picnic areas.

Please, no swimming in parkway lakes and ponds. Fire is the archenemy of the parkway. Use the fireplaces in campgrounds and picnic areas. Dispose of burning matches and tobacco safely.

Protect wildlife. Watch for animals as you drive and—for your own safety as well as theirs—avoid hitting them. Hunting is prohibited in this wildlife sanctuary.

Pets must be kept on leash or otherwise under physical control. No animals may be turned loose on parkway land at any time.

Administration. Blue Ridge Parkway, established on June 30, 1936, is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.

A superintendent, whose address is 700 Northwestern Bank Building, Asheville, NC 28801, is in immediate charge of the parkway.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities to protect and conserve our land and water, energy and minerals, fish and wildlife, park and recreation areas, and for the wise use of all those resources. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

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At the southern end of the Blue Ridge Parkway lies Great Smoky Mountains National Park, a rugged, heavily forested wilderness complemented by touches of pastoral beauty. To the north of the Parkway is Shenandoah National Park, a more gentle portion of the Blue Ridge now returning to wilderness following agricultural use.

In these brief descriptions of special features along the Parkway, mileposts are used as reference marks beginning with Mile 0 on the north end, where the parkway joins Skyline Drive in Shenandoah National Park.



PARKWAY ON RICHLAND BALSAM, MILE 431.4  
The parkway skirts pyramidal Mount Pisgah (el. 5,721) and soars a mile high across the Balsams and Plott Balsams. Range upon range, the mountains stretch to the horizon.

- | Mile  | Special Places to Stop   |
|-------|--|
| 451.2 | Waterrock Knob. Exhibits. Comfort station. Loop trail to Knob and dramatic 360° view of Southern Highlands. Superb panorama of Great Smoky Mountains.      |
| 458.2 | Heintooa Ridge spur road to Balsam Mountain; campground and picnic area (in Great Smoky Mountains National Park) 7.3 miles. Mile High overlook, 1.3 miles. |
| 461.9 | Exhibit tells of Big Witch, Cherokee eagle killer.   |
| 469   | Terminus of Blue Ridge Parkway.  |



TWIN TUNNELS, MILE 344.5  
The mountains reach their greatest height at Mount Mitchell in the Black Mountains. The once magnificent dark green forest of Fraser fir is dying, victim of the woolly aphid. The trees give the Blacks their name.

- | Mile  | Special Places to Stop  |
|-------|---|
| 320.7 | Chestoa. Short walk to view from cliff of Humpback Mountain. Table Rock is conspicuous.   |
| 331   | Museum of North Carolina Minerals.  |
| 339   | Crabtree Meadows. Campgrounds, Crabtree Falls, gas, restaurant (Mile 339.5). Picnic area (Mile 340.3).  |
| 342.2 | The Black Mountains dominate the horizon. Mount Mitchell (el. 6,684) is highest in the East.  |
| 355.4 | N.C. 128 to Mount Mitchell State Park. Campgrounds, trails, picnic area, lookout tower.   |
| 363.4 | Craggy Gardens. Outstanding purple rhododendron mid-June. Trail to Craggy Pinnacle (Mile 364.1). Visitor center, self-guiding trail (Mile 364.6). Road to picnic area, trails (Mile 367.6). |



THE FOREST, LINVILLE FALLS, MILE 316.3  
The parkway skirts the mountain resort area of North Carolina and skips in and out of Pisgah National Forest from Grandfather Mountain (el. 5,939) to Great Smoky Mountains.

- | Mile  | Special Places to Stop  |
|-------|---|
| 285.1 | Daniel Boone's Wilderness Road crosses here.  |
| 292.7 | Moses H. Cone Memorial Park. 25 miles of horse and carriage trails; two lakes. Parkway Craft Center (Mile 294).   |
| 295.1 | Julian Price Memorial Park, 2-mile Green Knob loop trail from Sims Pond. Lake and campgrounds (Mile 297.1). Picnic area (Mile 296.6).                                   |
| 308.3 | Flat Rock. Trail to superb view of Grandfather Mountain and Linville Valley.  |
| 316.3 | Linville Falls, in a dramatic and rugged setting, was donated by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Campgrounds. Trail to overlooks of falls and gorge. Picnic area (Mile 316.5). |



RHODODENDRON AT ALLIGATOR BACK, MILE 242.6  
Entering North Carolina, you will find the mountain country higher and more sparsely settled. Rolling bluegrass pastures terminate in precipitous bluffs. Rhododendron blooms through Doughton Park in early June.

- | Mile  | Special Places to Stop   |
|-------|--|
| 218.6 | Fox Hunters Paradise. 10-minute trail to Paradise, where old-time hunters listened to the baying of their hounds in the valley below.  |
| 238.5 | Doughton Park. Weaving demonstrated on old loom at Brinegar Cabin. Campground, picnic area, hiking trails, fishing. Restaurant, gas. Bluffs Lodge. Bluffs Ridge road and trail to shelter on Bluff Mountain, Wildcat Rocks (Mile 241.1). |
| 258.6 | Northwest Trading Post, a country store.   |
| 260.6 | Jumpin-Off Rocks. Short woodland trail to overlook on sheer rock cliffs above a forested valley.   |
| 264.4 | The Lump. Sweeping view of forested foothills.   |
| 272   | E. B. Jeffress Park. Self-guiding trail to Cascades. Picnic area.  |
| 217.5 | Cumberland Knob. Picnic area, trails.  |



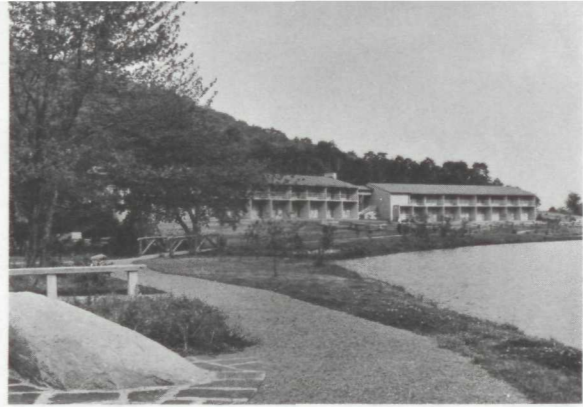
MABRY MILL, MILE 176.1  
Blue Ridge Parkway passes through a region rich in the folk history of the late 1700's, when the Blue Ridge marked the edge of the western frontier. Log cabins, farm buildings, a church, and a gristmill are some the structures preserved as evidences of the pioneer past.

- | Mile  | Special Places to Stop  |
|-------|---|
| 176.1 | Mabry Mill. Visitor center; self-guiding trail features old-time mountain industry; water-powered mill and blacksmith shop in operation; restaurant.  |
| 188.8 | Groundhog Mountain. Picnic grounds. Examples of rail fences—snake, post and rail, and buck.   |
| 189.8 | Puckett Cabin. Home of Mrs. Orlean Hawks Puckett from 1865 until her death in 1939 at the age of 102 years. A busy midwife, she is credited with bringing more than a thousand babies into the world. None of her own 24 children lived past infancy. |
| 217.5 | Cumberland Knob. Picnic area, trails.   |



PARKWAY NEAR ADNEY GAP, MILE 136  
For 150 miles south of Roanoke, Va., the Blue Ridge is a high rolling plateau which breaks sharply on the east.

- | Mile  | Special Places to Stop   |
|-------|--|
| 120.4 | Roanoke Mountain. Campground 1.3 miles on spur road to Mill Mountain, trails; Mill Mountain, a Roanoke City Park, 3 miles. Roanoke Mountain (Mile 120.3), one-way road around mountain, 3.7 miles long, steep grades, no towed vehicles, impressive views from summit. |
| 129.6 | Roanoke Valley. The city you see is Roanoke, largest along the parkway.  |
| 154.5 | Smart View. Picnic area, trails. The one-room Trail Cabin built in the 1890's faces a "right smart view." Fine dogwood bloom early May.  |
| 165   | Shading from yellow to deep red, flame azalea blooms mid-May throughout the plateau section.   |
| 167   | Rocky Knob. Campgrounds (Mile 167). Nature trail from The Saddle (Mile 168). Picnic area, trails, gas (Mile 169). Housekeeping cabins (Mile 174).  |
| 174   |  |



PEAKS OF OTTER LODGE, MILE 85.6  
After crossing the James River, the parkway ascends 3,286 feet in 13 miles to its highest elevation in Virginia, 3,950 feet.

- | Mile  | Special Places to Stop   |
|-------|--|
| 71    | Petit Gap. Road to Cave Mountain Lake (7 miles) in Jefferson National Forest. Swimming, picnicking, camping.   |
| 74.7  | Thunder Ridge. 8-minute trail to superb view of Arnold Valley. The slopes are purple with rhododendron in early June.  |
| 79.7  | Onion Mountain. Short loop trail through rhododendron and mountain-laurel. Fine bloom in early June.   |
| 83.4  | Fallingwater. Loop trail along Fallingwater cascades, 1.5 miles.   |
| 84    | Peaks of Otter. Lodge, restaurant (Mile 85.6). A forest plant-animal community is the theme of exhibits at the visitor center (Mile 86) and self-guiding trail. Gas, road to campgrounds, picnic area, bus station, hiking trails. |
| 87    |  |
| 114.9 | Twenty-minute walk to overlook above Roanoke River gorge.  |



WHETSTONE RIDGE FROM PARKWAY, MILE 28  
The parkway winds in and out of George Washington National Forest from Mile 0 to James River. South of the river to Roanoke, it is in Jefferson National Forest. It crosses Otter Creek nine times between Mile 56.6 and James River, which is 105 miles long and connects with the parkway at Rockfish Gap.

- | Mile | Special Places to Stop  |
|------|---|
| 16   | Va. 814 to Sherando Lake (4.5 miles) in George Washington National Forest. Swimming, picnicking, camping.   |
| 29   | Whetstone Ridge. Restaurant and gas.  |
| 34.4 | Yankee Horse. Reconstructed spur of logging railroad. Delightful short walk through woods alongside Wigwam Creek to Wigwam Falls.   |
| 58   | Otter Creek. Campground, restaurant, gas, (Mile 60.8). Otter Lake (Mile 63.1), fishing, trail.  |
| 63.6 | Visitor center (Mile 63.6) tells of James River and Kanawha Canal; footbridge across James River to restored canal lock; self-guiding trail from visitor center along banks of the James. |



THE MOUNTAIN FARM CABIN, MILE 5.8  
At the northern end of Blue Ridge Parkway is Shenandoah National Park, 75 miles long and from 2 to 13 miles wide. Its most celebrated features are mountain slopes of lush beauty and a succession of panoramas from Skyline Drive, which is 105 miles long and connects with the parkway at Rockfish Gap.

- | Mile | Special Places to Stop   |
|------|--|
| 5    | Humpback Rocks. Self-guiding trail through reconstructed mountain farm homestead leads from visitor center (Mile 5.8). Hiking trail from parking area at Mile 6.1 leads three-quarters of a mile to The Rocks, whose humped appearance gives the area its name. Picnic area (Mile 8.4). Greenstone self-guiding trail (Mile 8.8) offers an interesting walk. Stone fences are remnants of hog-walls built in early 1800's to control wanderings of half-wild hogs. |
| 10.7 | Ravens Roost. Torry Mountain and Shenandoah Valley to the west.  |

