


# National Forests and Parks along the (Appalachian) Trail

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In a time of Green Culture, where better to get back to "nature" than with a trip to one (or more) of the United States best National Forests or Parks. The Appalachian Trail (AT) was first conceived in 1921 and it was completed many years later in 1937. Its purpose was to link cities to wilderness and farms. The AT is the longest hiking trail in the United States at over 2170 miles in length. It stretches along the Appalachian (Smoky) Mountains from Georgia, throughout North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, to Maine.

Upon its conception it was titled "[A Great Trail from Maine to Georgia!](#)". There are numerous National Forests and Parks that are part of and near the [AT](#).

In Georgia, Springer Mountain in [Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest](#) is the beginning of the AT. Visit the Anna Ruby twin waterfalls. This forest offers some of the best trophy fishing. Motorized boating and waterskiing is permitted in designated areas and exploring for rocks, minerals and panning for gold is offered.

In North Carolina, the [Nantahala National Forest](#) which is part of the AT includes the Nantahala River and Mountain Waters Scenic Byway. This is also a great spot for water activities. Non-motorized boating, kayaks, canoes and whitewater rafting is allowed on the river. Motorized boating, swimming, and fishing are permitted on Lake Fontana, Lake Hiwassee and Lake Chatuge. There are incredible hiking and nature trails for exploring the flora and fauna in the [Pisgah National Forest](#) and the stunning views and scenic driving on [Blue Ridge Parkway](#) are magnificent. There are many beautiful [waterfalls and Sliding Rock](#) (a rock waterslide) in this forest.

In Tennessee, the [Cherokee National Forest](#) along with the [Tennessee Valley Authority](#) cooperatively offer whitewater rafting and other watersports recreation. Sightsee at the historic Pinnacle Mountain Fire Lookout Tower. This national forest borders the south and north ends of the [Great Smoky Mountain National Park](#) which boasts the highest elevation on the AT at [Clingmans Dome](#) at 6625 feet.

In Virginia and West Virginia, the [Jefferson and George Washington National Forests](#) are full of vast wilderness and they also include the Blue Ridge Parkway. Hiking, biking and horse trails are the way to see these forests. The exploration of vegetation and wildlife is fantastic. Hunting and shooting ranges are offered here as well.

In Vermont, the [Green Mountain National Forest](#) includes 100 miles of the AT referred to as "Long Trail". Wildlife is abundant there because of all of its wilderness, and this forest has been involved in many Wilderness Acts passed by Congress. Birdwatching and bird migration are other treats. Forest management is very important, and be sure to sightsee the historic battlegrounds that were fought there.

In New Hampshire, the [White Mountain National Forest](#) offers seasonal activities: hiking, backpacking and picnicking in the warmer months to skiing and snowboarding in the winter. Mineral exploration and collecting is permitted. Hunters and trappers are allowed to do so in this forest.

In Maine, the [Acadia National Park](#) is on the coast of Maine close to where the AT ends. It boasts Cadillac Mountain, the tallest mountain on the east coast, visit [Bass Harbor Head Lighthouse](#) or Islesford Historical Museum and Nature Center.

Picnicking, hiking, nature viewing and exploring are always welcome in all of these forests/parks. Many have observation decks and waterfalls that you can hike to as well. Horseback riding, bicycling and nature trails are located in all of the forests. Camping, backpacking and fishing are also permitted throughout the forests in designated areas.

Mostly all of these forests/parks present the opportunity for scenic drives with roadside stops and spectacular views of the Smoky Mountains.

There are a ton of outdoor and recreational activities for everyone to do in all of these forests/parks. The different seasons make it exciting all year round. Most of these things cost little or no money and all they require is a love of nature and a sense of adventure. The exploration and sightseeing are remarkable and unmeasurable. The views of the Appalachian Mountains

are truly breathtaking!

Here is an excellent [map](#) of the [AT](#) and the [National Forests](#) that compromise it.

Visit these links for more information about these and "other" [national forests](#) and [parks](#).

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