



Brookside
Mountain Cottages
Mountain City, Tennessee

Area Hiking Guide

LAUREL CREEK TRAIL – The Laurel Creek trail is one of the closest hiking trails to Brookside and perfect for those looking for an easy and pretty hike without taking much time out of their day. To get there - take TN-91 north toward Damascus for 3.7 miles. The trailhead parking area is located on the left just past the Ahistadi Youth Camp. If you take the trail to the north (cross the bridge over the creek and go to the right) it follows along Laurel Creek for about 1.5 miles until it reaches the Tennessee-Virginia state line (out & back approximately 3 miles).

GENTRY CREEK FALLS – The Gentry Creek Falls trail is also very close to Brookside and approximately a 4.5 mile out and back hike featuring approximately 15 shallow creek crossings where you must hop across rocks, so be sure to wear appropriate footwear that you don't mind getting wet. However, it is a beautiful hike, and the falls are worth the effort. To get there – take TN-91 north 0.9 mile to Gentry Creek Road in Laurel Bloomery. Turn right and drive 0.8 miles to the end, bear right to stay on Gentry Creek Road and then drive 0.1 mile to the fork and bear left. Continue on Gentry Creek Road, which becomes gravel, and drive to the parking area at the end at the trailhead.

LAUREL FALLS TRAIL – The Laurel Falls trail is one of the most popular in the area as it leads to a fantastic waterfall well worth the trip. If you are going to do this hike on a weekend, we recommend you get there early as the parking area is quite small and fills up quickly. To get there take TN-91 south toward Mountain City. Turn left on US-421 and go to TN-67 (Walgreens on the right). Turn right (south) on TN-67 and drive 18.5 miles to the trailhead parking area on the left. The trail is approximately 5.8 miles round trip from the trailhead to the falls and back and is of moderate difficulty.

BACKBONE ROCK – Known as the world's shortest tunnel, is a great destination for a day hike. Created in 1901 out of necessity for the railroad to transport timber, a hole was blasted through Backbone Rock. Today, this recreation area provides hiking trails, fishing in Beaverdam Creek, a day-use shelter, outdoor grills, primitive restrooms, and a large parking area. Across the highway from the parking area is the Backbone Falls loop trail which is a short trail up and around the waterfall and back down to the highway (approximately 1 mile total). To get there – take TN-91 6.6 miles to US-58 W/VA-91N toward Damascus. Take US-58 W/VA-91 N 1.0 mile to E. 3rd St in Damascus and turn left to stay on US-58 W. Drive 0.2 miles to S. Shady Ave and turn left. Drive 1.9 miles, the road becomes TN-133 at the state line – continue another 1.8 miles, go through the tunnel and the parking area is on the right just past the tunnel.

GRAYSON HIGHLANDS STATE PARK – This Virginia State Park is one of our favorite places to hike. It is located about an hour's drive from Brookside and makes for a great day trip. Once in the park, there are several trails from which to choose, but we highly recommend the Twin Pinnacles Trail, which is a 1.6-mile loop hike that offers incredible views from a couple of large rock outcroppings. We also love The Cabin Creek trail; a 1.8-mile loop hike that leads to a scenic waterfall and is well worth hiking. In addition, the Wilson Creek trail is a nice hike along Wilson Creek and is about the same length as the Cabin Creek trail. From Massie Gap, you can also take the Horse Trail North and see the wild ponies that roam these highlands – and this trail intersects the Appalachian Trail where you can split off and head

up to Mount Rogers (the highest peak in Virginia). To get to Grayson Highlands State Park – take TN-91 N 6.6 miles and take a sharp right onto US-58 E. Take US-58 E for 25 miles to the park entrance on the left. For more detailed information visit:

<http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/document/data/trail-guide-graysonhighlands.pdf>

ELK KNOB STATE PARK – This park is in North Carolina not far from the state line. The Summit Trail is a switch backed 1.9-mile climb to the summit of Elk Knob where there are two overlooks offering breathtaking views as far as the eye can see. The views from the summit are well worth the strenuous climb. To get to Elk Knob State Park – take TN-91 south 5.7 miles toward Mountain City. Turn left on US-421 S and drive 6.9 miles to Brushy Fork Road. Turn left on Brushy Fork Road and drive 0.8 miles and bear right to stay on Brushy Fork at the North Carolina state line, and then drive 3.5 miles to Green Valley Road. Turn right on Green Valley Road and drive 0.9 miles to NC-88 W. Turn right on NC-88 W and drive 0.5 miles to Sutherland Road. Turn left on Sutherland Road and drive 3.9 miles then bear left to continue onto Meatcamp Road. Drive another 2.4 miles to the park entrance on the left.

APPALACHIAN TRAIL – The A/T runs through this region and there are several access points where you can take a day hike on a small section of the A/T. These would all be out and back hikes from wherever you start unless you have two vehicles. A very convenient access point is at the Cross Mountain trailhead, which gives you options to head north or south for two very different hikes. From the parking lot, you can cross TN-91 and head north through the old Osborne Farm to Double Springs Shelter and back which is about a 5-mile out and back hike. Or you can cross over Cross Mountain Road and head south on the A/T, climbing up the Iron Mountain range and hike to the old Uncle Nick Grindstaff gravesite. This hike is about 7.2 miles out and back. To get there take TN-91 south 5.7 miles to US-421. Turn left toward Mountain City and drive 0.6 miles to TN-67 (Walgreens on the right) and turn right. Take TN-67 south 5.5 mile to Spear Branch Road. Turn right on Spear Branch Road and drive 0.8 miles to the fork and bear left onto Cross Mountain Road. Take Cross Mountain Road 3.6 miles to the end at TN-91 and the parking area is on the right.

The hikes listed in this guide are just a sampling of many great trails in Northeast Tennessee, Northwest North Carolina, and Southwest Virginia, and are the most accessible from Brookside. There are many other fabulous trails, and a great resource to learn more about many other trails and waterfall hikes in this region is [Appalachian Treks](#) (click on the title to go to the website).