

JOURNALIST AIDES



Fresh Story Ideas

◆ **Ancient Mountains, Timeless Beauty:** A work in progress for more than 400 million years, the Appalachian Mountains that define the landscape here today were well worth the wait. Older than the Andes, the Alps and the Rockies, the beauty of these mountains has a captivating and breath-taking effect. Thirteen peaks reach elevations of more than 6,000 feet—the most in any county east of the Mississippi. Whether surveying the scenery from the summit, from the high-elevation overlooks along the Blue Ridge Parkway or from the valley floor, views of the natural splendor are everywhere.

◆ **Nature's Playground:** Haywood County — surrounded by protected land, including the country's two most visited national parks and a national forest—is the ultimate outdoor lover's paradise. Explore thousands of miles of hiking trails, from leisurely strolls to strenuous climbs, in a variety of settings. Traverse the ridges on horseback, or zip down a narrow trail on mountain bike. Raft down the river, or fish for mountain trout. View the wildlife, including the reintroduced and now thriving elk in

Cataloochee Valley. The Great Smoky Mountains National Park, 800 square miles of wilderness bordering (and encompassing parts of) the county, is world renowned for its diversity of plant and animal life. These mountains serve up a menu of choices, from heart-pounding adventure to more subdued outdoor activities.

◆ **Three Cheers for our Three Craft Breweries:** Waynesville may be a small town but it is no stranger to the craft beer scene. With three well known craft breweries finding their home in less than a 5 mile radius of each other, there is plenty of fresh brews to go around. BearWater Brewing Co., Frog Level Brewing, and Tipping Point Brewing each have their own unique brews that proudly represent the area's thriving craft beer scene. And just to show how great they work together, they even collaborated together in 2013 on Haywood County's first beer festival with plans to become an annual event. Three cheers to that!

◆ **More than One Color Season:** Haywood County may be famous for its golden fall foliage, but there is more than one color season in the NC Smokies. A White Christmas can be common in Western North Carolina along with many fresh snowfalls each winter. Spring and Summer lend themselves to even more color with a wide variety of vibrant colors displayed among the wildflowers and flowering trees. And don't miss the colorful showcase of the native rhododendron and mountain laurel. Visitors enjoy spectacular scenery unlike anything else in the world.



◆ **A Homegrown Taste of Haywood:** Did you know that Haywood County is home to 707 working farms encompassing 56,212 acres? From an extensive variety of produce to farm raised trout to native flora, the NC Smokies offer homegrown items to please even the pickiest palates. We even have our own local agricultural initiative, Buy Haywood, that works diligently to support the farmers of Haywood County by helping introduce high-quality farm products to community-minded consumers. Buy Haywood produces a yearly Agritourism Guide of local farms, produce stand & markets, and other vendors that welcome visitors. They can get a first-hand look at the farming process and can take home many incredible products that are produced around the county. We hope this will leave them with the true meaning of "Homegrown in Haywood" and encourage them to buy local. The farmers (and your taste buds) will thank you!



◆ **Fresh-Cut Bluegrass:** With bluegrass popularity on the rise, you can find some of the freshest picking right here in Haywood County. The county's native bluegrass band, Balsam Range, is nationally acclaimed as one of the most talented bands on the scene. Winner of two IBMA awards, they have



developed a die-hard following known as Balsam Nation and continue to sell out shows across the country. There are also many other talented bluegrass artists throughout the county and you can find them in various venues in the area, including the Maggie Valley Opry House. Among these artists, you can find bluegrass legend, Raymond Fairchild, performing regularly at the Opry House.

◆ **Hog Heaven:** With 46 miles of the Blue Ridge Parkway—the 469-mile road's highest and wildest segment—stretching along Haywood County's southern border, motorcyclists love riding their steel horses here. Not only are there four access points to the Parkway but also several other switchback-heavy roads they are sure to enjoy, including U.S. 276 and N.C. 215. Only about 45 minutes west, U.S. 129 at Deal's Gap, better known as the Tail of the Dragon, lures motorcyclists with its seemingly incalculable number of twists and turns. And don't forget to check out Wheels Through Time in Maggie Valley. This museum features a premier collection of rare American Vintage Motorcycles.

◆ **Ski the Smokies:** Consistently one of the first resorts in the Southeast to open the ski season and the last to close, Cataloochee Ski Area is a winter playground for the entire family. With 17 slopes and trails there is something for everyone, from skiers to snowboarders, from novices to veterans. Beginners can get a feel for things on a couple of smooth, gentle slopes (classes and private lessons are also available), while the more experienced and adventurous can head to the Cat Cage Terrain Park. Nestled in the Great Smoky Mountains, the surrounding views are magical. When you need a break or have taken the skis off for the day, check out the lodge, where you can warm up by the double-sided fireplace, enjoy some good food and drink, and perhaps even listen to a live band

◆ **The Perfect Hike:** No matter the time of year, Purchase Knob & Sams Summits Loop Trail provide the perfect year-round hikes. Both with easy access (even in the winter), the hikes offer summer butterfly and wildflower abundance, historical significance and amazing scenery which are among the best in the county. A unique illustrated guide is available for both exclusively at Haywood Visitor Centers that was mapped, cataloged, and hand-drawn by a local certified naturalist. The guides, which doubles as a work of art, provide an experience unlike any other in the area.

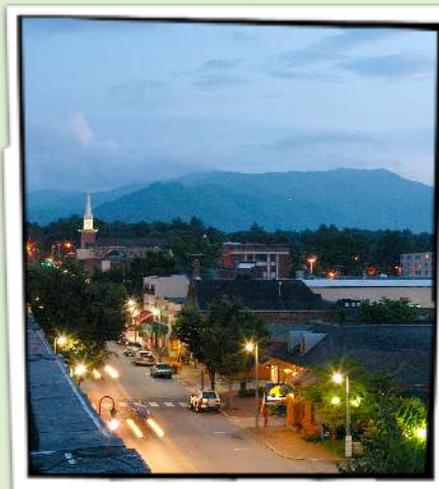


◆ **Haywood Heritage**

Hotspots: If you love rich mountain history and heritage, Haywood County has got you covered. Spend the day exploring the Haywood County Quilt Trails to learn stories of the area told through vibrant quilt blocks on buildings and barns throughout the county. Take a trip to Cataloochee Valley to visit the elk and the preserved buildings of an early 1900's mountain settlement. And don't forget a stop by Shelton House, the Museum of North Carolina Handicrafts which features comprehensive exhibits of 19th century crafts.



◆ **Main Street, Redux:** While many small town downtowns have given way to suburban malls and sprawling shopping complexes in recent years, Waynesville's Main Street, thanks to a successful revitalization project over the last decade, is alive and well. Antique furniture shops, independent bookstores, hip cafés, upscale and casual restaurants and bars with many supporting the Farm-to-Chef movement, art galleries and studios, locally owned clothing stores,



and souvenir shops line the brick sidewalks of this quaint downtown. A slow-paced atmosphere, it's also alive with activity: Mountain Street Dances and Art After Dark, on Friday evenings in summer, music from bands playing at a café wafting through the air, vendors setting up shop in the street at one of the several festivals held in downtown. Head down the hill from Main Street to Frog Level, the revitalized railroad district that now beams with a character all its own, with new art and furniture galleries, a tasty coffee shop, and craft brewery.

◆ **Tis the Season for the NC**

Smokies: Every holiday season, starting in mid-November, the choose-and-cut Christmas tree farms nestled among the Great Smoky Mountains of North Carolina attract visitors both near and far in search of the perfect Christmas tree. The county is home to four locally owned and operated farms specializing in North Carolina Fraser firs. Tree-seekers search the mountainside for the ideal Christmas tree or choose a pre-cut tree of their liking. Other holiday necessities can be purchased onsite such as fresh hand-made wreaths and garland. Visitors also incorporate overnight stays and combine their trip with other holiday events and winter activities, such as snow skiing at Cataloochee Ski Area.

◆ **Treasure Hunt:** From one-of-a-kind antiques to unique mountain crafts, from paintings of mountain scenes to modern art, from award-winning metal sculptures to pottery shaped by local artisans, you're sure to discover a few treasures you can't leave without. And if you're lucky, you just might discover a precious (and valuable) gem: Two of the largest sapphires—"The Star of the Carolinas" (1,445 carats) and "The Southern Star" (1,035 carats)—were unearthed at the Old

Sample Itinerary

DAY ONE

Breakfast at Joeys Pancake House

4309 Soco Rd. Maggie Valley, 28751

Enjoy a breakfast at an authentic mountain pancake house. Since opening in 1966, Joey's Pancake House has been a favorite breakfast stop for locals and visitors alike because of their delectable menu. And make sure you order up a stack of homemade pancakes. We dare you to find a better flapjack anywhere else!

Soco Falls

Visit one of the area's most beautiful waterfall features! From Maggie Valley head up US 19 South to the Blue Ridge Parkway. Cross under the Parkway and continue downhill towards Cherokee. From the Parkway, it's 1.5 miles to a marked pull-off on the left side of the road. The short, steep trail ends at a view deck that provides a breathtaking glimpse of falls.

Tour the Blue Ridge Parkway

The 46 miles of twisting mountain roads that run through Haywood County are one of the most popular attractions in the area. After Soco Falls, head back to the parkway entrance just outside of Maggie Valley and head North towards Canton for an exquisite drive through the Balsam Mountain Range, which is where Haywood's native bluegrass band, Balsam Range, got the inspiration for their name. Stop and stretch your legs at two of the counties most popular hiking areas, Graveyard Fields or Devils Courthouse, which are sure to inspire you as well!

Lunch at The Imperial

117 Main St, Canton 28716

You've surely worked up an appetite by now! Hop off the parkway and head towards Canton to experience one of the finest eateries in town: The Imperial, located in a historic victorian-style building built in the late 1800's. After lunch, grab a

history guide from the hostess and take a stroll around the building to learn more about the restored Victorian style Inn that was established in 1911. During the summer months, The Imperial also offers live local music on their porch and other events so make you sure you check them out during your visit.

Cataloochee Valley

After lunch, travel back in time to one of the most beautiful and remote parts of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Cataloochee Valley is rich in mountain history, laced with abundant wildflowers and rich with wildlife including elk, white-tailed deer, black bears, butterflies and many species of birds. With several hiking trails and preserved buildings from the early 1900's, there is

plenty to explore in the valley. For prime elk viewing, stick around at dusk as they are most prominent during dawn and dusk.

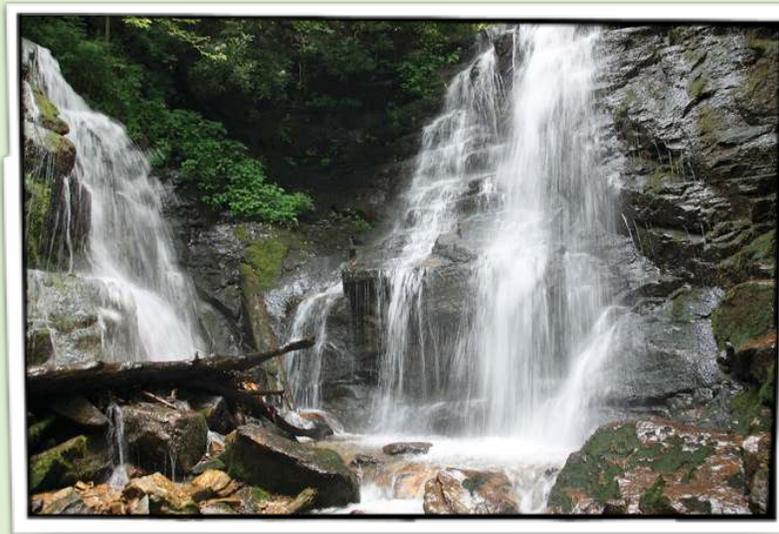
Dinner at Frogs Leap Public House

44 Church St.,
Waynesville 28786
Enjoy dinner at Frogs Leap Public House for a truly "unique farm-to-fork experience." FLPH is one of the many local restaurants to enjoy the farm-to-

chef movement as they pride themselves on utilizing as many local homegrown ingredients as possible. You will find the menu is ever changing in order to incorporate what is currently in season. You will also enjoy perusing the many works of local artists that are displayed around the restaurant.

Check out our Breweries!

After a long day of adventuring, you must be thirsty! Haywood County is the proud home of three (soon to be four) homegrown microbreweries, all within a short drive of each other. After dinner and spend the rest of your evening visiting one (or more) of our breweries. On the weekends, you can usually catch some of the area's many talented local musicians at each brewery.



DAY TWO

Breakfast at Blue Rooster Southern Grill

207 Paragon Pkwy, Clyde, 28782

Enjoy a authentic southern breakfast at Blue Rooster Southern Grill. By incorporating fresh local ingredients into traditional dishes of the south, Blue Rooster is a must for breakfast. Check out their unique daily specials that are sure to satisfy!

Haywood County Quilt Trails

After lunch, pick up a quilt trail guide to uncover the heritage of Haywood County. The quilt trail project helps the county tell it's history by featuring colorful and meaningful quilt squares installed on barns, public buildings, shops, and other appropriate buildings around the community. Quilts represent a much-loved symbol of comfort, family, heritage, and community, and the blocks on the trail provide splashes of color along major roads and in the rural countryside. Start your trail tour at your next stop, The Shelton House.

The Shelton House

49 Shelton St,
Waynesville 28786

A visit to the Shelton House is a must for anyone intrigued by the heritage of Haywood County. The Shelton House was built in 1875 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Housed in and around the Shelton House, the Museum of North Carolina Handicrafts features comprehensive exhibits of 19th century crafts. The first quilt block in the county is featured here.

Lunch at City Bakery

18 N Main St, Waynesville, 28786

Stop by City Bakery to pick up a delectable picnic for your next adventure. Known for their homemade artisanal bread and baked goods, they offer a wide range of fresh sandwiches on their homemade bread along with made from scratch soups and salads that incorporate many locally grown and produced

ingredients. And don't forget a sweet treat for later on.

Purchase Knob Hike

After picking up lunch, stroll down the street to the Waynesville Visitor Center and grab a Purchase Knob Hiking Guide. This beautifully illustrated map was created by a local certified naturalist and highlights one of Haywood County's best hiking gems. Purchase Knob offers a wide range of biodiversity and other appealing aspects all encompassed in a four-hour or less walk. Its winter accessibility, summer butterfly and wildflower abundance, and amazing panoramas make Purchase Knob the perfect hike. Easy to Moderate grade.



Dinner at Bourbon Barrel Beef and Ale

454 Hazelwood Ave,
Waynesville, 28786
Venture down to the Hazelwood Village of Waynesville for a one of kind dining experience at Bourbon Barrel Beef and Ale. They incorporate only the finest local farm-to-chef ingredients into their classic comfort foods, which make it a "must dine" on any foodie's list. Make sure to check out their hand-cut, all-

natural and locally raised steaks along with their extensive selection of local craft microbrews and fine display of small batch bourbons and whiskey.

The Haywood Arts Regional Theatre

250 Pigeon Street, Waynesville, 28786

If you have a passion for the theatrical, Haywood County has got you covered. Haywood Arts Regional Theatre, or better known by the locals as The Hart Theatre, is not to be missed. This year-round theatre features productions from the classics like Macbeth to Broadway musicals like Hello Dolly. The company is proud of its regional and local performers and their wide range of singing and acting abilities. A performance at The Hart Theatre is must while you're in town!



A Homegrown Epicenter

With more than 800 accommodations located in Maggie Valley, Waynesville, Canton, and Clyde, visitors will have no problem finding the right place for them. So what's your style? An economical motel in the heart of the action or a secluded luxury cabin perched high on mountain? Or perhaps a cozy downtown inn or romantic bed and breakfast is more your style. Regardless of your preference, we've got you covered.

Centrally located in the Southeast, Haywood County is only a few hours away from some of the South's major cities, including Atlanta and Charlotte. Once here on vacation, it's the perfect base camp, allowing visitors to take countless excursions throughout Western North Carolina to places of natural beauty, historical interest, and creative artistry. Day trips and scenic drives in and around Haywood County are a great way to explore all that the region has to offer.

Some of the favorite day trips include:

- **Biltmore Estate:** Dubbed "America's Largest Home," this renowned Asheville attraction is a 250-room French chateau built by George Vanderbilt in 1895, surrounded by lush gardens and even a winery. With 8,000 acres, there's no shortage of outdoor activities to partake in on the Biltmore property itself. And it's only 30 minutes east of Haywood.

- **Cherokee Indian Reservation:** Also about 30 minutes away, Cherokee, North Carolina—home to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians—is a popular destination. Located at the southern entrance of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, centuries of Cherokee history, tradition, dance, art, and artifacts come to life.
- **Chimney Rock Park:** About 25 miles southeast of Asheville, Chimney Rock Park is a unique setting—a towering 315-foot monolith soaring above Hickory Nut Gorge. Once you get to the top, via the easy or more difficult route, the 75-mile views are truly breathtaking.
- **Great Smoky Mountains Railroad:** Take a journey through the countryside of the Western North Carolina mountains by train. Choose from a variety of half-day scenic rail excursions departing from depots in the historic mountain towns of Dillsboro and Bryson City. Other options include a gourmet dinner train, a mystery theatre trip, and the Polar Express.
- **Harrah's Cherokee Casino & Hotel:** The casino boasts more than 3,400 games, including live table games and a bevy of slot machines. The 1,500-seat pavilion regularly features some of the best entertainment in the area.

With all these great offerings both in and around Haywood County, it's easy to see how a homegrown vacation in the North Carolina Smokies should be your next fresh adventure.