

# Take a Scenic Drive in the Foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains

In the northwestern corner of South Carolina, the rolling landscapes of the Piedmont transform into steeper slopes and peaks, marking the beginning of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Throw in a couple of fun side excursions, some fresh-from-the-farm cuisine, a cozy cabin in the woods and you have a wonderful, fun-filled getaway.

Whether you're traveling with the kids, your parents or friends, we've got some great ideas for your itinerary:



**Day 1:** The [Cherokee Foothills National Scenic Byway](#), whitewater rafting on the [Chattooga River](#), apple orchard country, dinner at [The Steak House Cafeteria](#) in Walhalla.

**Day 2:** [Devils Fork State Park](#), kayak or pontoon boat tour of [Lake Jocassee](#), [Twin Falls](#).

**Day 3:** [Caesars Head State Park](#), [Raven Cliff Falls](#), [Poinsett Bridge](#), [Campbell's Covered Bridge](#).

## Go at your own pace.

No need to rush on this road trip. It's all about enjoying the sights and sounds of the rivers, lakes, waterfalls, and mountains. Slow down, stop often and take plenty of pictures to show the folks back home.

**Day 1:** Start your adventure at the southernmost end of the [115-mile Cherokee Foothills National Scenic Byway](#) off Interstate 85 at the Georgia-South Carolina border. As you travel through the low, soft hills of the Piedmont, you'll begin to see the magnificent peaks of the Blue Ridge Mountains in the distance.

Take a turn off the highway to venture into the heart of the Sumter National Forest, where you'll find [Wildwater's Chattooga Rafting Center](#). Take your pick of several great excursions — a zip line canopy tour through nine acres of wooded wilderness, a leisurely rafting trip on Section III of the Chattooga or, ratchet it up a notch and take an exciting ride on Section IV of this National Wild and Scenic River.

Just down the road from Wildwater's outpost is [Chattooga Belle Farm](#), a 138-acre u-pick farm featuring exquisitely maintained fields of peach and apple trees, grape and muscadine vines and berry patches. Sample the locally made chutney, relishes and apple butter sold in the store. Or just take a seat in one of the rocking chairs under the barn's covered patio and enjoy the expansive vista as the sun sets behind the mountains.

**Day 2:** Make your way back to the Cherokee Foothills Highway and head north to [Devils Fork State Park](#), a hidden jewel tucked deep in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The centerpiece of this 622-acre retreat is [Lake Jocassee](#), a crystal clear mountain reservoir surrounded by a lush landscape of pines and hardwoods.

Rent a canoe, kayak or motor boat from one of the local outfitters or take a guided pontoon boat tour of the lake and its many splendid waterfalls. The park also features an easy one-mile loop trail that follows a winding creek through the forest.

Finish the day with a pleasant hike to one of the prettiest waterfalls in the Upstate. It will take you just 15 minutes to walk the quarter-mile trail to [Twin Falls](#). Reedy Cove Creek splits at the top of the falls, sending most of its water down a 75-foot granite wall and the rest cascading down a 45-degree slope of rocks and boulders.

**Day 3:** It wouldn't be the mountains without some seriously twisty roads. As you continue on the Cherokee Foothills Highway, you'll begin to ascend quickly as you drive north on US 276 to [Caesars Head State Park](#) in the Mountain Bridge Wilderness Area. Walk out to the 3,266-foot granite outcropping for a fantastic view of [Table Rock](#), South Carolina's most photographed natural wonder.

If you're up for a moderately difficult but lovely trek through the woods, hike to [Raven Cliff Falls](#), a 420-foot mountain cascade boasting well-deserved postcard status. A suspension bridge offers one of the two publicly accessible overlooks to the falls as they splash deep into the mountain cove below.

Those of you seeking a less-strenuous end to your tour might prefer to visit two landmark bridges farther along the Cherokee Foothills Highway. [Poinsett Bridge](#), one of the most significant historic structures in South Carolina, is a graceful 14-foot Gothic arch stone bridge spanning Little Gap Creek. [Campbell's Covered Bridge](#) is the only remaining covered bridge in the state. Both are also great spots for picnicking.

### Where to stay, what to eat

Before you leave [Oconee County](#) for Devils Fork State Park, stop at the [Steakhouse Cafeteria in Walhalla](#) for some of the best fried chicken this side of the Mason-Dixon Line. It doesn't have to make sense, it's delicious! Other great dining spots along the way include [Mountain House Restaurant at Caesars Head](#) in Cleveland and the [Hare & Hound Pub](#) in Landrum.

Your choice of accommodations is just as plentiful. [Oconee, Table Rock and Devils Fork state parks](#) all feature camping and cabins or villas. Another popular offering is [Laurel Mountain Inn](#) in Pickens. Even more places to stay can be found here.

