Use this map to discover an abundance of natural and cultural treasures that lie along the Blue Ridge Heritage Trail.
Explore a trail of heritage treasures that winds throughout the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area.

On the Blue Ridge Heritage Trail you will discover stories about the people and places that have made North Carolina’s Blue Ridge mountains so significant to the history of our country that the region was named a National Heritage Area.

Here among some of the world’s oldest mountains, you’ll get a glimpse into the distant past and learn about the earliest people who dwelt here, ancestors to the Cherokee.

You’ll see spectacular scenery around virtually every bend in the road, views enriched by the stories on the trail signs that point out significant landmarks and the history of what happened there.

The music that was born and bred in these mountains is a living tradition, and many of the stops along the trail share the stories of the people and places that continue to pass along this rich musical heritage.

This region is one of the largest centers of handmade crafts in the nation, and as you follow the trail, you may meet mountain artists in their studios or sample a great variety of crafts at festivals, galleries, and museums.
An enriching adventure awaits you on the Blue Ridge Heritage Trail. Get started today!

Interactive kiosks at the five North Carolina Welcome Centers listed here offer more information that will enrich your visit. The signs on the Blue Ridge Heritage Trail tell the stories of this magnificent scenic land and the diverse heritage of its people that together have created a culture unique to this region.

The 25 westernmost counties in North Carolina were designated the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area by the U.S. Congress in 2003. This honor was bestowed because of the impact the natural and cultural heritage of the region had on the history of North Carolina and the United States. The Blue Ridge Heritage Trail is a project of the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership.

1. I-77 North Welcome Center
   I-77 southbound at Mile Marker 105, Dobson, NC
2. I-85 South Welcome Center
   I-85 northbound at Mile Marker 2, Kings Mountain, NC
3. I-26 East Welcome Center
   I-26 westbound at Mile Marker 68, Columbus, NC
4. I-26 West Welcome Center
   I-26 eastbound at Mile Marker 6, Mars Hill, NC
5. I-40 West Welcome Center
   I-40 eastbound at Mile Marker 10, Waynesville, NC
A QR code is located on each sign. Using a QR app on your smart phone, you can instantly link to a world of additional information at every site.

Welcome to the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area

A place unlike any other on Earth, where ancient landscapes enchant the eye and age-old traditions warm the heart.

You are now in one of America’s most cherished and celebrated natural landscapes, the mountains and foothills of Western North Carolina. The natural heritage of these ancient mountains, some of the oldest in the world, combined with the cultural heritage of the people who have lived here over centuries have created a place so special in our country it has been honored with the designation of “National Heritage Area.”

Here, you’ll find...
- The highest mountain east of the Mississippi—Mount Mitchell
- The deepest gorge in the Eastern United States—Linville Gorge
- The oldest river in North America—the New River
- The most visited National Park lands in the country—Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Blue Ridge Parkway
- Cherokee heritage—more than 10,000 years old
- America’s largest home—Biltmore Estate
- Music born and bred in the Blue Ridge
- Handcraft traditions—unique to the Blue Ridge Area in more than 60 centers
- Fresh, delicious food from local markets.

Visit our website for more information on our unique cultural heritage.

www.blueridgeheritage.com

More information online at: www.blueridgeheritage.com
Create your own trail by visiting these sites along the Blue Ridge Heritage Trail.

**2. Historic Earle Theatre**
The theatre is home of the Merry-Go-Round, currently the second longest running live radio program in the nation, and the Old-Time Music Heritage Hall.
142 North Main Street, Mount Airy, NC 336-786-7998 • surryarts.org

**3. Town of Sparta**
Sparta and Alleghany County have a rich heritage of music, crafts, and agriculture. A visit to Crouse Park and Sparta’s quaint downtown is like a refreshing step back in time.
60 Cherry Street, Sparta, NC 336-372-5473 • visitalleghany.com

**4. Air Bellows Gap, Blue Ridge Parkway**
This overlook provides a long range view of an area of mixed agriculture, with numerous Christmas tree farms dotting the landscape.
Blue Ridge Parkway Milepost 265.9

**5. Old Wilkes Jail**
Tom “Dooley” Dula, the subject of the well-known folksong, was one of many colorful characters to be incarcerated in the historic 19th century jail, part of the Wilkes Heritage Museum.
203 North Bridge Street, Wilkesboro, NC 336-667-3171 • wilkesheritagemuseum.com

**6. St. Paul’s Episcopal Church Ben Long Frescoes**
100 West Street, Wilkesboro, NC 336-667-4231 • blueridgeheritage.com

**7. Tweetsie Railroad**
Locomotive #12, built in 1917, takes visitors around a 3-mile loop in North Carolina’s first theme park.
Tweetsie offers Wild West fun for the whole family.
300 Tweetsie Railroad Lane, Blowing Rock, NC 828-264-9061 • tweetsie.com

**8. Gardens of the Blue Ridge**
The oldest licensed plant nursery in North Carolina, Gardens of the Blue Ridge supplies wildflowers and native plants to customers in the U. S. and around the world.
9056 Pittman Gap Road, Newland, NC 828-733-2417 • gardensoftheblueridge.com

**10. Mast Farm Inn**
The Mast Farm Inn is an award-winning historic country inn and restaurant in the Valle Crucis Historical District and has been welcoming guests since the 1800s.
2543 Broadstone Road, Banner Elk, NC 828-963-5857 • themastfarminn.com

**11. Original Mast General Store**
Opened in 1883, the original Mast General Store in Valle Crucis is still in full operation, with old-timey goods and candies on shelves side-by-side with contemporary merchandise.
Highway 194, Valle Crucis, NC 828-963-5571 • mastgeneralstore.com

**12. Grandfather Mountain**
Located near Linville, Grandfather Mountain is a state park famous for its “Mile High Swinging Bridge,” panoramic vistas, wildlife, events, and superb alpine hiking.
2050 Blowing Rock Highway, Linville, NC 800-468-7325 • grandfather.com

**13. The Crossnore School Ben Long Fresco**
Suffer the Little Children depicts this Biblical story in the chapel at The Crossnore School, a residential foster care home. Part of the Benjamin F. Long IV Fresco Trail.
100 DAR Drive, Crossnore, NC 828-733-4305 • crossnoreschool.org

**14. Lost Cove Cliffs, Blue Ridge Parkway**
Dense tree canopies shelter isolated forest inlets or “coves.” From this overlook, the mysterious Brown Mountain Lights have been spotted over the centuries.
Blue Ridge Parkway Milepost 310

**15. Linville Gorge, Brown Mountain Overlook**
Nicknamed the “Grand Canyon of the East,” Linville Gorge in Pisgah National Forest is one of the wildest, most rugged places in the eastern United States. It became a federal Wilderness Area in 1964.
Mile marker 20 on NC Highway 181, Morganton, NC 888-462-2921 • discoverburkecounty.com

**16. Linville Gorge, Brown Mountain Overlook**
Enchanting Linville Caverns offers tours of incredible “rooms” and fanciful underground labyrinths that have been carved in the subterranean rock by slowly moving groundwater.
19929 US-221 North, Marion, NC 800-419-0540 • linvillecaverns.com

**18. Hickory Ridge Living History Museum & Outdoor Drama**
Learn about life on the North Carolina frontier in the days of Daniel Boone and the story of the role of mountaineers in America’s war for independence.
591 Horn in the West Drive, Boone, NC 828-264-2120 • horninthewest.com

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Create your own trail by visiting these sites along the Blue Ridge Heritage Trail.
18. Orchard at Altapass, Blue Ridge Parkway
More than 100 years old, this working apple orchard is also a place where mountain music can be heard during the warm season with dancing, performances, and jams.
Blue Ridge Parkway Milepost 328.6
828-765-9531 • altapassorchard.org

19. Hog Waller Market in Downtown Lenoir
Until the 1950s, this open-air market was a place for street performers, soap box orators, and musicians. Today, downtown Lenoir hosts numerous music events and festivals.
136 Main Street, Lenoir, NC
828-726-0323 • explorecaldwell.com

23. 16th Century Native American Village
An outdoor living history exhibit in Catawba Meadows Park tells of 16th century Native American life in North Carolina's western Piedmont. Catawba Meadows Park, 701 Sanford Drive, Morganton, NC
828-439-2463 • exploringjoara.org

28. Bechtler Mint
After NC’s gold rush in the early 1800s, jeweler Christopher Bechtler opened a private mint. By 1837, he'd minted $2.4 million in coins from local gold, including the first $1 gold coin in the U.S.
342 Gilboa Church Road, Rutherfordton, NC
828-287-6113 • visitncgold.com

31. Mill Spring Agriculture Development Center
This agricultural center, housed in the Historic Mill Spring School, supports local farmers and agriculture through an on-site produce store, area farmers’ markets, and other projects.
156 School Road, Mill Spring, NC
828-436-0029 • polkcountyfarms.org

33. Pearson’s Falls
Over 200 species of native deciduous and evergreen trees, flowering plants, wildflowers, and ferns thrive in this 268-acre sanctuary. A 1/4 mile, moderate trail leads to a 90-foot waterfall.
2748 Pearson Falls Road, Saluda, NC 28773
828-789-3031 • pearsonsfalls.org

39. Hickory Nut Gorge
Rushing waters, rocky cliffs, a giant waterfall, lake views and pristine forests make Hickory Nut Gorge a popular destination for hikers, leaf-peepers, and photography buffs.
2932 Memorial Highway, Lake Lure, NC
828-625-3725 • hickorynutchamber.org
36 Historic Johnson Farm

Once a thriving tobacco farm, later a summer boarding house, the Historic Johnson Farm now offers school children and visitors an authentic farm experience.

3346 Haywood Road, Hendersonville, NC
828-891-6585 • hendersoncountypublicschoolsnc.org/johnson-farm

37 Fletcher, Howard Gap Road

A former Native American trail, Howard Gap Road was used by settlers as part of a Drover’s Road that ran for 300 miles from Charleston, SC, to the Continental Divide, near this site.

85 Howard Gap Road, Fletcher, NC
828-687-3985 • fletchernc.org

38 Montreat College Ben Long Fresco

Return of the Prodigal Son rises 17 feet at the front of the Chapel of the Prodigal at Montreat College, just north of the Town of Black Mountain. Part of the Benjamin F. Long IV Fresco Trail.

201 East State Street, Black Mountain, NC
800-669-2301 • blackmountain.org

39 Mountain Gateway Museum & Heritage Center

Open year round, the museum exhibits reflect western NC history from the pioneer era through the early 20th century, with programs, reunenactments, and festivals.

102 Water Street, Old Fort, NC
828-668-9259 • mountaingatewaymuseum.org

40 Historic Carson House

A rare example of an Up-Country plantation house, this was home to the Carson family which played a prominent role in politics and society during the 18th and 19th centuries.

1805 US Highway 70 West, Marion, NC
828-724-4948 • historiccarsonhouse.com

41 Thomas Wolfe Memorial

The Thomas Wolfe Memorial State Historic Site preserves the childhood home of one of the giants of American literature and showcases his life and writing.

52 North Market Street, Asheville, NC
828-253-8304 • wolfememorial.com

42 The Cradle of Forestry Blue Ridge Parkway

The Cradle of Forestry was the site of the Biltmore Forest School, the first forestry school in America. The Center includes exhibits, hiking trails, special events, a movie, and a gift shop.

Blue Ridge Parkway Milepost 411
828-877-3130

43 Shindig on the Green Summer Music Festival

Shindig presents authentic, traditional music and dance in a stage show on summer Saturday evenings “along about sundown” in Asheville’s Pack Square Park.

121 College Street, Asheville, NC
828-258-6101, ext. 345 • folkheritage.org/shindigonthegreen

44 Hot Springs

The warm waters of the springs, the rush of the French Broad River, the Appalachian Trail, and a rich music tradition combine to attract visitors to Hot Springs.

106 Bridge Street, Hot Springs, NC
828-622-9932 • hotspringsnc.org

45 The North Carolina Arboretum

Considered one of the finest public gardens in the Southern Appalachians, the Arboretum emphasizes connections between local culture and the landscape.

100 Frederick Law Olmsted Way, Asheville, NC
828-665-2492 • ncarboretum.org

46 The Cradle of Forestry Blue Ridge Parkway

The Cradle of Forestry was the site of the Biltmore Forest School, the first forestry school in America. The Center includes exhibits, hiking trails, special events, a movie, and a gift shop.

Blue Ridge Parkway Milepost 411
828-877-3130

47 Biltmore Estate

Elegant architecture, manicured gardens, a winery, restaurants, hotels, shops, and special events make a visit to “America’s Largest Home” a memorable experience.

One Approach Road, Asheville, NC
800-411-3812 • biltmore.com

48 The North Carolina Arboretum

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Blue Ridge Parkway Milepost 411
828-877-3130

50 Looking Glass Rock, Blue Ridge Parkway

This 390-million-year-old granite monolith is named “Looking Glass” because of its appearance when rainwater freezes on its surface and reflects the sun like a mirror.

Blue Ridge Parkway Milepost 413.2

51 Bethel Rural Community

The Bethel Community is surrounded by natural beauty, with Black Balsam Knob, Cold Mountain, and Mount Pisgah providing striking contrast to farmlands and valleys below.

5868 Pigeon Road, Canton, NC 28716
828-421-0610 • bethelrural.org

52 Museum of North Carolina Handicrafts

Housed in a Charleston-style mansion built in 1875, the museum showcases traditional North Carolina crafts and hand-crafted Native American pieces.

49 Shelton Street, Waynesville, NC
828-452-1551 • sheltonhouse.org
Haywood County Quilt Trails
Colorful painted quilt blocks adorn barns, public buildings, shops, and other structures with designs that represent the heritage of the people who live and work here.
44 North Main Street, Waynesville, NC
828-452-0152 • haywoodquilttrails.com

Qualla Boundary, Blue Ridge Parkway
Here the Parkway overlooks the Qualla Boundary, home to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. The Boundary is a small fragment of the extensive historical homeland of the Cherokee.
Blue Ridge Parkway Milepost 458.9

Oconaluftee Indian Village
This recreated Cherokee village of the 18th Century immerses visitors in the history and culture of the Cherokee through traditional arts, weaponry, ceremony, and dances.
278 Drama Road, Cherokee, NC
828-497-2111 • visitcherokeenc.com

Qualla Arts & Crafts
Exquisite handmade Cherokee crafts are on display and available for sale at the oldest Native American artisan cooperative in the nation.
645 Tsali Boulevard, Cherokee, NC
828-497-3103 • quallaartsandcrafts.com

Unto These Hills Outdoor Drama
Unto These Hills Outdoor Drama tells the powerful story of the Cherokee from the first contact with Europeans through the infamous and tragic Trail of Tears.
Mountainside Theater, 688 Drama Road, Cherokee, NC
866-554-4557 • visitcherokeenc.com

North Carolina Bartram Trail
The North Carolina Bartram Trail commemorates the 1775 visit of Philadelphia naturalist William Bartram and parallels Bartram’s actual route into Cherokee country.
12 East Main Street, Franklin, NC
ncbartramtrail.org

Cheoah, Heart of the Old Cherokee Nation
About 500 Cherokee lived in the Cheoah Valley before the United States Army forcibly deported Cherokees to Oklahoma on the Trail of Tears in 1838.
At intersection of NC 143 & US 129, Robbinsville, NC
800-470-3790 • grahamcountytravel.com

Qualla Boundary, Blue Ridge Parkway
Here the Parkway overlooks the Qualla Boundary, home to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. The Boundary is a small fragment of the extensive historical homeland of the Cherokee.
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Museum of the Cherokee Indian
Interactive video, intriguing displays, and a full sensory experience of the history of the Cherokee await visitors in this 12,000 square foot state-of-the-art museum.
589 Tsali Boulevard, Cherokee, NC
828-497-3481 • cherokeemuseum.org

Franklin Gem & Mineral Museum
Hundreds of specimens on display highlight the rich gem and mineral history of this region. Visitors enjoy “mining” for rubies and other precious stones at many gem mines nearby.
25 Phillips Street, Franklin, NC
(828) 369-7831 • fgmm.org

Nantahala Outdoor Center
The Nantahala Outdoor Center is popular for whitewater rafting, canoeing and kayaking. The campus includes two restaurants, outfitters shop, and is a destination for the Great Smoky Mountain Railroad.
13077 West Highway 19, Bryson City, NC
828-785-4834 • noc.com

Nantahala Lake
Located in the Nantahala National Forest at an elevation 3,012 feet, the lake is the second highest lake east of the Mississippi.
17838 Wayah Road, Topton, NC

Cheoah, Heart of the Old Cherokee Nation
About 500 Cherokee lived in the Cheoah Valley before the United States Army forcibly deported Cherokees to Oklahoma on the Trail of Tears in 1838.
At intersection of NC 143 & US 129, Robbinsville, NC
800-470-3790 • grahamcountytravel.com

Konehete, Breadbasket of the Old Cherokee Nation
The rich, fertile soil and protection from the weather of the “Long Valley” provided ideal conditions for agricultural cultivation. Immigrants changed the name to Valleytown.
828-557-1185 • visitcherokeecountync.com

Little Tennessee River Greenway
This Greenway meanders along the river through Franklin, where visitors can experience wetlands and upland woods, wildflowers, and wildlife, especially migratory birds.
573 East Main Street, Franklin, NC
828-369-8488 • littletennessee.org

John C. Campbell Folk School
Visit this historic folk school founded in 1925 and immerse yourself in classes in craft and art, music, dance, cooking, gardening, and writing, as well as special events.
1 Folk School Road, Brasstown, NC
828-837-2775 • folkschool.org
Museum exhibits tell of life in these mountains from Native American and early European settlement through the development of the national park.

1194 Newfound Gap Road, Cherokee, NC
828-497-1904 • nps.gov/grsm