

## Long Distance Outing – Great Smoky Mountains National Park, May 2019

Join club member and master photographer Marsha Ezell in May 2019 at a long-distance outing in Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

- May 20-25, 2019
- Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Tennessee and North Carolina
- Participants are responsible for travel, park fees, lodging and food

This is a loosely organized trip/outing, says Marsha, who has previously traveled to the park and loves the photo opportunities there. “The park is good for non-walkers and super heroes, there are on-the-road areas and hard hikes that take photographers to fabulous waterfalls,” she says. “The great draw of the Smokies is water. There are cascades, waterfalls and still water, everywhere.”

The park also has photogenic cabins, churches, mills and a school, the Eastern Cherokee Reservation nearby, and morning fog that gives the park its name. The park straddles the Tennessee-North Carolina border in the Blue Ridge Mountains, about 950 miles east of Fort Worth.

- For information, contact Marsha at [marshachad@yahoo.com](mailto:marshachad@yahoo.com).
- If you are interested in RV-ing as a group, contact Chad Fenner at [caverchad@maverickgrotto.org](mailto:caverchad@maverickgrotto.org).

To learn about the park, go to:

- [Great Smoky Mountains National Park](#) - official park service site
- [Explore Great Smoky Mountains National Park](#) - National Park Foundation site
- [Visit Gatlinburg](#) – food and entertainment

### More Information from Marsha

#### Making Photos

If you ever wanted the opportunity to shoot what you wanted to and take all the time to get the shot you want, this is it, says Marsha.

To photograph water, you’ll need filters and a tripod. You need to be sure and bring or purchase a 9-stop neutral density filter and a polarizer. (Silky water without a tripod is a mushy, fuzzy mess.) There also are old buildings, crafts and artists and a casino at the [Cherokee Reservation](#).

Park locations such as Cades Cove, Mount LeConte, Morton Overlook and Newfound Gap, and their surrounding areas are [popular places to make photos](#) and are popular with hikers. The [Appalachian Trail](#) winds through the park.

We will not be able to drive or stay together in the Smokies because there is limited parking. You will want to stop at the roadside stops to explore. Looking out your window for a good place to stop does not work. You will drive by all the good stuff and say there was nothing to shoot. I will try to make sure everyone has enough information so that they can gather with others of the same interest and ability.

You will not be paired up with anyone or specifically told what to do. I will try to make sure everyone has enough information so that they can gather with others of the same interest and ability. I have limited technical ability, I will try to find someone to answer your questions, if I can't. (Now all the technical people will avoid me so they can shoot!)

Cades Cove is a wonderful loop in the park that will completely fill your day. (On Wednesdays and Saturdays, it is closed in the morning except for bicycles.) It is also is the [best place to see bears](#) late in the afternoon. If you like shooting old buildings, this loop is the place for you. The historical buildings are maintained by the park service, so they are not [Chura-type of old](#). There is a picnic ground and a concession with good ice cream at the entrance. This is all great fun.

In the mountains there are many vistas, and if it rains the night before, you have fog. If it rains, you should go to [Morton Overlook](#) and watch the fog rise from the ground.

In addition to the mountains, there is a craft area that is not corny. There are mostly Tennessee crafts makers (potters, quilters, wood carvers) and you can enjoy a conversation with the artists. There are also art galleries.

If you enjoy getting lost on the country roads, there are old houses, barns, churches – the hardest part is finding one with a great setting. There is a place that has been built as an old area with some nice rusting cars. They will allow you to photograph; sometimes there is a small (\$5) charge.

Going across Newfound Gap road takes you to Oconaluftee and Cherokee, N.C. The [Eastern Cherokee Reservation](#) village there is interesting and they let you take pictures of the village buildings and Cherokees in period dress. Cherokee also has a casino. (There is not a good place to eat in Cherokee.)

In addition to the waterfalls on the North Carolina side of the mountains, there is a place to view elk. The [Cataloochee Valley](#) area is accessible from Exit 20 on I-40. This road winds to a narrow, up-the-side the mountain dirt road that takes you to an area with a barn, house, church, creek, and at about 3 or 4 p.m., lots of elk. (You will need to be able to edit the huge orange collar off the elk.) They do not run away, but remember that they are wild animals.

- [Learn about elk viewing.](#)

We will try to eat together a few times, but if you are shooting, no one expects you to leave your great find. There is no or sporadic phone service in the mountains, park craft areas or campgrounds.

### **Lodging, Food**

The park and surrounding area offers camping, RV parks and lodges; reservations should be made as soon as possible. The area is popular, especially in spring when waterfalls are flowing. Gatlinburg, Tenn., has supplies, restaurants, shopping and entertainment.

Outside the park, I suggest [Carr's Northside Cottages](#) in Gatlinburg. We have to wait to make reservations until January 2019. These burned during the [Chimney Tops 2 fire](#) in November 2016. Carr's plans to open in January and won't make reservations until then. They can accommodate any need at a reasonable price, and you can share rooms. I wanted to try to get everyone on the creek side, which sounds wonderful. It also good for practicing making photos of silky water. Their location is perfect. They do not serve breakfast, but most rooms have a mini-kitchen or full kitchen so you won't be confined to a specific hour to eat.

### **Camping Information from Chad Fenner**

The Elkmont and Cades Cove campgrounds in the national park are more primitive and fairly isolated from other areas of the park. In general, campgrounds in the park have no services (electric, water, sewer). There are restrooms with fresh water, but no campground shower. Some have dump stations. Remember: date is May 20-25, 2019.

### **Recommended inside the park**

#### **Elkmont**

- No dump station, but there is one nearby at a visitor center.
- \$21-27/night
- Trailers limited to 32 feet, motor homes to 35 feet.
- Limited number of 5 amp power sites for medical needs.
- 220 sites (Generators prohibited in some).
- Only 9.6 miles from Gatlinburg, but Google maps says it's a 23-minute drive.

#### **Cades Cove**

- No dump station.
- \$21-25 per night  
Trailer sizes limited to 35 feet; motor homes to 40 feet.
- Limited number of 5 amp power sites for medical needs.
- 159 sites (Generators prohibited in some).
- Only 35 miles from Gatlinburg, but Google maps says it's 1:20 hour drive each way.

The following link has reservation info for both of the above campgrounds:  
<https://www.nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/frontcountry-camping.htm>

### **Recommended outside the park**

Camp LeConte <https://www.campleconte.com>

- 1739 East Parkway, Gatlinburg, Tenn. 37738
- Phone 865-436-8831
- 4.4 miles from Gatlinburg
- Full services (water, electric (20, 30, 50 amp), sewer)
- \$42 for back-in; \$45 for pull-through
- 4.5 user rating
- VERY small (18 sites)

Greenbrier Campground <https://www.smokymountaincamping.com>

- 2353 East Pkwy, Gatlinburg, Tenn. 37738
- Phone 844-304-CAMP
- 8.1 miles from Gatlinburg
- Full services \$49 for their most basic (but still full service) to \$69 for premium spots
- 4.9 user rating
- 100 sites

### **Restaurants and Entertainment**

- The [Wild Plum](#) in Gatlinburg is a wonderful place for lunch - get reservations. There is an extreme shortage of employees because of the 2016 fire. Lunch at the Chop House in Sevierville is fantastic.
- [Ripley's Aquarium](#) in Gatlinburg is one of the top aquariums in the world. I think they still allow tripods. Gatlinburg is a mecca for urban art.
- Pigeon Forge has games and entertainment, including [Dolly Parton's Family Destinations](#) - best but expensive. (They all serve the exact same meal.) Tanger Outlet Mall is there, too.