

Jackson County | NORTH CAROLINA



An Insiders' Guide to the Best Motorcycle Routes in the N.C. Mountains

The Western North Carolina mountains are known for some of the most scenic and enjoyable motorcycle routes in the world. Whether it's cruising on America's most celebrated motor route, the Blue Ridge Parkway, or exploring the back roads of the region, the mountain towns of Cashiers, Cherokee, Dillsboro, and Sylva serve as the perfect base camp for your motorcycling adventures.

From one rider to another, these are the best routes our locals love

Unknown to many riders, however, is that we hold many rider-friendly lesser-traveled back roads, access to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and more of the Blue Ridge Parkway than any other county in the state. Jackson County's central location also makes it the ideal place for riders to enjoy their visit, allowing them to spend less time stuck in traffic, and more time exploring and enjoying mountain vistas. The following guide is "geared" towards the motorcyclist and contains recommended routes from local riders. Go ahead and hop on and head towards your next adventure in the Western North Carolina mountains.

Cullowhee Mountain Road Loop

DISTANCE: 32.8 Miles Round Trip

APPROXIMATE TIME: quarter/half-day ride
(1-2 hours by car without stops)

DIFFICULTY: Easy



<http://jax.onl/moto1>



IG @juiced_z

Cullowhee Mountain Road offers a true off-the-beaten path experience. Exclusively in Jackson County and recommended by local riders, this route provides riders a curvy back-road excursion spanning from Cullowhee and looping around N.C. 107 North back to Sylva.

Directions

- Drive from Sylva on N.C. 107 South and follow signs for Cullowhee/Western Carolina University
- Proceed through Catamount Gap
- Pass Forest Hills on the right and proceed to the next stoplight
- Follow signs for Speedwell and take a right, passing the Jackson County Recreation Complex on the right-hand side
- Proceed to fork in road, take the left-hand fork, following Cullowhee Mountain Rd., S.R. 1157
- Remain on S.R. 1157 for approximately 10 miles (S.R. 1157 makes a left turn where Cullowhee Mtn. Road dead ends into Pine Creek Road; continue left onto Pine Creek Rd. to N.C. 107)
- When S.R. 1157 intersects N.C. 107, turn left and proceed North on N.C. 107
- Remain on N.C. 107 for approximately 14.5 miles to return to Western Carolina University

Insider Tips

- Pines Recreation Area, 1965 Pine Creek Road, Cullowhee, NC 28723: Offering 26 miles of shoreline, 3 waterfalls, and place to take a rest, Lake Glenville is one of the highest elevated lakes east of the Mississippi. The Pines Recreation Area amenities includes a sandy swimming beach with plenty of parking for multiple bikes, restrooms, and picnic benches to eat a packed lunch.
- Cashiers, North Carolina, 6 N.C. 107, Cashiers, NC 28717: The mountain town of Cashiers, North Carolina is accessible on this route by heading South on N.C. 107 (right turn), instead of North, for approximately 6.5 miles. Cashiers is home to upscale shopping, dining, and quaint southern charm. It also hosts The Village Green, a relaxing commons/park area worthy of exploration.
- Gravel Driveways: Proceed with caution on this route. Many driveways along both Cullowhee Mountain Road and N.C. 107 are unpaved, and gravel and will occasionally wash out into the road.

Great Smoky Mountains National Park: Newfound Gap

DISTANCE: 69.8 Miles Round Trip

APPROXIMATE TIME: half-day ride (2 hours by car without stops)

DIFFICULTY: Easy-Moderate

CLICK
FOR MAP 
<http://jax.onl/moto2>



IG @joeytheleo

The Great Smoky Mountains National Park offers a great opportunity for a half-day cruise with convenient amenities. Nestled in the middle of U.S. 441 (Newfound Gap Rd.) is the Newfound Gap Overlook, located on the North Carolina-Tennessee line. This area offers a large parking area, wonderful views, hiking trails, and restrooms.

Directions

- Heading from Sylva, follow signs for U.S. 74 W towards Cherokee, approximately 15 miles
- Take exit 74 and head North on U.S. 441 towards Cherokee
- Travel approximately 4.5 miles to U.S. 19
- Take a right at the stoplight on to U.S. 19 N for .6 miles
- Take a left at stoplight onto Tsali Blvd, U.S. 441 S
- Remain on U.S. 441 S for 19 miles
- Newfound Gap on Right

Insider Tips

- The North Carolina Side of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park: The North Carolina side offers a less crowded GSMNP experience. With the Great Smokies being one of the most visited parks in the world, the North Carolina side hosts a more relaxing experience allowing riders to spend less time in traffic and more time cruising.
- Clingmans Dome: The turn-off to Clingmans Dome is on the left approximately 1-mile before the Newfound Gap Overlook.

Clingmans Dome is the highest point in Great Smoky Mountains National Park, towering at 6,643 feet. On clear days, one can view over 100 miles throughout the Great Smokies.

- Combining Blue Ridge Parkway and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park: Conveniently, Cherokee offers a terminus for both the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park within a quarter-mile of each other. Depending on personal preference, both of these roads can be ridden on the same day in a loop fashion. Read the following ride for more.

Blue Ridge Parkway Loop

DISTANCE: 57 Miles Round Trip

APPROXIMATE TIME: half-day ride

(1-3 hours by car without stops)

DIFFICULTY: Moderate-Difficult

CLICK
FOR MAP 
<http://jax.onl/moto3>



IG @tall.benjamin

The Blue Ridge Parkway is known as America's most celebrated motor route and for good reason. This motorcyclist mecca offers scenic views, curvy roads, and convenient overlooks. Jackson County is home to more of the Blue Ridge Parkway than any other county. This route allows riders to get the most out of this pristine ride. The following route is designed to begin from Sylva/Dillsboro and end in the same location.

Directions

- Heading from Sylva, follow signs for U.S. 74 W towards Cherokee approximately 15 miles
- Take exit 74 and head North on U.S. 441 towards Cherokee
- Head approximately 4.5 miles to U.S. 19
- Take a right at the stoplight on to U.S. 19 N for .6 miles
- Take a left at stoplight onto Tsali Blvd, U.S. 441 S

- Follow Signs for Blue Ridge Parkway
- Take a right onto the Blue Ridge Parkway
- Head north on Blue Ridge Parkway for 25.5 towards Balsam Gap
- Follow signs for U.S. 23 S/US 74 W/ Great Smoky Mountains Expressway Sylva
- Turn right onto U.S. 23 S/US 74 W/ Great Smoky Mountains Expressway
- Remain on U.S. 23 S/US 74 W/ Great Smoky Mountains Expressway for 10.7 miles
- Take exit 83 towards Sylva

Insider Tips

- **Overlooks:** Along this route, there are 22 overlooks, each offering a unique view of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Among them is Waterrock Knob, which offers an ideal place for riders to rest and take a picnic. Waterrock Knob's amenities include restrooms, a gift shop, a large parking area, picnic benches and even a short hike to one of the highest points and best views along the Blue Ridge Parkway.
- **The Great Smoky Mountains National Park/Blue Ridge Parkway Tour:** To turn this into a full day ride, combine both the GSMNP: Newfound Gap route with the Blue Ridge Parkway route for a full day of riding bliss. Riders will want to make sure that they are stocked up on supplies and fuel because there are no restaurants or gas stations along this route. If either is needed, proceed back to Cherokee before continuing on the Blue Ridge Parkway portion of this ride.

Blue Ridge Parkway to the Copperhead Loop

DISTANCE: 106 Miles Round Trip

APPROXIMATE TIME: half day ride (2 hours and 36 minutes by car without stops)

DIFFICULTY: Moderate-Difficult



<http://jax.onl/moto4>



IG @blisteredbrains

This loop will take you from Sylva to Cherokee... and everywhere in between. Starting and ending in Sylva, riders will experience the best of the Blue Ridge Parkway, some back-road farmlands, and gives you the option to explore Harrah's Cherokee Casino.

Directions:

- Heading from Sylva, follow signs for U.S. 74 East towards Waynesville
- Follow for 10.7 miles
- Turn left onto Blue Ridge Parkway
- Follow Parkway north for 29.5 miles
- Follow Blue Ridge Parkway to U.S. 276 N
- Turn Right onto NC 215 N Lake Logan Rd. (follow signs for Canton)
- Follow for 15.1 miles
- Merge a slight left onto Edwards Cove Rd. for 1.6 miles
- Turn left onto US-276 N Pigeon Rd. for 4.6 miles
- Turn Right at the 1st cross street onto S Main St for .3 miles
- Turn Left onto Walnut St. for .3 miles
- Continue onto US-276 N/Russ Ave for 2.2 miles
- Use the left two lanes to merge onto U.S. 19 S/Dellwood Rd. for 6.5 miles
- Head west on US-19 S/Soco Rd. for 16.2 miles
- Turn left onto U.S. 441 S for 4.9 miles
- Merge left onto U.S. 74 E/Great Smoky Mountains Expressway (follow signs for Sylva)
- Follow U.S. 441 S and U.S. 74 E/Great Smoky Mountains Expressway for 9.5 miles
- Take exit 83 for Sylva

Insider Tips

- **Wheels Through Time Museum, 62 Vintage Lane Maggie Valley, North Carolina 28751:** Home to the world's premier collection of rare American motorcycles, memorabilia, and a distinct array of "one-off" automobiles, the Wheels Through Time Museum is a must-see. Operating hours Thursday-Monday, 9am-5pm.
- **Best BRP Views heading north:** Riding on the Blue Ridge Parkway gives riders the opportunity to see some truly spectacular views along the way. With many named pull-offs along this route, riders are encouraged to check out Cowee Mountain Overlook, Richland Balsam, and Devil's Courthouse. Richland Balsam is the highest point along the BRP standing at 6,053 feet and is a favorite for riders to take pictures. Cowee Mountain Overlook offers a fully panoramic view and is regularly among the best places to catch a sunset in the N.C. Mountains while the Devil's Courthouse pull off is a great opportunity to stretch your legs and hike a short trail to an amazing view.

Classic Tail of the Dragon

DISTANCE: 57 Miles to and 11 miles on (136 miles)

APPROXIMATE TIME: full-day ride
(2.5 hours by car without stops)

DIFFICULTY: Difficult



<http://jax.onl/moto5>



IG @rustybagger

Known as America's favorite two-lane touring road, the Tail of the Dragon boasts 318 curves in 11 miles making it an experience to behold. This road is located just over an hour's scenic drive from Jackson County, allowing for a full day's experience to riders who dare to take on this technical motoring experience.

Directions

- Leaving Sylva, Head on to U.S. 74 W/Great Smoky Mountains Expressway for 9.6 miles
- Keep left to continue on U.S. 74 W for 15.2 miles
- Turn right onto N.C. 28 N for 31.9 miles
- Destination on left, follow signs for Deals Gap 129

Insider Tips

- Curves are incredibly sharp, heed posted warning signs at all times. Stay in your lane, do not pass, and do not exceed posted limits.
- Picture Perfect: motorists taking on the Tail of the Dragon are photographed by killboy.com. Photographers are set up at various corners on the road and pictures are available for purchase online the day after your ride.
- The Best Way to End a Full Day: Returning to Jackson County, riders will find a wide variety of comfortable accommodation options, dining options ranging from biker-friendly bars to elevated farm-to-table restaurants, and over 120 taps at our breweries to satisfy a long day's ride.

Scenic Jackson

DISTANCE: 67.3 Miles

APPROXIMATE TIME: half-day ride (1 hour and 48 minutes by car without stops)

DIFFICULTY: Difficult



<http://jax.onl/moto6>



IG @birdseye400

Scenic Jackson turns a Parkway experience into a scenic loop that winds back to Sylva through eastern Jackson County via Charleys Creek Road (S.R. 1756). This route crosses five tributaries of the Tuckasegee River's East Fork – Tanassee Creek, Wolf Creek, Gage Creek, Charleys Creek and Sols Creek and offers pastoral scenes as well as mountain views. Landmarks along the way include Richland Balsam, the highest point on the Blue Ridge Parkway; a glimpse of 5,574-foot Charley Bald and Balsam Lake, which is the site of a U.S. Forest Service picnic area with public rest rooms.

Directions

- Heading from Sylva, follow signs for U.S. 74 East towards Waynesville
- Follow for 10.7 miles
- Turn left onto Blue Ridge Parkway N Towards Asheville
- Follow for 19.6 Miles
- Turn left onto the NC-215 ramp
- Follow NC-215 S for 3.3 miles (follow signs for Rosman)
- Turn right onto Explorer Rd (S.R. 1756, becomes Charleys Creek Rd) for 6.9 miles
- Turn right onto NC-281 N for 12 miles
- Arrive Downtown Sylva

The Explorer Loop Tail of the Dragon & Great Smoky Mountains National Park

DISTANCE: 162 Miles Round Trip

APPROXIMATE TIME: full-day ride (4 hours by car without stops)

DIFFICULTY: Difficult

CLICK
FOR MAP 
<http://jax.onl/moto7>



 IG @christicarpenter

Adding to the classic Tail of the Dragon, the Explorer loop will take you through two states, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and on a journey you will never forget. This route is recommended by local riders as a full day loop and will add to the excitement that the Tail of the Dragon offers.

Directions

- Merge onto U.S. 74 W/Great Smoky Mountains Expressway for 9.5 miles
- Take Exit 74 onto 441 North, continue for 4.9 miles
- Use the right two lanes to turn right onto U.S. 19 N/U.S. 441 N
- Turn right to continue onto U.S. 441 S for 44.5 miles
- Turn left onto Fighting Creek Gap Rd. for 12.5 miles
- Continue straight onto Little River Gorge Rd/Old State Hwy. 73 Scenic to U.S. 321 S, for 4.8 miles
- Turn Right onto Weaver Cove Gap Rd. for 1.4 miles
- Continue onto Line Springs Rd. for 1.4 miles
- Turn left onto U.S. 321 S for 13.2 miles (turns into E Lamar Alexander Pkwy)

- Use the left lane to take the exit toward Foothills Parkway Section 8G/Foothills Pkwy W for 16.8 miles
- Turn left onto U.S. 129 S for 15 miles
- Head South on U.S. 129 S toward N.C. 28 S
- Turn Left on U.S. 28 S for 31.9 Miles
- Turn left onto U.S. 19 N/U.S. 74 E for 5.2 Miles
- Keep left to continue on U.S. 74 E/Great Smoky Mountains Expressway for 19.2 Miles
- Take Exit 83 to return to Sylva

Triple Lake Loop

DISTANCE: 65.8 Miles Round Trip

APPROXIMATE TIME: half-day ride (2 hours by car without stops)

DIFFICULTY: Moderate

CLICK
FOR MAP 
<http://jax.onl/moto8>



 IG @birdseye400

Jackson County is home to several picturesque lakes. This route will take you past 3 of the region's best: Wolf Lake, Lake Toxaway, and Lake Glenville, and makes for a relaxing, enjoyable half-day ride.

Directions

- Beginning in Sylva, head South on N.C. 107
- Remain on N.C. 107 S for 12.7 miles
- After passing Dollar General Store on the left, turn left onto N.C. 281 S
- Remain on N.C. 281 S for 24.5 miles
- Turn Right on U.S. 64 W
- Remain on U.S. 64 W for 12.7 miles
- At the Cashiers Crossroads, turn right onto N.C. 107 N
- Remain on N.C. 107 N for 26.8 miles to return to Sylva

Insider Tips

- Pack a lunch: This route is a true half-day route. Considering the route's secluded nature, local riders recommend packing a lunch or a snack to enjoy along the way. There is a gas station near the N.C. 107/N.C. 281 intersection but no other gas stations before reaching Cashiers.

Mini Moonshiner Loop

DISTANCE: 59.6 Miles Round Trip
APPROXIMATE TIME: half-day ride
(1.5 hours by car with no stops)
DIFFICULTY: Moderate

CLICK
FOR MAP 
<http://jax.onl/moto9>



IG @everliftin

This spin on a regional classic is a shortened version of U.S. 28 the Moonshiner. Giving riders a good variety of curvy back-roads, highway, and scenic views, the Mini Moonshiner Loop will make for a great half-day ride depending on speed.

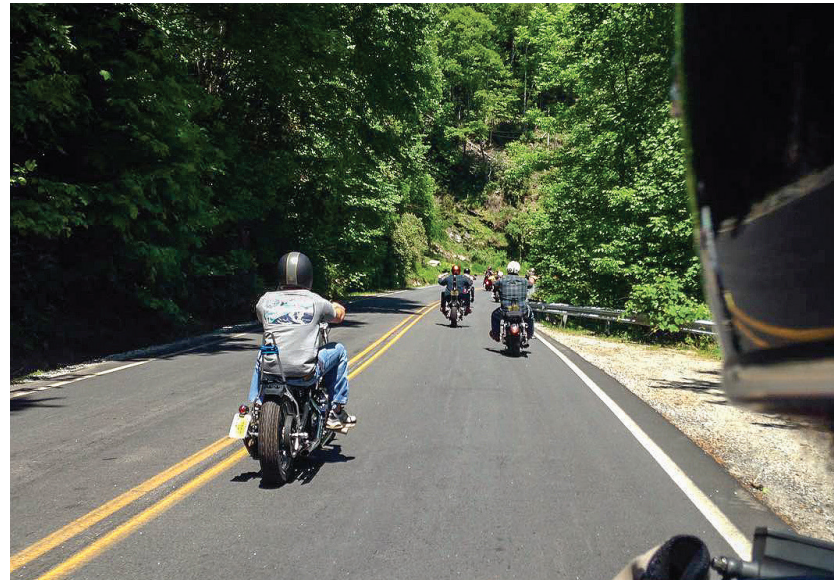
Directions

- Heading from Sylva, merge onto U.S. 23 BUS/U.S. 441 S
- Remain on U.S. 23 Business/U.S. 441 S for 13.7 miles
- Turn right onto Sanderstown Rd.
- Remain on Sanderstown Rd. for 3.2 miles
- Turn Right onto N.C. 28 N Bryson City Rd.
- Remain on N.C. 28 N Bryson City Rd. for 12.5 miles
- Follow N.C. 28 N and U.S. 74 E Great Smoky Mountains Expressway
- Remain on U.S. 74 for 25.1 miles
- Take Exit 83 for Sylva

Boonedox Loop

DISTANCE: 141 Miles Round Trip
APPROXIMATE TIME: full-day ride (3.75 hours by car without stops)
DIFFICULTY: Moderate-Difficult

CLICK
FOR MAP 
<http://jax.onl/moto10>



IG @squirrel_but

This route is among the longest routes, taking riders through Sylva, Cashiers, Brevard, the Blue Ridge Parkway, Maggie Valley and Cherokee. This route contains a little of everything and can be modified to fit the rider's preferences. It should be recognized that this route is considered a full-day route and has multiple twisty back roads, mountain passes, and scenic vistas along the way.

Directions

- Leaving Sylva, Follow N.C. 107 and head S towards Cashiers for 27.6 miles
- Once in Cashiers, Take a left at the Crossroads onto US 64 E for 28.2 miles
- Once in Brevard, head northeast on U.S. 64 E/ S Broad St. toward E. Main St for 3.4 miles
- Turn left onto U.S. 276 N for 49.1 miles
- Turn right onto Raccoon Rd. to Waynesville for 3 miles
- Continue onto Ratcliff Rd. for .5 miles
- At the traffic circle, take the third exit for Bus 23/Asheville Rd
- Continue onto Asheville Rd. for .3 miles
- Continue onto N. Main St for .4 miles
- Continue straight onto Walnut St. for .3 miles
- Turn Right onto U.S. 276 N/Russ Ave. for 2.2 miles
- Use the left 2 lanes to turn left onto U.S. 19 S/Dellwood Rd. for 23.7 miles
- Continue to follow U.S. 19 S

- Passing Harrah's Cherokee Casino on right, take a left at the second light onto Casino Trail
- Continue onto Casino Trail for .8 miles
- At the light, take a left onto U.S. 441 S
- Continue onto U.S. 441 S for 3.6 miles
- Use the left lane to merge onto U.S. 74 E/Great Smoky Mountains Expressway for 9.5 miles
- Take exit 83 to return to Sylva.

Going Down South

DISTANCE: 126 Miles Round Trip

APPROXIMATE TIME: full-day ride
(3.25 hours by car without stops)

DIFFICULTY: Moderate-Difficult

CLICK
FOR MAP 
<http://jax.onl/moto11>



 IG @bd_ward

Taking a local favorite and turning it into a full-day ride. Recommended by local riders, this loop will take you past one of the highest waterfalls east of the Rockies (Whitewater Falls), through Southern Jackson County, and into South Carolina.

Disclaimer: Riding a motorcycle carries implied risks. By following this guide, you hereby release and discharge Jackson County TDA from any claims, damages, demands, or liabilities arising from injury to your person or property as the result of driving on these routes. North Carolina is a mandatory helmet state. It is always important to respect speed limits, road signs, and other motorists.

Directions

- Follow N.C. 107 S towards Cashiers for 27.6 miles
- Continue on N.C. 107 S to Tamassee for 9.1 miles
- Turn left onto SC State Rd. S-37-413 for 2.2 miles
- Sharp right onto SC-130 S/Whitewater Falls Rd. for 9.4 miles
- Turn left onto SC-11 N/Cherokee Foothills Highway for 12.1 miles
- Turn left onto SC State Rd. S-39-118 for 2.1 miles
- Turn left onto U.S. 178 W/Brevard Highway for 5.7 miles
- Head north on U.S. 178 W/Brevard Highway toward Rocky Bottom Church Rd. for 9.1 miles
- Turn left onto Main St (Rosman) for .2 miles
- Turn left onto U.S. 64 W for 19.9 miles
- Turn right at the Cashiers Crossroads onto N.C. 107 N for 27.6 miles

Insider Tips

- **Whitewater Falls:** Upper Whitewater Falls starts with a half-mile walk (relatively flat and well worth it) to one of the tallest waterfalls east of the Rockies. To access the falls, instead of taking a sharp right onto SC-130, turn left onto Whitewater Falls Road and proceed roughly half a mile to an unnamed road to the left. The parking area is large and offers restrooms and a picnic area to eat a snack or packed meal.
- **Enjoying Cashiers:** Once U.S. 64 intersects with N.C. 107, you'll be greeted by the mountain town of Cashiers, North Carolina. Cashiers is home to upscale shopping, dining, and quaint southern charm. It also hosts The Village Green, a commons/park area worthy of exploration. Be sure to check out Whiteside Brewing for great food and brews.



Whitewater Falls

The adventure doesn't stop there

Jackson County offers a large rider friendly atmosphere, with many restaurants, breweries, and attractions that will cater well to any size group of riders:

- Dillsboro: Innovation Station & Foragers Canteen, Dillsboro Chocolate Factory
- Cashiers: The Orchard Restaurant & Event's Barn, Table64, the Library Kitchen and Bar, and Whiteside Brewing Company
- Cullowhee: Campus Scoop Ice Cream
- Sylva: White Moon, City Lights Cafe, Lazy Hiker & Mad Batter Kitchen, Balsam Falls Brewing & Eatery, the Cut Cocktail Lounge, Guadalupe Cafe, Baxley's Chocolates, Speedy's Pizza, Lulu's on Main, Nantahala Brewing & Creekside Oyster House



Getting Out of the Rain

Riding in Western North Carolina means that riders may experience non-ideal riding conditions. We've compiled a list of some of the best places to wait out the storm during your ride:

- **East LaPorte** – Located in Tuckasegee, along Highway 107, East Laporte park has a large pavilion and seating fit for any size group. Restrooms are also available. East Laporte is located about 1 mile from Western Carolina University, on the righthand side, heading south on NC 107.
- **Cullowhee Recreation Department** – The Cullowhee Recreation Department Complex offers several covered pavilions to choose from, a large parking area, and restrooms. This location is approximately a quarter mile past Western Carolina University, take a right onto Cullowhee Mountain Road and it is located immediately on your right.
- **Mark Watson Park** – Located in Sylva, Mark Watson Park offers a large pavilion with multiple picnic benches, a large area to sit, and restrooms. This location can be found between Dillsboro and Sylva on the other side of the Jackson County Historic Courthouse on West Main St.

Regional Wrenching

When on the road, it can be imperative to know where you can get trusted maintenance services. We've compiled a list of regional repair and service shops that can help keep you traveling.

- Cycle Tec Custom Cycles - facebook.com/cycleteccustomcycles
- Smoky Mountain Indian Motorcycle at Smoky Mountain Steel Horse - smokymountainsteelhorses.com
- Waynesville Cycle Center - waynesvillemotorcycles.com
- Harley Davidson of Asheville - hdofasheville.com
- Eurosport Asheville - eurosportasheville.com/home



A Good Night's Rest

With so many rides in and around Jackson County, why not stay in the center of the action? Whether in a hotel or a cozy cabin, there's no shortage of accommodations to suit your wants and needs. Order a Visitor Guide today to learn more about the adventures in and around Jackson County and to start planning your trip today to enjoy all that the beautiful Western NC mountains have to offer.

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www.DiscoverJacksonNC.com

"An Asheville Alternative for the Crowd Weary." *The Washington Post*

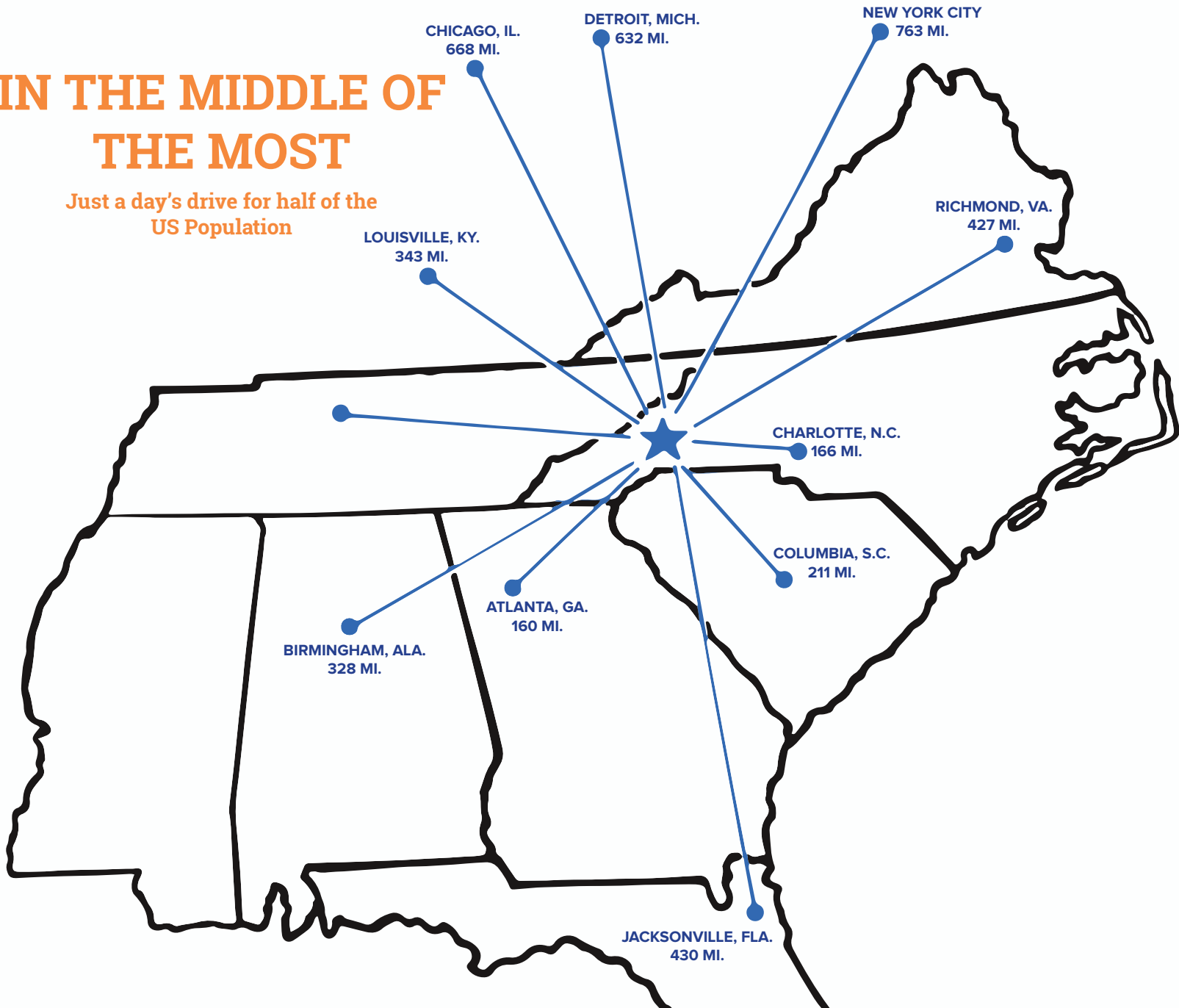
Sylva - One of the Top 10 Cleanest Cities in America. *Expedia*

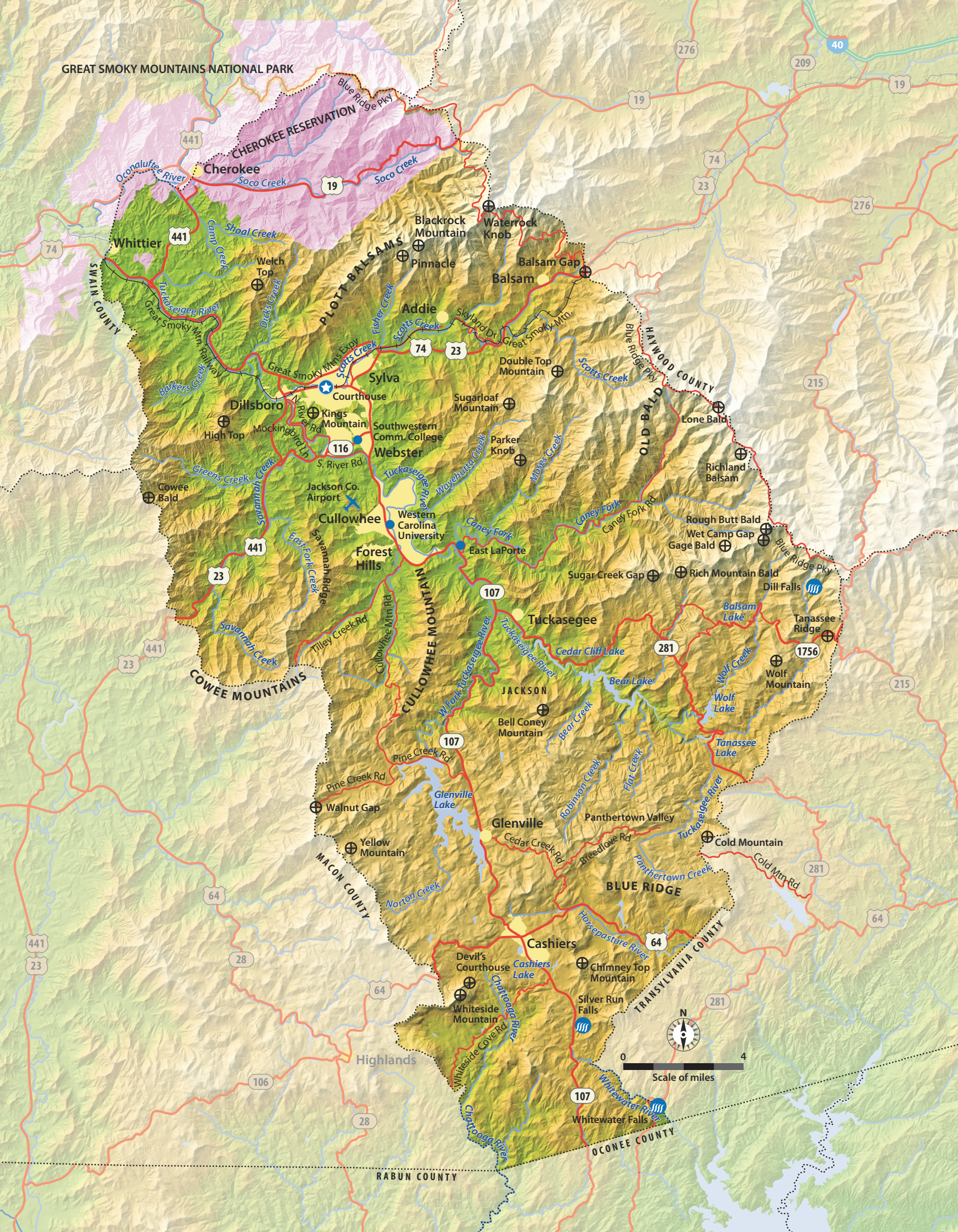
Sylva - One of America's 25 Cutest Main Streets in Small(er) Towns *Fodors*

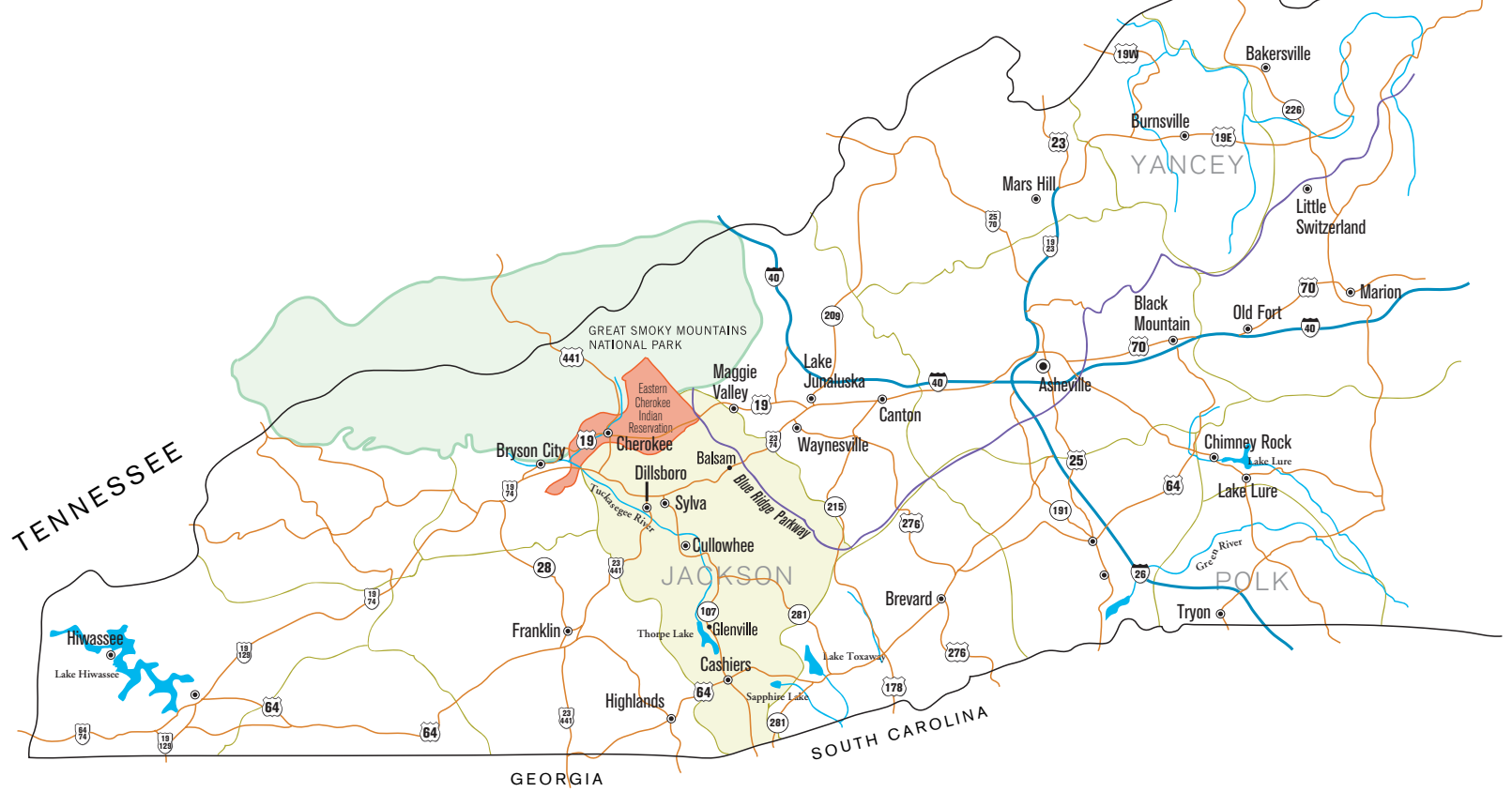
"Top 20 Best Small Mountain Towns for Summer Vacation" *Country Living Magazine*

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE MOST

Just a day's drive for half of the
US Population



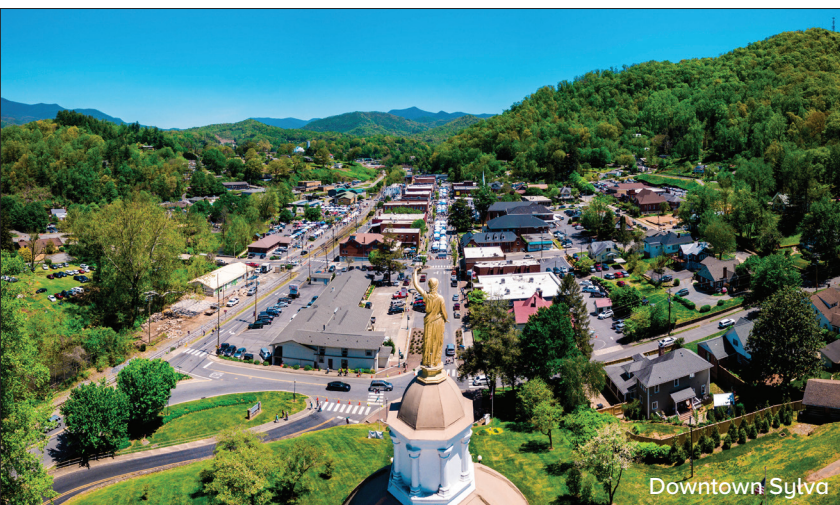




Jackson County stretch of the Blue Ridge Parkway



Silver Run Falls, Cashiers



Downtown Sylva



Great Smoky Mountains National Park

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