

University of Minnesota Duluth - Recreational Sports Outdoor Program
Hike the Legendary Appalachian Trail
Itinerary

This itinerary is designed to be flexible based on many factors that include: weather, skill levels, and interests.
Listed are highlights of a proposed schedule.

Monday, February 23, 2009 5-6:30pm

Mandatory Pre-Trip Meeting in Sports and Health Center room 119 - Introductions, group expectations, itinerary, safety, physical preparation, limitations, equipment, meals, and final payment due at this meeting.

Friday, March 13, 4pm

Depart from the front of the Sports and Health Center on U.M.D. campus. Drive southeast toward Tennessee and North Carolina! You pay for meals during the drive. While driving you can rest in the van (so bring a pillow). We'll drive until around 10 and sleep in tents along the way.

Saturday, March 14

Get back in the van early and drive on, we'll reach Tennessee's Great Smoky Mountain National Park around 6pm and camp for the evening.

March 15, 16, 17: The Great Smoky Mountains

After breakfast we'll pack up and get our first taste of the Appalachian Trail. Today we're beginning our 66-mile stretch of surreal hiking in the Smoky Mountains. We'll start to get a feel for what it's like to live out of a pack with lunch on trail, and a gourmet dinner in camp tonight.

Over the next two days we will continue our trek through one of the wildest portions of the Great Smokies. We will hike through virgin forest's overstory canopy, trek in-between Dry Sluice Gap's jagged ridge of exposed Sawteeth, and camp in stone shelters built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the 1930's.

March 18 & 19

North of the Smoky Mountains the trail smoothes out a bit with less rugged climbs and continued stunning views. The route here is on graded footpaths, much of it constructed by the CCC between 1936 and 1938. During this section we will get away from the shelters and live the nomadic tent life as we wonder through the Appalachians. With each climb we will take in clean mountain air. Our bodies will be full of nourishing meals and our legs will grow more solid as we take on the life of a mountain trekker.

Friday, March 20- Destination: Hot Springs NC

The adventure comes to an end in the sleepy little hollow of Hot Springs North Carolina. They don't call this town Hot Springs for nothing; we will bath in the natural Appalachian hot springs to sooth our battered hiking bodies. That night we will stay at a thru-hiker inn; this will be our one night of "civilized living." The inn and hot springs fee are included, but we may eat out as a group for our last dinners so plan on an \$8-10 meal.

Saturday, March 21

We'll pack up after breakfast and depart for Minnesota.

Sunday, March 22

Arrive back in Duluth by evening and put gear away as a group.

Logistics:

• **The Trail**

The Appalachian Trail is surprisingly well maintained for a 2,069 mile long path through the woods. Minimal brush covers the trail, and the entire path is dotted with white blazes that indicate you are not in fact lost but going the right way.

The trail does pass by a few convenience stores over the 67 mile stretch so bring a few buck cash on the trail if you want to grab a quick non-trail-food snack like some *Ben & Jerry's*.

• **Trail Locomotion**

We will be hiking over 60 miles over 6 full days on the AT. Though the seasoned hiker may scoff at the 12 plus mile a day average the same hiker will eat crow pie after realizing we tackle 18,000 feet of elevation change over 60 miles. We will be sure to acclimate our bodies to the brief change of lifestyle; our two goals for moving on the trail are having fun and being healthy.

• **The Great Smoky Mts.**

The Smoky Mountains are central to Appalachian culture. Our 30-mile stretch through the National Park follows the master range along the Southern Appalachians. The park has never been logged or settled making it one of the most biologically diverse habitats in all of North America.

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