



LAURIE ROWE
COMMUNICATIONS

TRAVEL

A WEEKEND IN ...



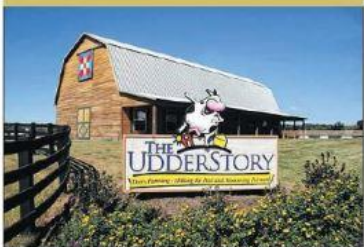
Clara Bosonetto

East Tennessee

Plan an autumn journey on roads less traveled into the Smoky Mountains. Loudon County's Highway 321, recently designated as the Great Smoky Mountains Byway, is the most scenic and least congested route to the Smokies from I-75 North. It's a 49-mile drive to Cades Cove, a 2,500-acre valley in the heart of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park where visitors will find an abundance of trails for hikers of all experience levels, and picnic areas. Beginner

hikers might try Rich Mountain Loop at Cades Cove, Laurel Falls Trail, or Schoolhouse Gap, near Townsend. From Townsend, Highway 321 turns north toward Pigeon Forge and then south to Gatlinburg for a scenic 45-minute drive. The East Tennessee River Valley Geotourism MapGuide highlights the natural, historic and cultural assets unique to the area. www.tennesseevalleygeotourism.org. Plan trips at www.tnvacation.com/east.

BUDGET



The Udder Story Barn at Sweetwater Valley Farm houses an exhibit explaining the past, present and future of dairying. CONTRIBUTED BY JANE FOWLER

Stay

Rates at the pet-friendly Econo Lodge (Platinum Award Winner) start from \$67, including continental breakfast and use of a seasonal outdoor pool. The hotel is on the "Lakeway to the Smokies" leading to several lakes. 1211 U.S. 321 N., Lenoir City. 865-986-0295. www.choicehotels.com.

Eat

Le Noir is where Southern-style cuisine meets Belgian fare. Chicken is cooked into a crisp Belgian waffle and served with a homemade Southern bacon peach honey chutney, \$12 (other items, \$9-\$16). 123 E. Broadway St., Lenoir City. 865-816-3516. www.abelgianbistro.com.

Experience

Loudon County's Tennessee Valley Winery has garnered more than 800 awards in national and international competitions. Stop in for complimentary, no-limit samples. 15606 Hotchkiss Valley Road E., Loudon. 865-986-5147. tnvalleywine.com. Sweetwater Valley Farm is located in the heart of dairy-rich southeast Tennessee. Stop into the farm store and bring home a velvety cheese. Through October, take a farm tour to see the cow-to-cheese process. 17988 W. Lee Highway, Philadelphia. 865-458-9192. www.sweetwatervalley.com.

Bosonetto is a retired travel consultant. Look for her daily deals on ajc.com/travel.

MODERATE



Chilhowee Mountain Retreat was named one of the Top 10 Southern Mountain Resorts and Inns by USA Today. CONTRIBUTED BY WWW.CHILHOWEEMOUNTAINRETREAT.COM

Stay

Unplug at the Chilhowee Mountain Retreat, located in Blount County. The luxury adults-only (21 and older) bed-and-breakfast offers panoramic Smoky Mountain views, covered wraparound porches with rocking chairs, a reading loft and hot tub. The Great Room features a stone fireplace and log beams. Even the lighting in the three guest rooms is considered for comfort – along with king beds, two-person air-jet tubs, steam showers with rainheads, robes, towel warmers and Aspen log cabin furniture. An 8-mile hiking trail from the inn leads to Abram's Falls in the national park and a further 2.5 miles to idyllic Cades Cove. Smoking is prohibited on the entire 10-acre property. Rates from \$200 for two or more consecutive nights (\$250 one-night), including full hot breakfast and snacks. 5110 Little Doubles Road, Maryville. 865-983-8511. chilhoweemountainretreat.com.

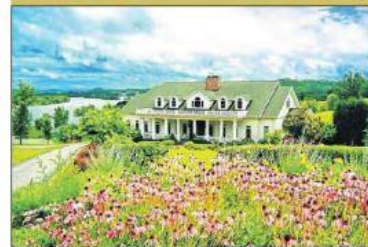
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Dinner reservations are suggested for the Foothills Milling Company (\$20-\$32). Consistently good reviews for service and cuisine have made this restaurant the most popular within miles for casual fine dining. 315 S. Washington St., Maryville. 865-977-8434. foothillsmillingcompany.com.

Experience

Fort Loudoun, a reconstructed British colonial fort built to protect the Cherokee frontier during the French and Indian War, hosts several garrison weekends with colorfully costumed soldiers re-enacting life in the 1750s (Oct. 17-18). 338 Fort Loudoun Road, Vonore. 423-884-6217. fortloudoun.com. The park's Sequoyah Birthplace Museum, on the shores of beautiful Tellico Lake, offers information on local Cherokee life and how it mostly ended in the South with the Trail of Tears. The 24th Annual Cherokee Fall Festival is held Sept. 12-13; \$5. 576 Highway 360, Vonore. 423-884-6246. www.sequoyahmuseum.org.

SPLURGE



Whitestone is one of only five AAA four-diamond inns in Tennessee, and was named one of the "10 Most Romantic Inns in America." CONTRIBUTED BY WWW.WHITSTONEINN.COM

Stay

The 600-plus-acre, AAA Four-Diamond Whitestone Country Inn (Roane County, west of Lenoir City about 35 minutes) is set on the shores of Watts Bar and surrounded by meadows, woods and mountains. The grounds are visited daily by herds of deer, bald eagles and songbirds. The lodge, chapel, barns, farmhouse and 22 individually decorated guest rooms have a cozy New England feel. Rates, including country breakfast, from \$165-\$335 (varies by room type, season). 1200 Paint Rock Road, Kingston. 865-376-0113. whitstoneinn.com.

Eat

Even guests of Whitestone Country Inn need reservations for an upscale Southern dinner. Entrees, \$20-\$34, include an appetizer of Baked Brie with a Warm Apricot Sauce and a Classic Caesar Salad. 1200 Paint Rock Road, Kingston. 865-376-0113. whitstoneinn.com.

Experience

The Highway 11 Antique Trail begins in Lenoir City and leads south to Loudon and Sweetwater. Antique shops around the courthouse square in downtown Loudon carry a wide variety of items, from antique baskets made by Cherokee Indians to primitive furniture. Many fine antique shops line the streets of downtown Sweetwater. Take a tour of the 4-acre Lost Sea, America's largest underground lake, located in Sweetwater. The 90-minute tour involves a round-trip walk (¾ mile) and a glass-bottom boat ride to see rare anthodites in immense cavern rooms 140 feet below ground level; \$18.95 adults, \$9.95 ages 5-12. 140 Lost Sea Road, Sweetwater. 423-337-6616. thelostsea.com.

Calendar

Your guide to event-related travel in the Southeast

GEORGIA

Watkinsville — Perspectives: Georgia Pottery Invitational, through Sept. 16, features sales and exhibits of handmade pottery, workshops, demonstrations, gallery talks and tours of local potters' studios. www.ocaf.com.

Jekyll Island — 10th Annual Shrimp & Grits Festival, Sept. 18-20, features food, chef demonstrations, the music, and craft beer tasting. www.jekyllisland.com.

St. Simons Island — Food & Spirits Festival, Sept. 30-Oct. 4, features food, craft beer, wine pairings, art, music and more. www.saintsimonsfoodandspirits.com.

Macon — Ocmulgee Indian Celebration, Sept. 19-20, features music, dance, storytelling, crafts, demonstrations, Native language workshops and children's activities. www.nps.gov/ocmu.

Flinstone — Rock City's Enchanted Maze, Sept. 25-Nov. 2, features a crop-circle style maze, hayrides, food and a petting zoo. www.blowingspringsfarm.com.

ALABAMA

Fort Payne — Boom Days Heritage Celebration, Sept. 19, features art exhibits, music, clowns and other entertainers, food, fire and police demonstrations, parades and children's activities. www.boomdays.org.

Huntsville — Scarecrow Trail at the Huntsville Botanical Garden, through Oct. 31, features custom scarecrows, hay bale art, a sorghum maze, weekend hayrides and BOOTanica. www.hsvbg.org.

Gulf Shores — National Shrimp Festival, Oct. 8-11, features food, works by fine artists, entertainment, an outdoor village, arts and crafts and children's activities. www.myshrimpfest.com.

Orange Beach — Scarecrow Festival, Oct. 17, features make-your-

own scarecrow competitions, clay and glass artist demonstrations, live music and children's activities. 251-981-2787, www.coastaltourcenter.com.

Birmingham — Central South Native Plant Conference, Oct. 29-31, features lectures, workshops and field trips. www.bbgardens.org/csnpc.

FLORIDA

Pensacola Beach — Taste of the Beach, Sept. 18-19, features chef presentations and demonstrations, food vendors, crab racing, concerts, beer tasting and children's activities. www.tasteofpensacolabeach.com.

Pensacola — Seafood Festival, Sept. 25-27, features food vendors, artist booths and children's activities. www.fiestaoffiveflag.com.

KENTUCKY

Danville — State BBQ Festival, Sept. 11-13, features food vendors, live music, demonstrations, door prizes and more. www.kybbqfestival.com.

Covington — Main Strasse Village Oktoberfest, Sept. 11-13, features food, beer, arts and crafts vendors, carnival rides, music and children's activities. www.mainstrasse.org.

Lexington — Roots and Heritage Festival, Sept. 11-13, features music, art exhibits, film presentations, food and a parade. www.rootsfestky.com.

Bardstown — Kentucky Bourbon Festival, Sept. 15-20, features tastings, cooking, mixology, talks, cigars and jazz. www.kybourbonfestival.com.

Henderson — Highway 60 Yard Sale, Oct. 1-4, features miles of yard sales, arts and crafts booths, artist demonstrations and concerts. 800-648-3128,

START PLANNING



The North Carolina Seafood Festival, Oct. 2-4 in Morehead City, N.C., features local seafood, live music, vendors, cooking demonstrations and rides. www.ncseafoodfestival.org.

www.highway60yardsale.com.

Perryville — Battle of Perryville Commemoration, Oct. 3-4, features Civil War reenactments, battlefield tours, living history encampments, paranormal lectures, parades, street dancing, open-fire cooking, picnics, craft fair and flea market. 859-332-1862, www.perryvillebattlefield.org.

Berea — Kentucky Guild of Artists & Craftsmen Fall Fair, Oct. 10-11, features a juried art show, crafts, live music and food. 859-986-3192, www.kyguild.org.

LOUISIANA

Baton Rouge — Live After Five, Fridays through Oct. 23, features outdoor concerts and restaurant meet-ups. www.liveafterfive.downtownbr.org.

Sulphur — Stars and Stripes in

the Park Classic Car Show, Sept. 12, features food, door prizes, show cars, trucks, motorcycles and more. www.sulphur.org.

New Orleans — Burlesque Festival, Sept. 17-20, features dancers, comedians, singers and more. www.neworleansburlesquefest.com.

Shreveport — Highland Jazz and Blues Festival, Sept. 19, features performances from Papa Mali, John Lisi and the Delta Funk and more. www.highlandjazzandblues.org.

Lake Charles — Calca-Chew Food Festival, Sept. 27, features a French mass, food, dance, live auction and children's activities. www.stmargaret.church.

Chackbay — Louisiana Gumbo Festival, Oct. 9-11, features seafood, live music, carnival and

midway rides. 985-859-4859, www.lagumbofest.com.

MISSISSIPPI

Biloxi — Seafood Festival, Sept. 12-13, features food, a gumbo championship, live entertainment, arts and crafts. www.biloxi.org.

Hernando — Cedar Hill Farm's Pumpkin Patch, Corn Maze & Trail of Terror, Sept. 26-Oct. 31, features a pumpkin patch, pumpkin smashing, pony rides, campfires, food, a hay fort, petting zoo, maze and haunted trail. 662-429-2540, www.gocedarhillfarm.com.

Biloxi — Chefs of the Coast, Sept. 27, features food, wine and more. www.chefsofthecoast.org.

Gulf Coast — Cruisin' the Coast, Oct. 4-11, features cruise-ins, a salute to veterans event, car auction, swap meets and parade along the 26-mile stretch of coastline. www.cruisinthecoast.com.

NORTH CAROLINA

Lake Junaluska — Smoky Mountain Folk Festival, Sept. 4-5, features fiddlers, banjo players, string bands, ballad singers, buck dancers and square dance teams and more. www.lakejunaluska.com/smfestival.

Matthews — Alive Festival, Sept. 4-7, features artists, rides and children's activities. www.matthewsalive.org.

Morehead City — North Carolina Seafood Festival, Oct. 2-4, features local seafood, live music, vendors, cooking demonstrations and rides. www.ncseafoodfestival.org.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Greenville — Euphoria: Food, Wine and Music Festival, Sept. 18-21, features tasting events,

cooking demonstrations, wine seminars, dinners and live music. www.euphoriagreenville.com.

Greenville — Fall for Greenville, Oct. 9-11, features food, musical entertainment on five stages, children's activities, culinary demonstrations, wine tasting, a beer garden and a variety of food- and drink-related competitions. www.fallforgreenville.net.

TENNESSEE

Kingston Springs — Farmers and Artisans Market, second Saturdays through Oct. 10, features local produce, hand-crafted goods and live music. www.kstfarmersmarket.org.

Knoxville — Boomsday, Sept. 6, features choreographed fireworks, live music, food and contests. www.boomsday.org.

Nashville — Italian Lights Festival, Sept. 11-13, features food, wine, music, arts and crafts, grape stomping and children's activities. www.italianlights.org.

Knoxville — Tennessee Valley Fair, Sept. 11-20, features historical exhibits, crafts, food, storytelling, livestock shows, sports and rides. www.tvvalleyfair.org.

NORTH CAROLINA

Virginia Beach — Neptune Festival, through Oct. 4, features a parade, sand-sculpturing and surfing competitions, music and fireworks. www.neptunefestival.com.

Blacksburg — Brew Do, Oct. 17, features more than 40 breweries, live music, food and a homebrew competition. www.blacksburgbrewdo.com.

VIRGINIA

Compiled from Southeast Tourism Society's Top 20 Events and staff reports. If you find a mistake, email scanady@ajc.com.

A weekend in East Tennessee

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Posted: 12:00 a.m. Wednesday, Sept. 2, 2015

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By Clara Bosonetto - For the AJC

Weekend in East Tennessee one of three ways: on a budget, spending a bit more, or when the getaway calls for a splurge.

Trip tips: Plan an autumn journey on roads less traveled into the Smoky Mountains. Loudon County's Highway 321, recently designated as the Great Smoky Mountains Byway, is the most scenic and least congested route to the Smokies from I-75 North. It's a 49-mile drive to Cades Cove, a 2,500-acre valley in the heart of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park where visitors will find an abundance of trails for hikers of all experience levels, and picnic areas. Beginner hikers might try Rich Mountain Loop at Cades Cove, Laurel Falls Trail, or Schoolhouse Gap, near Townsend. From Townsend, Highway 321 turns north toward Pigeon Forge and then south to Gatlinburg for a scenic 45-minute drive. The East Tennessee River Valley Geotourism MapGuide highlights the natural, historic and cultural assets unique to the area.

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Getting there: The tri-counties of Blount, Loudon and Roane are a 3.5-hour drive from Atlanta. Round-trip airfare to Knoxville, about a 36-minute drive to Lenoir City, from \$296; nonstop Delta, 21-day advance purchase.

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In this Section



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Shakespeare Festival draws big crowds to Ashland

Tips for visitors to Crater Lake and Ashland, Ore.

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'Secret Garden' restored at Wright's masterpiece Fallingwater



What you need to remember when traveling with your pet for Labor Day

Top events and exhibits this autumn in London, England

For history-minded tourists, London marks blitz anniversary

Foreign language apps for traveling abroad

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