



CHEROKEE HERITAGE TRAIL ITINERARY

Tsi-lu-gi (Cherokee word for Welcome)

Winding through mountains, past rivers, and through small towns, you will discover the rich history of the Cherokee people. Follow National Scenic Byways, quiet highways, and back roads to visit sites which offer a glimpse into the past and a view of the present. Museums, historic sites, and memorials tie the past to the present and a people to their land.

Historical Background

The Cherokee once commanded much of the southern Appalachians. Archaeological evidence, early written accounts, and the oral history of the Cherokee themselves demonstrate that Cherokees controlled more than 130,000 square miles. The original Cherokee homeland has been altered over the past 200 years, with new roads and towns, and vanishing chestnuts and buffalo, but the shape of the hills and valleys remain much the same as Cherokees experienced them for thousands of years. And Cherokee people are still here. They live in the modern world but many still sing the old songs and practice the old ways. We invite you to explore part of the Cherokee homeland in Tennessee and North Carolina. Museums and historic sites will reveal the long and compelling Cherokee history, while festivals and events make it possible for you encounter Cherokee people and traditions.

1. Fort Loudoun

338 Fort Loudoun Road (just off Hwy 360)

Vonore, TN 37885

(423) 884-6217

Hours: Fort – 8am-Sunset; Everyday

Visitor Center – 8am-4:30pm; Mon-Fri

Living History Demonstrations occur on scheduled weekends throughout the year. Contact Fort Loudoun for dates and times

Fort Loudoun was built in the wilderness of the Tennessee River Valley during the winter of 1756-57 at the request of pro-British Cherokee factions at the Overhill Town of Chota. The Cherokees wanted the fort and garrison to deter raiding on the Overhill towns by the French allied Indians and to discourage French settlement. Today the reconstructed fort sits on a hill overlooking Tellico Lake. Living history demonstrations take place throughout the year. A reconstructed Cherokee winter house and summer house are located directly outside the fort help convey the important Cherokee role in the history of Fort Loudoun. The visitor center presents information on the fort's history and artifacts that were excavated prior to the Fort's reconstruction.

Tellico Blockhouse

Blockhouse Road (just off US 411)

Vonore, TN 37885

For more information about the Tellico Blockhouse contact Fort Loudoun at (423) 884-6217.

The Tellico Blockhouse, built in 1794, was located across the lake from Fort Loudoun. There, federal and territorial officials implemented the Factory Act of 1795, which was a United States government plan to “civilize” Indians by maintaining federal “factories,” or trading posts, where Indians would receive fair exchange for their furs as well as learn farming and mechanical skills. Today, interpretive

exhibits situated among the ruins tell the story of the Tellico Blockhouse. Visitors to the site can wander among the foundations and look across the river toward the old Cherokee Nation.

2. Sequoyah Birthplace Museum

576 Hwy 360

Vonore, TN 37885

(423) 884-6246

www.sequoyahmuseum.org

Hours: 9am-5pm; Mon-Sat and Noon-5pm; Sun

The Sequoyah Birthplace Museum, the only Cherokee owned museum in Tennessee, houses exhibits which focus on the lifeways of the Overhill Cherokee and the accomplishments of Sequoyah, inventor of the Cherokee syllabary. The gift shop offers a wide selection of books, as well as Native American crafts.

Chota & Tanasi.

For more information about the Chota and Tanasi memorials contact the Sequoyah Birthplace Museum at (423) 884-6246.

The waters of Tellico Lake now cover the original town sites, but memorials to honor both towns are located alongside the lake approximately 12 miles from Sequoyah Birthplace Museum. Special events and programs take place at various times during the year.

Snowbird Cherokee Community

Near the town of Robbinsville is a small Cherokee Community known as Tu Ti Yi or Snowbird. The reservation lands of the Snowbird Community are scattered in tracts along the Snowbird, Little Snowbird and Buffalo creeks. Although a part of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, they are separated geographically from the Qualla Boundary Cherokee. The Snowbird Cherokee are descendants of the Cherokee who lived in the Cheoah Valley or hid in the mountains during the time of the Trail of Tears. The Snowbird is said to be one of the more traditional Cherokee communities. A large percentage of its population still retains the use of the Cherokee language and customs of their ancestors.

3. Junaluska Memorial and Museum

Junaluska Memorial Drive

Robbinsville, NC

(828) 479-4727

www.junaluska.com

Hours: 9am-5pm; Mon-Fri

The Junaluska Memorial and Museum presents information on the Cherokee leader Junaluska, a medicinal plant garden with walking trail, exhibits of area artifacts, as well as the story of the Trail of Tears. This small museum was created by members of the Snowbird community of Cherokees from the Eastern Band. It also serves as a visitor information center and the center for Cherokee Heritage Trail.

4. Cherokee and the Qualla Boundary

This nation within a nation is just a small remnant of the ancestral homelands of the Cherokee people. Despite signs and markers stating "Cherokee Indian Reservation," the land is not technically a reservation, but rather a land trust. The land is owned by the Cherokee people themselves and held in trust by the federal government.

Museum of the Cherokee Indian

589 Tsali Boulevard

Cherokee, NC

(828) 497-3481

www.cherokee-nc.com

Summer Hours: (June-August) 9am-7pm; Mon-Sat and 9am-5pm; Sun

Winter Hours: (Sept-May) 9am-5pm; Mon-Sun

Located on tribal land in the Great Smoky Mountains, this non-profit museum tells the story of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. Follow the Story Belt from pre-history to present day with several exhibits. Virtual Cherokee storytellers welcome you and serve as your guides to this interactive museum experience, offering a link to the Cherokee saga. The gift shop features Cherokee art and crafts.

Oconaluftee Indian Village

564 Tsali Blvd

Cherokee, NC 28719

828-497-2111

www.cherokee-nc.com

Hours: 9am-5pm; Daily

Oconaluftee Indian Village allows a glimpse back in time to an active and authentic 1750s Cherokee village. The earliest forms of American craft—pottery, basket making, wood carving and weaving—are demonstrated and sustained here by members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. Dog hobble, jelly berry, mockernut hickory and the tree of heaven line the walking trail along with hundreds of flowers, shrubs and ferns.

Qualla Arts & Crafts Mutual

498 Tsali Blvd.

Cherokee, NC

800-438-1601

www.cherokee-nc.com

Summer Hours: 8am-7pm; Mon-Sat and 9am-5pm; Sun

Winter Hours: 8am-5pm; Mon-Sun

Founded in 1946 with the purpose of preserving and advancing Cherokee arts and crafts, the Qualla Arts & Crafts Mutual, Inc., is today the oldest and leading Native American Arts cooperative in the United States. Featuring a wide variety of authentic Cherokee art and crafts.

5. Murphy, NC

Murphy was first known as the “Leech Place” reflecting a Cherokee legend about two giant leeches that lurked in the Hiwassee River. Later the area was called Huntington, after A.R.S. Hunter’s Store, an early trading post and ferry on the Unicoi Turnpike. This trade center eventually grew into a town named Murphy. In preparation for the Cherokee Removal, the US government built Fort Butler here. All the Cherokee prisoners from North Carolina eventually came to Fort Butler before departing on the Unicoi Turnpike Trail to Tennessee.

Cherokee County Historical Museum

87 Peachtree Street

Murphy, NC

828-837-6792

Hours: 9am-5pm; Mon-Fri

This museum holds an extensive collection of prehistoric and historic artifacts and includes a model of Fort Butler. Fort Butler was the headquarters of the Eastern Division of the U.S. Army of the Cherokee Nation, the military force which was charged with forcing Cherokee emigration – known as the Trail of Tears. Though Fort Butler no longer stands in Murphy, the museum staff can direct you to the historic site where it once stood. The Cherokee County Historical Museum also contains the account ledger from A.R.S. Hunter’s Store. The store records shed light on the lives of Cherokee families up to the moment of the Cherokee Removal.

6. Coker Creek, TN

Once part of Cherokee lands, Coker Creek was not heavily settled until the 18th and 19th centuries. After gold was discovered at Coker Creek in the 1830’s white prospectors began to pour in, even though the area was still part of the Cherokee Nation. The federal government intervened by establishing Fort Armistead at Coker Creek to deter the intruders, but the strategy failed miserably and white settlers continued to move in. When the Cherokee Removal began in 1838, Fort Armistead was reactivated as a holding area for Cherokee people who were forcibly removed to the West. The promise of gold never fully materialized at Coker Creek, but this high mountain community survives.

Coker Creek Welcome Center

Hwy 68
Coker Creek, TN
(423) 261-2286

Hours: 10am-5pm; Tues-Sat

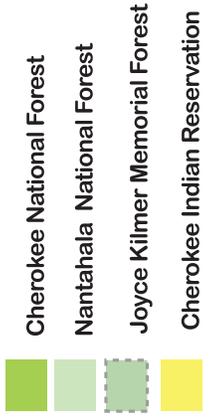
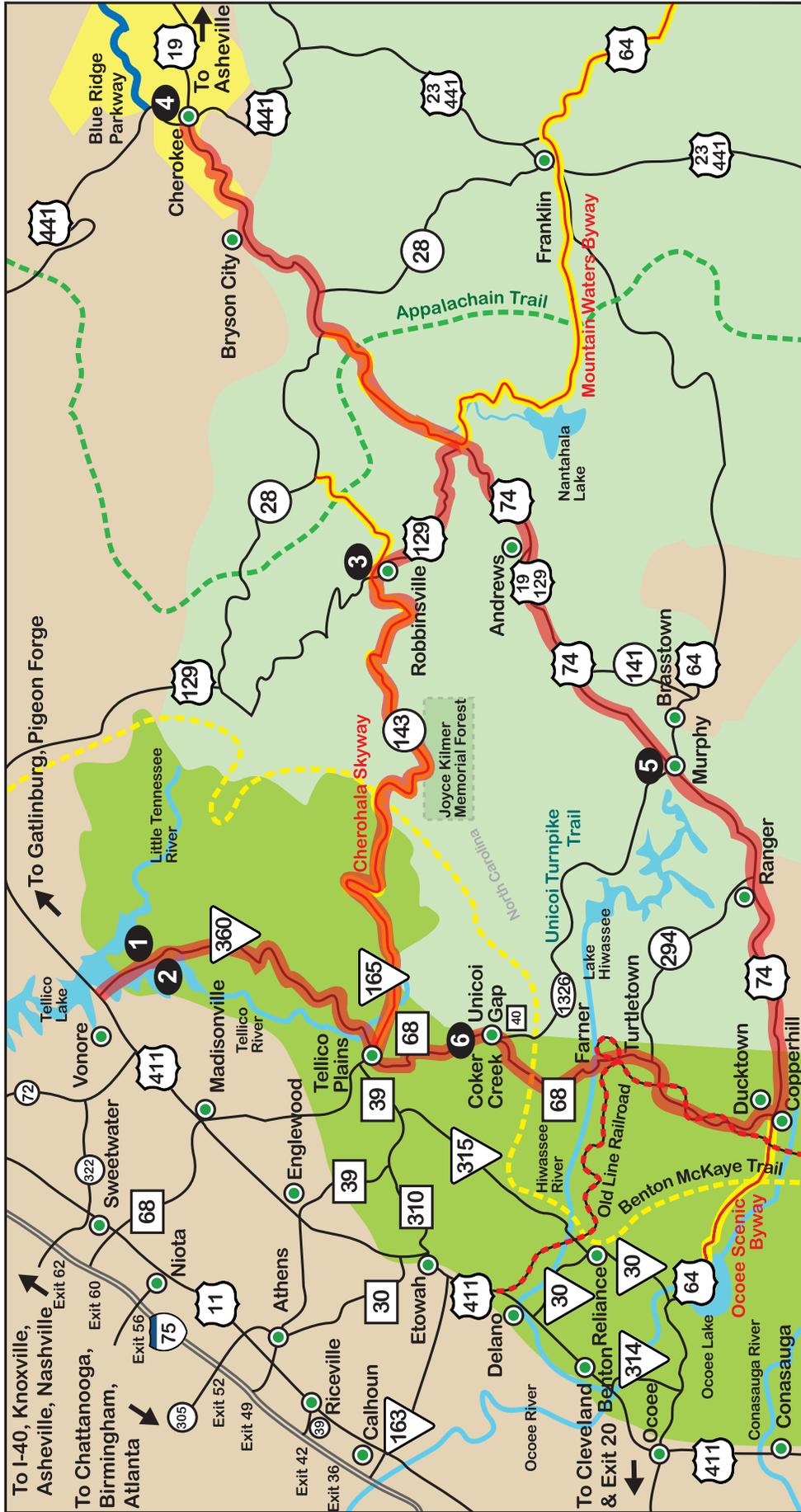
A welcome and information center filled with arts, crafts, books, maps, as well as information about the historical Unicoi Turnpike, Cherokee history, the Cherokee National Forest, and area attractions. The Coker Creek Welcome Center has books and information about historic sites and can help you delve into the rich history of the area. As a Gold Panning Association of America (GPAA) dealer, they can sell you a gold pan and give you practical and historic information about gold panning.



TOLL FREE: 1-877-510-5765

WWW.TENNESSEEOVERHILL.COM

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