

Great American Road Trips: Maggie Valley, N.C., To Cherokee, N.C

Are you one of those types of people who load up the kids in the car and pick a new and spontaneous adventure to go on? If so, then this article is for you. For several years now, I have been documenting my travels with my 4-year-old daughter, across the United States. I have done a lot of hit and miss research, and have picked out some of the best places for families to drive on single day and weekend road trips.

Maggie valley is a beautiful town, with tourist stops open year round, and plenty of hotels and restaurants, to satisfy all of your families needs. Whether you are driving on the cheap, or going all out, Maggie valley has it all. Most hotels are less than \$100 on the weekend, unless you arrive at the peak tourist season in summer, then they tend to get a little pricey. If you book ahead, usually you can get a better rate, especially if it's off-season and not on a weekend.

One of Maggie valleys many great adventures, is to go horseback riding. Queens stable is located just off Soco rd and has been in business since 1948. It offers trail rides on 200 acres of family owned farm, with beautiful mountain views and pristine natural surroundings. It costs \$20 for a 1-hour ride, or for \$30, you get a 1 hour 45 minute ride to the top of the mountain and along the ridge. They accommodate children 6 and up and adults up to 235 pounds. They are open from around April 1st through until November, but they do offer other rides during other times, but you should call and check first. To reach them call (828)926-0718

Wheels through time, is a great place to stop in, and enjoy one of the best transportation museums in the eastern United States. Opened only 4 years, they have had an extremely large number of visitors, over 250,000 and counting. They have well over 10,000 pieces of memorabilia, ranging from early, turn of the century motorcycles, to classic cars and racing memorabilia. They even have Steve McQueen's Cadillac! Admission is \$12 for adults, \$10 for seniors, and half price for children 12 and under. They can be reached at (828)926-6266 or online at www.wheelsthroughtime.com It's a definite destination stop for motorcycle enthusiasts and racing fans alike.

If you like to ski or just play in the snow, then Cataloochee ski area is the place for you, during your trip through Maggie valley. Located at the end of Maggie valley, near the now closed, but recently to be reopened Ghost town in the sky, it offers skiing, snowboarding, and tubing. Because of the large amount of information they offer on skiing dates and pricings, I suggest you contact them at (828)926-0285 or online at www.cataloochee.com The web address provides maps to the lodge and of the skiing area, as well as live web cams of their skiing and tubing areas. The best times to visit are just after Thanksgiving . They have artificial snow machines, so Cataloochee ski area is the first one to open and the last one to close.

As you leave town, and head towards the Great Smoky Mountains national park, you enter the Qualla boundary, also known as the Cherokee Indian reservation. It consists of nearly 57,000 acres of federal government public trust lands. With a large amount of family oriented activities, this town of 9,000 residents has an abundance of places to visit and see. The Oconaluftee Indian Village is a great place to take the kids. There they have a working Indian village, with all native Cherokees, to help explain the ways of life they once new, before the advent of the modern technology. There is also a fascinating play that has been in production for almost 60 years, entitled "unto these hills" that tells the infamous tale of "the trail of tears" when Cherokee and others local tribes were moved to Oklahoma. One of top three Native American museums in the United States is located here, and in 1998, it went under renovation, and today, provides a great hands on experience for the adults, as well as the kids. To find out more about Cherokee and its attractions go online at www.cherokee-nc.com or phone them at 800-438-1601

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