EXPERIENCE

Franklin

-The Heart of-

ADVENTURE

ExperienceFranklinNC.com

–Welcome to–
Franklin, North Carolina

From Mayor Stacy J. Guffey

Welcome to Franklin, North Carolina!

We're glad you're here. Whether you're visiting for a weekend, passing through on a mountain adventure, or staying a little longer, I hope you'll take some time to enjoy everything that makes Franklin special.

This valley has been home to people for centuries. Long before there was a Town of Franklin, this was the site of the Cherokee town of Noquisiyi (ᏃᎮᏏᎥ). Today, the Cherokee people remain an important part of our community and our region. The Noquisi (sometimes referred to as Nikwasi) Mound, which stands at the site of the historic Cherokee town and is now owned and protected by the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, reminds us that this history is not just something to remember. It is something that continues today.

The families who settled these mountains later added another chapter to Franklin's story. Generation after generation of Appalachian people built homes, churches, farms, schools, and businesses here. They passed along traditions, music, and stories that helped make Franklin the warm and inviting place it is today.

Our town sits in the heart of the mountains, surrounded by rivers, trails, waterfalls, and some of the most beautiful scenery you'll find anywhere in Western North Carolina. But what I think visitors remember most are the people. Franklin is a friendly, welcoming community where folks still wave, strike up conversations, and take pride in their town.

I encourage you to spend some time downtown, visit our local shops and restaurants, attend a community event, and explore the mountains that surround us. There is a lot to see here, but there's also a lot to simply enjoy.

Thank you for choosing Franklin. We're proud of our town, grateful you're here, and we hope you'll come back and see us again.

Sincerely,
Mayor Stacy J. Guffey

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Cover photo: Wesser Bald Fire Tower

POPULAR HIKES

Siler Bald

Popular Hikes

Appalachian Trail

varies in elevation, difficulty and length

Virtually all of the hiking trails around Franklin connect to or are near the famous Appalachian Trail. For northbound AT hikers, Franklin sits at mile 110 and we are the very first designated Appalachian Trail Community. Check out all of our hiking trails listed here to see which are on or adjacent to the AT.

Bartram Trail

varies in elevation, difficulty and length

Designated as a National Recreation Trail by the National Trails System Act of 1968, the 100+ mile Bartram Trail crosses over some of the most scenic mountains of North Carolina and Georgia. Many of its side trails lead to incredible views of the Blue Ridge and the Smokies. Passes right through downtown/Main Street.

Hiking Safety Tips

- ✓ Carry and drink plenty of water.
- ✓ Bring salty snacks to replenish electrolytes.
- ✓ Wear sturdy hiking shoes or boots to protect your feet.
- ✓ Stay at least one body length away from cliff edges at all times.

-Leave No Trace-

Albert Mountain Fire Tower

Moderate, 908 ft. elevation gain, 2-2.5 hrs

An out-and-back trail with plenty of ridge lines and creeks to cross. Some parts of the trail can be steep and rocky, including some steps, but the top offers fantastic views. The trail is mostly shaded.

Little Tennessee Greenway

Easy, all-access, 180 ft. elevation gain

This beautiful out-and-back, in-town scenic trail is a paved (all-access), mostly level walkway that follows the winding path of the river. It boasts gardens and bird-watching stands. Plenty of benches are scattered along the way. Several bridges cross the river at different points.

Mooney Falls Trail

Easy/moderate, .2 mile, 32 ft. elevation gain, .5-1 hour

A very short .2-mile hike, this family-friendly, out-and-back trail leads to a beautifully long waterfall in the Nantahala National Forest. Two viewing areas provide up close views of Mooney Falls.

Pickens Nose

Easy/moderate, 262 ft. elevation gain, .5-1 hour

A 1.4 mile out-and-back trail which follows the ridge line and leads to the amazing Pickens Nose lookout.

Rufus Morgan Falls

Moderate, 285 ft. elevation gain, 1.1 miles, .5-1 hour

A out-and-back hike to the beautiful 60 ft. Rufus Morgan waterfall.

Siler Bald

Moderate, 1,023 ft. elevation gain, 2-2.5 hours

A 3.8 mile out-and-back trail with breathtaking 360 views at the top. Also, part of the Appalachian Trail.

= *Dog Friendly*

Wayah Bald

Easy, all-access, drivable 1,988 ft. elevation gain

A out-and-back visit to the Wayah Bald Lookout Tower is well worth the journey. Visitors can drive to stunning mountain views without the strain of a long hike (includes parking spaces and bathroom facilities). For hikers, the Appalachian and Bartram trails both pass by the tower, making it a base for out-and-back hikes. Anyone can stop and enjoy the overlook and view of the valley below.

Wesser Bald Fire Tower

Moderate, 748 ft. elevation gain, 1.5-2 hours

This 2.2-mile loop trail is approximately 20 miles from downtown Franklin and has stunning views from the fire tower.

Williams Pulpit

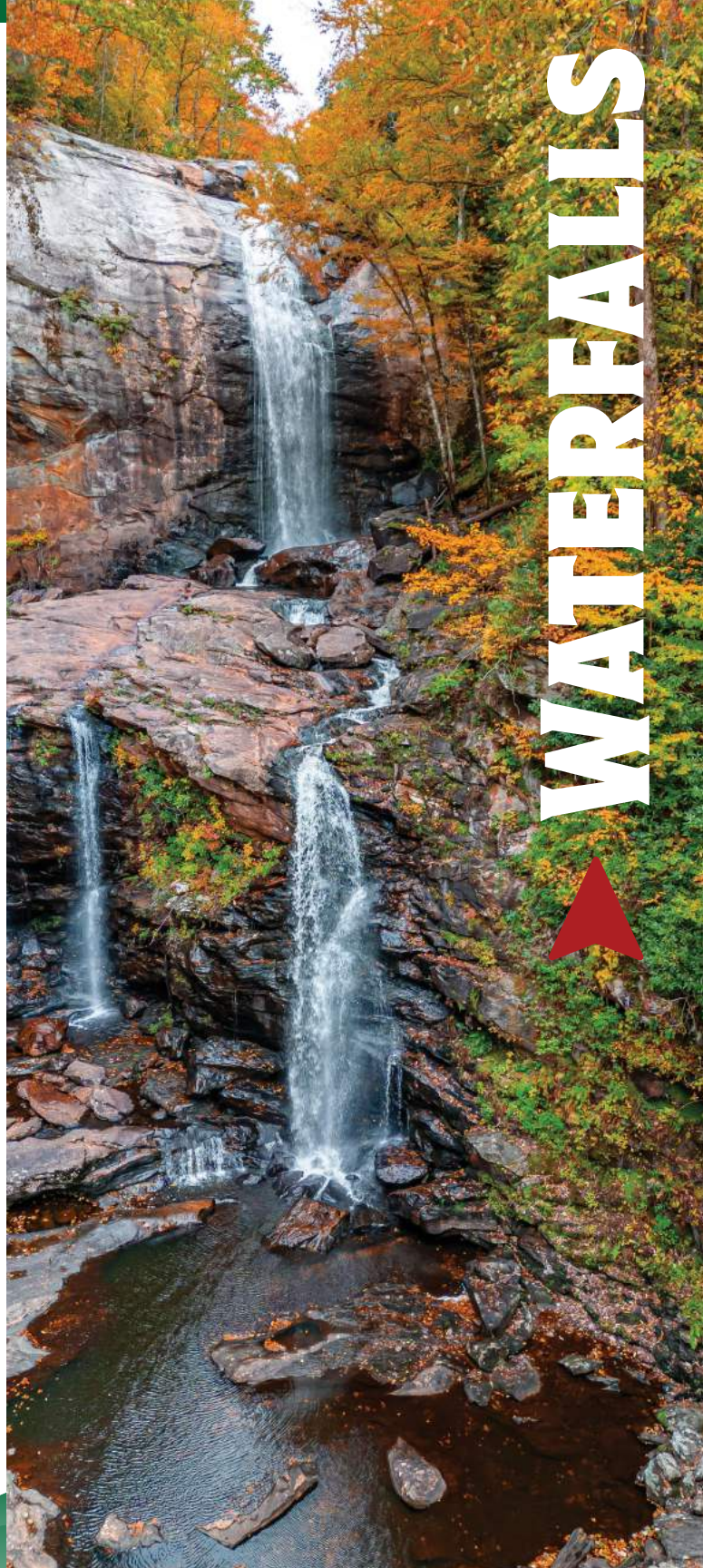
Moderate, 1,089 ft. elevation gain, 2.5-3 hours

Explore this 4.0-mile out-and-back trail only minutes from Franklin. This section of the trail is called Section 4 of the 100-mile N.C. Bartram Trail. The trail has a stunning waterfall just 5 minutes from the parking area.

Wilson Lick Ranger Station

Moderate, 344 ft. elevation gain, 1.5-2 hr

On the drive to Wayah Bald, you can stop here for history and a hike out and back on the Appalachian Trail. Built in 1916, Wilson Lick gives you a glimpse of a bygone era of forestry. The hike from here to Wayah Bald is about 3-mile hike.



WATERFALLS

Just minutes from Franklin you'll find some of the region's most beautiful waterfalls. Four waterfalls alone are a short drive along Hwy. 64 toward Highlands. Just park and awe. Mooney and Rufus Morgan are also local hiking trail gems.

Bust Your Butt Falls

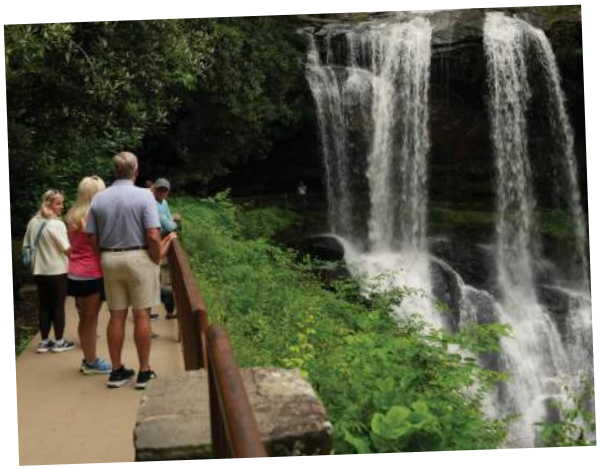
A favorite roadside swimming hole along scenic Hwy 64 just minutes from Franklin. With easy access, this natural waterfall and plunge pool makes it a spontaneous stop for brave cliff jumpers, swimmers, and sunbathers alike.

Bridal Veil Falls

One of the four main waterfalls just minutes from Franklin on Hwy 64. The waterfall resembles a bride's veil – a small stream falling from above creates a 60-foot "veil" of water.

Cullasaja Falls

This spectacular waterfall is located along a narrow stretch of Hwy 64. Of the waterfalls along this route, Cullasaja Falls is the largest. It cascades approximately 250 feet in a stunning rush of water that you need to see to believe.



Dry Falls

Dry Falls is unique among North Carolina waterfalls since you can walk behind the 80-foot cascade. The falls flow over an overhanging bluff, and when the water flow is low, you'll stay dry, hence the name "Dry Falls." When the water flow is high, you're likely to get wet! The falls are wheelchair accessible, and kid-friendly. The parking area includes handicap spots and visitor facilities.

Mooney Falls

A short, easy to moderate .2 mile hike. See listing in "hikes".

Rufus Morgan Falls

A 60-foot waterfall along a moderate hiking trail. See listing in "hikes".

WATERFALL SAFETY TIPS

- ✓ Stay back from the edge.
- ✓ Avoid slippery rocks.
- ✓ Wear stable shoes and watch your footing.

= *Dog Friendly*

THINGS TO DO

PumpkinFest

THINGS TO DO

Franklin is full of fun things for people of all ages *(and their furry friends)*. Live music is everywhere: breweries, wine bars, coffee shops, historic general stores, even a favorite community market. There are farmers and craft markets. Main St. merchants take shopping to a new level with the monthly "Second Saturday Sip & Shop". And we are home to the elegant Smoky Mountain Center for the Performing Arts which hosts national music artists and locally-produced Broadway plays. From Gemborees *(for gem fans)*, to fall leaf viewing, to guided outdoor adventures, Franklin makes your mountain visit amazing!

MUSEUMS

➤ Macon County Historical Museum

A unique experience that starts on the left side of the museum with artifacts as far back as 10,000 BC and moves through history until the 1900s. On the right side, we begin with WWI moving to near modern times. Research history for Macon County NC and local Native Americans.

➤ Franklin Gem & Mineral Museum

Housed in the Historic 1850 Macon County Jail, the museum has items on display from all over the world. The displays cover the history of mining in Western North Carolina, fossils, Native American artifacts, fluorescent minerals and gems and specimens from all 50 States and various countries.

➤ Scottish Tartans Museum & Heritage Center

Explore Scotland's history and your own Celtic roots through the famous Highland Dress - the tartan and kilt. Our museum features original and replica kilts from the late sixteenth century till today, Scottish weaponry, and information detailing the Scottish migration to North Carolina and the relationship with the Cherokee Indians. Don't forget the truly unique gift shop.

MUSIC

➤ Pickin' on the Square

Enjoy a free music experience along Franklin's historic Main Street. Twice monthly, from May through October, a featured artist performs while you relax and experience local restaurant and food-truck flavors, social district drinks and good vibes during our beautiful Saturday evenings!

➤ Sweet Carolina Music Fest

Top and rising country music artists join us in the spring for an unforgettable night of live music, energy, and small-town charm in the mountains of Western North Carolina!

➤ Yonder Summer Concert Series

All summer, the Yonder Community Market offers Songwriter Sundays and First Friday County Classic sounds. Free (with suggested artist donations), family friendly.

Birding

➤ Little Tennessee Greenway

Love to bird? Weekly guided walks (on our events page) will show you amazing colors, plumage and an incredible variety of wild feathered friends. This is the place for birding fans young and old.

Annual Events

If you're planning a trip to our stunning mountains, grab your calendar and mark these down. There are some incredible, annual, family-friendly events that will make your visit even more special.

➤ Appalachian Trail Celebration

Relax. Refuel. Retool. Hikers are most welcome in this Appalachian Trail original AT Community. At mile 110, we are usually the first stop for AT hikers heading to Maine. Need a place to rest, heal, fix or replace equipment, eat great food, enjoy great spirits? Catch a ride from the trail heads and stay a bit. Franklin residents, businesses and churches welcome you. Not a hiker. . .that's OK. Help us welcome them. Enjoy the events. Meet wonderful people passing through.

➤ Taste of Scotland

A three-day event of immersive Scottish fun. With dancing, kids' games, animals, crafters, vendors, competition, and culture for the whole family!

= *Dog Friendly*

➤ Braveheart 5K

This joyful, all-ages fun run is a race through the streets of Franklin. What makes this race really unique? Kilted runners and the William Wallace sword awarded to the overall winners.

➤ Cold Turkey 5K

Gobble! Gobble! Enjoying a holiday in the mountains? Make room for more food while doing good. Franklin's annual Cold Turkey 5K and Little Turkeys Fun Run/Walk is a Thanksgiving Day tradition that benefits the Special Olympics of Macon County.

➤ The Naturalist 25/50K

The growing mountain Fall extreme sports celebration attracts fans from around the world. A beautiful and tough trail race followed by a concert, food trucks, and craft beers for the perfect post-race celebration.

➤ Independence Day Parade and Celebration

Franklin hosts one of the few mountain July 4th parades that visitors and locals can participate in! Patriotic kid and pet contests, food, bounce houses and more.

➤ 80s Flashback Weekend

Break out your leg warmers, tease up that hair, and dust off your mixtapes–80s Flashback Weekend is back and bigger than ever! Western North Carolina's most immersive and electrifying fundraiser for Shriners Children's Hospital is a multi-day retro celebration that transforms Franklin into a totally tubular time warp.

➤ Winter Wonderland

Step into the magic of the Holiday season! For two Saturdays, Winter Wonderland transforms our charming mountain town into a glowing holiday village with twinkling lights, beautifully decorated storefronts, and the joyful sounds of the season.

PumpkinFest

Get ready to let the good times (and pumpkins) roll during Franklin's Annual PumpkinFest! Our Historic Downtown goes full tilt for this family, pet-friendly event. Compete in the World Famous Pumpkin Roll. Let the kids (of all ages) and dogs participate in the Costume Parade and Contest. And don't miss out on nearly 120 vendors with mountain arts and crafts and great food.

Veterans Day Parade

Join the Town of Franklin as we honor all of the Veterans who gallantly served our nation with a parade and ceremony.

Annual Christmas Parade

A beloved holiday tradition that brings joy, sparkle and Santa Claus to downtown on the Sunday after Thanksgiving! Main Street comes alive with twinkling lights, cheerful music, and festive floats.

New Year's Eve Ruby Drop

When you're the "Gem Capital of the World," New Year's Eve should have more bling than any other town or big city. Join us for one of the mountain's top New Year's events as we drop a massive, lighted Ruby to ring in the New Year. It's fun for all.

Macon County Fair

Organized in 1953, this is an agricultural family event celebrating our rural traditions. The fun includes farm and livestock displays and contests, gardening, cute pet shows, arts and crafts, and giant pumpkins... everything agricultural.

VOLUNTOURISM

Voluntourism is doing good while enjoying your vacation. If you want to make a positive impact on a small community or the environment, check out these opportunities. Local organizations regularly host volunteer events. It is a great way to experience our mountain town while making the world a better place.

Bartram Trail Conservancy

Help us maintain 100 miles of the trail with fun and rewarding events. Be a hiker leader, perform trail maintenance or be an event volunteer.

Little Tennessee River Greenway

Volunteers assist with the greenway upkeep, invasive plant cleanup and Greenway-related enhancement projects.

Mainspring Conservation Trust

Mainspring conserves the land and waterways, and connects the people to these valuable resources. Volunteer events include land and waters with biomonitoring, clean-up, seed collection and other critical activities.

Nantahala Hiking Club

One of 31 volunteer Appalachian Trail maintaining clubs of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. It maintains the AT around Franklin and AT connector trails. You do not need to be a member to hike or volunteer with the Club. Families and friends are always welcome!

MountainTrue

Help protect the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains to safeguard our forests, clean water, and healthier communities. In towns like Franklin, volunteers participate in river and invasive plant cleanups, hikes, advocacy and community events.

Special Liberty Project

The Special Liberty Project serves Healing Veterans and Gold Star Families through Nature-Based Healing Retreats. Every Friday, volunteers work in the vegetable garden, help with the horses and mini horses, perform trail maintenance and so much more.

Food & Drink

International cuisine, gas station gourmets, wine and brews along with down-home cooking make eating in Franklin a repeat family affair.

Wine & Brew

Breweries and wine bars make relaxing after a day of hiking, gem mining, fishing and shopping that much more special. Family and pet-friendly with tasty food options makes these stops easy.

Gem Mines

It's a thing here in Franklin. One of the nation's first gem mining centers (New York's famous Tiffany's had a mine here way back when). This kid-friendly activity is fun for all and you'll bring back shiny, and happy, memories.

Fishing

Have you tried fly fishing on a true mountain stream? How about lake fishing surrounded by peaks and valleys? The Franklin fishing scene will get you hooked.

Golf

Pros and novices alike know there is nothing quite like golfing in the mountains. Mild weather, spectacular scenery, and no crowds are everyday experiences here.

Shopping

This is how people describe shopping in Franklin: affordable, approachable, authentic and unique.

Farmstands/Farmers Markets

We are surrounded by farms and organic food *(and crafts)* producers. Support our farmers and enjoy some of the best products produced in the mountains.

Churches

All denominations are represented and welcome here. Don't miss your regular worship just because you're on vacation.

PLACES TO STAY

Bed & Breakfasts

Franklin Terrace – free breakfast, firepit, walk to town

McTernan Manor – 6 rooms, firepit

Cabins & Cottages

Big Bear Cabin Rentals – 2 and 3 bdrms

Cozy Cabin – 3 bdrms, fireplace

Cozy Creekside Cabin – 2 bdrms, firepit, creekside

Divas on Main Cottages – 1 bdrm, lakefront

Love Cove Cabin – 1 bdrm, firepit

Quartermoon Cabin at the Mountain Shire – service animal, 1 bdrm, firepit

Riverfront Cottage – 2 bdrms, firepit, river side, hot tub

Relaxing Cabin – 1 and 2 bdrm cabins, creekside, hot tub, firepit

Camping and RV Parks

Andy's Trout Farm – 1 and 2 bdrm cabins, camping, firepit

Cardinal Ridge Farm RV Resort – 9 sites

Cardinal Ridge Farm RV Resort – 9 sites

Cartoogechaye Creek Campground – RV sites, tent sites, cabin

Cowee Campground and RV – firepit, ADA

Cullasaja River RV Park – 90 sites

Franklin RV & Campground – 24 sites, firepit

Glamping in Corbin Cove – 40 ft. RV for rent, firepit

Great Outdoors RV Resort – 66 sites, pool, firepit

High Country Haven RV Park, Camping & Cabins – 16 sites

Mi Mountain Campground – 46 sites

Old Corundum Millsite Campground –

Pines RV Park & Cabins – campfire, 66 sites

Rose Creek Campground and Cabins – pool

Winding Stair Campground – glamping, cabins available, river access, firepit

Hostels

The Grove – service dogs, 6 bunks and 2 bdrms, fire pit

Hotels & Motels

Carolina Motel – pool, firepit, ADA

Colonial Inn – firepit, ADA

Franklin Inn/America's Best Value Inn – service animals, ADA

Hampton Inn – ADA

Hill Top Inn – pool, hot tub

The Lodge at Cat Creek – 9 rooms, firepit, ADA

Microtel – ADA

Quality Inn – service animals, pool

Sapphire Inn – ADA

Vacation Rentals

Mountain Top Hideaway – 3 bdrms, waterfalls, firepit

Peaceful Tiny Home – fire pit

Treehouse Retreat – 1 bdrm, hot tub, firepit

The Yonder Bungalow – 2 bdrms

= *Dog Friendly*

-Macon County Tourism Partners-

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