



BENTON MACKAYE TRAIL (BMT)



Explore the stunning beauty of the Southern Appalachian Mountains on the Benton MacKaye Trail (BMT) in Tennessee! Enjoy scenic hikes by the Hiwassee River, marvel at waterfalls like Upper Bald River Falls, and soak in the panoramic views from atop Buck Bald and Whigg Meadow. Perfect for family hikes, leisurely strolls, or backpacking wilderness adventures, the BMT spans 288 miles across Georgia, Tennessee, and North Carolina. In Tennessee, the trail winds through the Cherokee National Forest as well as five Wilderness Areas. Discover colorful wildflowers – lady slippers, dwarf crested iris, a wide array of trillium, fire pink and more. Tree-size rhododendrons and flame azaleas will not disappoint in the spring. Catch a glimpse of wildlife – bear, deer, bobcats, turkey, wild hogs and foxes.

Lost Creek is a stunning, kid and dog-friendly hike near Reliance, Tennessee. The 2.7-mile trail runs alongside the creek and kids and dogs can play below gentle waterfalls in a limestone gorge.

The Hiwassee River offers an 8.6-mile hike beginning at the BMT's Childers Creek Trailhead. It offers lovely river views, a picnic spot at the rocky point, as well as a campsite with a swimming beach further upstream. At 22.9 miles, the Upper Bald River Falls Wilderness Loop is a backpacker's delight! Start your hike at the Brookshire Creek Trailhead. Check out the glistening

cascades of whitewater rushing over Upper Bald River Falls. The trail meanders through several scenic gaps to reach Waucheesi Bald, a perfect camping spot on a beautiful grassy bald.

Bring your family and dog for a picnic on Whigg Meadow, just 1.6 miles from the BMT's Mud Gap Trailhead. In the spring, striking flame azaleas are scattered around the emerald green bald. Snack on blueberries and blackberries while admiring the far-off mountains!

Located near the Tennessee/North Carolina state line, Unicoi Gap is a site on the historic Unicoi Turnpike National Historic Trail (UTNHT), which intersects the BMT just south of the gap. After the Cherokee Removal the UTNHT was recognized as a segment of the Trail of Tears. The trek from the BMT's Unicoi Gap Trailhead offers a strenuous nine-mile hike, including a beautiful ridge line walk along the Tennessee/North Carolina state line, an engraved stone marker on the state line as well as the ruins of the historic Doc Rogers' House. It's a perfect mix of history and nature!

To learn more about these hikes on the BMT, go to bmta.org or contact Joy Forehand, jforehand@bmta.org.

