

Virginia's Converted Bike Trails



VISUAL TRAVEL TOURS

Maps Show You Where... We Show You Why!

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Tour Summary

Two of Virginia's best converted-railroad bike trails cross the history-steeped backlands in the southwest corner of the state. The Virginia Creeper Trail covers 34 mostly downhill miles from Whitetop through Damascus to Abingdon. The New River Trail is 57 miles long, from Galax or Fries to Pulaski. Both have shuttle services, are composed of asphalt or dirt, include scores of bridges or trestles, and open up otherwise inaccessible areas steeped in early musical history. The paths parallel rivers, and there are enough food stops, restaurants, and pastoral sites to make the combined 91 miles both fun and beautiful.

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Introduction



In southwest Virginia, just above the North Carolina border, hide two super cycling routes created on abandoned railroad corridors.



The Virginia Creeper Trail starts within sight of Virginia's highest peak, at Whitetop, and passes 34 miles through Damascus and the Appalachian Trail en route to Daniel Boone's old haunt, Abingdon.



Forty-seven miles to the west, the New River Trail, the state's longest linear state park, begins at Galax (or Fries) and continues for 57 miles, mostly astride the nation's oldest river.



You need a car or van to reach both trails on the same weekend, but each trail has shuttles to bring you back to your base site, and both, oddly, go downhill from the south to the north!



By packing some water and food reserves, there are enough replenishing stops en route to comfortably complete each trail in a day.



The Creeper is fast and a bit bumpy through the dense woods to Damascus - a beginner's delight. It gets smoother but a bit more trying through the pastoral land as it approaches Black Fort.



You'll see lots of bridges, woods, cattle, no-nonsense Appalachian Trail hikers, equestrians, trout, historical sites, and the heart of Americana music in the area where the word "hillbilly" first appeared.



The New River Trail, called “one of America’s premiere bike rails,” smoothly follows the Chestnut and New Rivers through tunnels and across breathtaking trestles past dams, kayaking, Civil War rifle shot mining, intact railroad trappings, restored depots, woods, bucolic dales - and lots of clean restrooms!



Requirements? A mountain bike, a hat, water, granola, leg power, and a pinch of diligence. These are super backwoods trails without veteran challenges. And they are both beautiful and free!

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