

# The Great Smoky Mountains



**VISUAL TRAVEL TOURS**

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

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# Tour Summary

The 30-mile Newfound Gap Road is the most popular route through the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, providing access to scenic vistas, including the 360-degree views from the Smokies' highest peak, Clingman's Dome. Along the way are opportunities for easy hikes, wildlife viewing, and access to the region's human history.

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# Newfound Gap Road Tour





Welcome aboard! I'm Deborah Huso.

The 30-mile Newfound Gap Road is the most popular route through the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Straddling the border between East Tennessee and western North Carolina, it is the most visited national park in the country with some 10 million people touring the park each year.



Allow at least half a day, if possible, to travel the Newfound Gap Road. This will give you plenty of time to take photographs at scenic overlooks, enjoy the short hike to the park's highest peak, and explore some of the park's restored historic Appalachian structures.



While most people come to the Smokies to enjoy scenic vistas, be sure to take some time to notice the park's other special natural features, including its crisp mountain streams and diverse flora and fauna.



The Great Smoky Mountains National Park has over 100,000 different species of living organisms from rare plants to salamanders.

They enjoy protection here in one of the largest wilderness areas east of the Mississippi.



The park also has some of the highest elevation peaks in the east. Sixteen of them rise to elevations over 6,000 feet, including Clingman's Dome, the highest mountain in

the park at 6,642 feet. We will hike a half-mile trail to Clingman's observation tower for 360-degree views.



While you're taking in the scenery along the Newfound Gap Road, note as well the threats to the park, which include the die-off of its spruce-fir forest and its hemlock trees, all of which are threatened by both invasive species and pollution.



In 2009, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park celebrated its 75th anniversary. Like the Blue Ridge Parkway and Shenandoah National Park in Virginia, the park's roads, trails, and public buildings

were constructed mainly through the efforts of the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Great Depression.



The park was actually created out of private land owned by both logging companies and private individuals. The states of Tennessee and North Carolina purchased the land with the help of a \$5 million donation from the Rockefeller Foundation.



So as you explore the park along the Newfound Gap Road, please respect the natural and cultural heritage you will find here. Stay on the trails, don't approach wildlife, carry your trash out with you, and don't deface any park property.



The Great Smoky Mountains National Park does not charge admission for access to any of its recreational and scenic offerings, so consider leaving a donation in one of the donation boxes you will find at each of the park's visitor centers as well as at various locations along the park's scenic drives.



The park, which receives less than \$1.50 in funding for each visitor it receives annually, depends heavily on both donations and the hard work of volunteers to keep it healthy and beautiful.



Enjoy your journey along the Newfound Gap Road, and remember to take the time to stroll a scenic walkway, have a picnic lunch along a mountain stream, and honor the wild landscape around you.

We'll start the tour in the next chapter. Glad to have you along.

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