

Carolina Blue Ridge Shopping

Souvenir buying is a big part of vacations . A survey by the Travel Industry Association found that almost 63 percent of vacationers said that a vacation just isn't complete without some shopping.

Many tourists visiting the Smoky mountains on vacation enjoy shopping for souvenirs . The Smoky mountains are a region of small towns that are not much more than a few stores and a post office. You won't find large crowds, traffic jams, mammoth malls, or theme parks.

It seems the most preferred items for shoppers are mountain crafts, antiques, North Carolina furniture, specialty foods, local wines, books and apparel. Successful bargain hunters know where to shop and how to take advantage of the competitive sales.

Outlets

Smoky mountain outlet malls offer great bargains. Like elsewhere in the world Blue Ridge mountain outlet stores or factory outlets sell high quality merchandise with a well-known brand at discounted prices. The items usually contain slight manufacturing defects and are leftovers from last season or the previous year. As a result, they are always discounted 20%-40% below department store prices.

Antiques

Antiquing is just a fancy term for driving in circles through the countryside and stopping in towns that you might not stop in otherwise just to poke around among things you might not notice , a little worn, a little beaten up, but designed simply and built to last. The inventories of antiques shops in the Carolina Blue Ridge spill out onto the sidewalks and consist of just the right ratio of trash to treasure.

Gifts and Crafts

In the Smoky mountains shopping for traditional arts and crafts is always a pleasure. Gift shops abound in the small mountain towns of North Carolina . Unique small shops throughout the region offer handmade crafts, local and regional art, unique clothing, sportswear, souvenirs, and memorabilia.

Its easy to find that something special in the mountains. Numerous galleries and folk art centers showcase pottery, textiles, paintings, musical instruments, metal work, jewelry, and wood carvings. The Folk Art Center on the Blue Ridge Parkway and The Southern Highland Craft Guild shop in Asheville offer one-of-a-kind arts, crafts, pottery and keepsakes unique to Smoky mountains . Enjoy the mountain air and scenery as you search for that perfect gift

Food and Wine

What the real question is when you're traveling in the mountains is, "Where do the locals go for the most authentic and delicious mountain food around?" Blue Ridge mountain folk have a healthy respect for the tender flavors and rich tastes of beef, pork, poultry, fish and, of course, home grown vegetables . The harvest of the season is one of the main reasons for a party in the Smokies .

Mountain cooks pride themselves on preparing gourmet dishes from locally grown fruits and vegetables. Visit local Farmers Markets, usually open on Saturdays and one or two days during the week, you'll get a delicious insight into how much the locals appreciate the home grown goodness of mountain fruits and vegetables.

Visit a century old grist mill or enjoy home baked goods in bakeries and restaurants wherever your travels take you. Mountain style desserts piping hot fresh fruit pies, hand made candies, oven baked sweet rolls are the perfect delicacy to complete every meal of the day.

Wine Country tasting tours in western North Carolina take on a special mountain hospitality an inspired glow. From native grapes to imported varieties, Carolina vineyards are producing exceptional, award-winning wines. Tours of mountain vineyards, local wine events and exclusive tastings offer all our guests, including the most discriminate of wine connoisseurs, opportunities to enjoy the award-wining wines of the Carolinas

Books

Everywhere you turn in the Smoky mountains there are amazing stories and storytellers. Majestic mountain views, peaceful pastoral country scenery and small town charm seem to be torn from the pages of such authors as Thomas Wolfe and Carl Sandburg, who had homes in the region, as well as frequent visitors: Ernest Hemingway, F Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald, and O. Henry.

The Smoky mountains literary trail is a winding path that passes through Charles Frazier's Cold Mountain to Jan Karon's "Mitford" novels. The Smoky mountains are filled with quaint book shops that offer the works of these and several other local authors, each with a special story to tell .

Home Furnishings

35 percent of all home furniture manufactured in the world is produced in North Carolina . More important, leading furniture manufacturers, such as Broyhill, Thomasville, and Henridon, sell their top-quality furniture at deep discounts straight from their factories in the region.

The Smoky mountains also offer a large selection of accessories and decor for mountain homes. From rustic figurines to kitchen accessories to living and bedroom log cabin furniture the region is filled with quaint shops with mountain crafts and country furnishings.

For most vacationers to the mountains street markets, country stores, and unique specialty stores that are off the tourist grid are typically the best bets for good finds when it comes to mountain mementos .

About the Author

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