How will Cherokee affect you?
Let us count the ways.

CHEROKEE north carolina
VisitCherokeeNC.com

How big are Cherokee’s adventures?
Well, some require a helmet and a chinstrap.

Outdoor Adventure

Fisheries & Wildlife Management
FishCherokee.com
828.359.6110

Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual, Inc.
QuallaArtsAndCrafts.com
828.497.3103

Cherokee Welcome Center
VisitCherokeeNC.com
800.438.1601

Oconaluftee Indian Village,
“Unto These Hills” Outdoor Drama
VisitCherokeeNC.com
866.554.4557

Museum of the Cherokee Indian
CherokeeMuseum.org
828.497.3481

Sequoyah National Golf Club
SequoyahNational.com
828.497.3000

Cherokee Adventures

Let us count the ways.
Cherokees begin a story the way their people have for generations. It’s only fitting to start the story of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians the same way.

**Chapter I: A Long Time Ago**

The Cherokees were hunters and gatherers, foraging the Great Smoky Mountains and the lowlands of the Southern Appalachians for food while hunting, fishing, and trapping game.

By 2000 BC, Cherokee culture had spread over hundreds of miles of mountains, governed by their clan system and town leaders. They passed on their history and religious beliefs through storytelling, ceremonies, and dances. Their agriculture, families, traditions, and way of life sustained them.

The Cherokees formed one of the largest tribes in the southeastern United States and controlled a vast land base.

**Chapter II: Strangers**

In 1540 AD, Spanish explorer and conquistador Hernando de Soto came through looking for gold, demanding food, and fighting and enslaving anyone he encountered.

Worse were the diseases that came with him. Lacking the immunity to combat these afflictions, indigenous peoples were nearly eradicated, victims of plagues such as smallpox, measles, and influenza.

Nevertheless, the Cherokees continued to work through diplomacy with the newcomers for the next 200 years.

By the late eighteenth century, seventy-five percent of Cherokee land had been lost through treaties with England and America. Encroachment by settlers forced the Cherokees to fight for their territory through statesmanship with both the new American government and colonial powers.

**Chapter III: Nineteenth Century Brings Tears**

Gold was discovered in Georgia in 1828, leading to America’s first gold rush while shifting the entire perception of the region. Peace made alliances irrelevant, and mounting pressure from land speculators made the Cherokees an inconvenience.

In 1830, US President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act, offering the Cherokees territory out west in exchange for their homeland. Five years later came the Treaty of New Echota, ceding to the federal government most of the Cherokee lands east of the Mississippi, resulting in what is now referred to as the “Trail of Tears.”

Sixteen thousand Cherokees were gathered, removed, and made to walk 1,200 miles west, a journey that would take six months. Roughly 4,000 Cherokees died of hunger, disease, exposure, or exhaustion.

The North Carolina Cherokees worked against removal. Along with other Cherokees who escaped removal or who came back, the group established the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

**Chapter IV: The Renaissance**

Today’s Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians stands strong and healthy. Harrah’s® Cherokee Casino Resort has provided important income for the Western North Carolina region and draws millions of visitors to Cherokee annually. Cherokee’s economic vitality can be seen across the Qualla Boundary. As the Tribe looks out into the twenty-first century, its bright future emanates a light for other tribes to follow.
It’s time for the **Fire Mountain Trails.** Ready to ignite your inner warrior.

The Cherokees view nature as inclusive of all things: animals, plants, and people—to ensure balance and harmony. It’s with that thought in mind that we take a quick tour, viewing the great outdoors with a new perspective.

We start with Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and 800 miles of the best hiking trails east of the Mississippi. Some lead to waterfalls with such cascading awesomeness you feel them flowing right through you. Like Mingo. Or Soco. Even in downtown Cherokee you see elk, successfully reintroduced only recently. It all leaves you feeling more connected, more in balance and harmony. You begin to think the ancient Cherokees were on to something.

**Floaties?**

Whether it be by kayak, canoe, raft, or tube, you’ll find yourself transported to a place where worries simply drift away. Oconaluftee Islands Park is a central hub for water lovers. From a cooling, relaxing wade with the little ones to picnics full of laughter, the Islands Park even includes stories around a bonfire at night.

**Cherokee is for the birds.**

This area is host to over 200 species of birds and six trails listed in the North Carolina Birding Trails Guide, making it one of the best bird-watching sites in the Southeast. So, if you haven’t seen a rose-breasted grosbeak in a while…keep your fingers crossed; you might also catch a glimpse of a black bear or two—real or made of fiberglass.

**At the end of the day.**

You’ve gone outside and seen a lot. The bonfire warmed you into a sleepy haze, and your head is now filled with amazing stories of wonder. Time for a comfortable bed in Cherokee for the evening.
Does a story thousands of years old require spoiler alerts?
If so, consider yourself alerted.

We begin with Hernando de Soto, the Spanish conquistador who encountered the Cherokees in 1540. Already, audiences will sense that not all is well, as de Soto’s visit portends the terrible tragedy that will befall the Cherokee people during the next 300 years.

We see the Cherokee people as the peace-loving nation that they are, willing to share food and gratitude with the strange interlopers in their land. Indeed, Yonaguska, the proud Cherokee leader, attempts to build a peaceful path through a rapidly changing world. But sadly, the modern world has other ideas.

And then, the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, where Jackson is saved by Junaluska.

One wonders if the noble Junaluska, who famously saved Andrew Jackson during this violent battle, would undo his decision if he could. Because of course it was Jackson who later, with the stroke of a pen, set in motion the horrors of the “Trail of Tears,” casting out thousands of Cherokees from their native homelands through forced removal. Many died along the way, while others were ravaged by disease and famine. This performance explores their heartbreak in exquisite drama and detail.

But before the tears, there’s gold in these hills—with a very steep price.

Wrapping themselves in the premise of Manifest Destiny, white settlers descended on Cherokee Country in 1835, and this astounding play details their impact on the Cherokees’ proud land and culture. Here, we’re introduced to the noble Tsali, a hero and revered figure in Cherokee history.

But the Cherokee spirit cannot be broken.

The drama concludes on a hopeful note. Through amazing imagery, and even some astounding pyrotechnics and special effects, you’ll emerge thrilled by the beauty of the Cherokee people. Today’s Cherokee is a place of natural beauty and economic triumph, and the play will send you off into the night infused with the belief that the Cherokees’ courage is the strongest you’ve ever seen.

Tsali’s heartbreaking personal sacrifice, made to preserve his family, his people, and their ancestral claim to the lands on which they lived, centers the drama and provides its emotional core.

For “Unto These Hills” tickets and information, call 866.554.4557 or go to VisitCherokeeNC.com.
Today is your day, proud angler—fishing thirty miles of streams, arguably the longest stretch of managed private waters in the eastern United States, stocked to the gills with trout: rainbow, brook, golden, and brown.

Three hundred thousand fish have been added to the already existing population (including the unusual sicklefin redhorse, a species that exists almost entirely in Western North Carolina), in emerald waters that sparkle and run through the heart of Cherokee.

In 2019, the catch-and-keep Enterprise Waters will have an opening date of March 30.

The catch-and-keep Enterprise Waters open March 30, 2019. They are closed to all anglers March 16 through March 29. For those who prefer catch-and-release fly fishing, a full 2.2 miles of water has been set aside and will remain open year-round. Fishing is allowed from one hour before sunrise to one hour after sunset.

You’ve been looking forward to today for weeks. The blood coursing through your veins ripples, like freestone streams, with anticipation.

You’ll be fishing the ancient waters the first Cherokees fished, but targeting freshly stocked fish—along with a few older ones wily enough to escape the anglers who have come before you.

Catch and release, catch and keep. Competitive cash-prize tournaments.

You’re told other annual fishing events are held here as well (look for the Talking Trees Children’s Trout Derby and the Rumble in the Rhododendron Fly-Fishing Tournament), ensuring your return.

Today, you’re fishing the Oconaluftee, host of the 2011 National Fly-Fishing Championships, and you’re feeling it.

No need to resort to old tricks from around here, like sprinkling a little walnut tree bark to stun the fish into submission.

Under secluded canopies of oak and sycamore, you sense fate is with you, because here is where you hook a 15 lb. brown with a 2 lb. leader and an egg-pattern fly. Soon thereafter you learn that the Cherokee word for fisherman is asunitobi. Your kids will later give you a T-shirt with that on it. From that point forward it’ll be your lucky shirt, to go with your lucky hat. You’ll test the duo’s power when you come back.

Visit FishCherokee.com to buy a fishing license and to learn more about fishing tournaments.
Welcome to the Museum of the Cherokee Indian, an award-winning experience that tells the story of the Cherokee people over thousands of years using artifacts, artwork, computer graphics, and interactive features. Van Romans, of Disney Imagineering, has called it “a model for museums.”

The Museum is open year-round and offers a fun, sometimes emotional way to discover the Cherokee people, their home, and their beautiful stories. As you enter, you see an interactive kiosk, with touch-screens offering you a chance to interact with Cherokee history and plan your visit. You also see why Kevin Gover, director of the National Museum of the American Indian, named the Museum “one of the top ten native sites east of the Mississippi” in Cowboys & Indians magazine. And why it received USA Today’s 10Best Readers’ Choice award in 2014.

There’s a lot to see and do here, starting with the main exhibit, “Story of the Cherokees: 13,000 Years” and the rotating exhibit, “People of the Clay: Contemporary Cherokee Pottery,” which opens on April 1, 2019. The rotating exhibit space will later feature the syllabary, the Cherokee writing system or alphabet.

Being someone who likes to begin at the beginning, you move toward the Story Lodge first to take in “The Cherokee Story” and its fascinating tale of creation.

You discover the “Bat Creek Stone,” a mysterious, inscribed stone found in a Cherokee mound in Tennessee, the origins of which may never be known.

There are Cherokee baskets, pottery, spears, and muskets alongside documents, pictures, books, and replicas.

You follow a trail through time as told through stories of a culture older than the Incan, Mayan, Greek, Roman, and Egyptian.

There are the ancient rituals and lifestyle of Paleo Indians and the development of tools by “knapping” stones, along with the origins of the Green Corn Festivals. You can also take in the Cherokee story of the beginnings of both disease and medicine, as told by an ancient medicine man speaking to you through the modern technology of a hologram.

You’re introduced to the butterbean game, you step into the Chamber of Dissenting Voices, and journey through the “Trail of Tears.” Though no museum can adequately express the hardship, suffering, and human triumph of the Cherokee people, this comes as close as any. You’re moved to the core.

While you’re here, you’ll meet the Cherokee Friends, adorned in eighteenth-century clothing, available to demonstrate moccasin making and atlatl throwing, and to speak with you or answer any questions you may have. They can make fire, play the “chunkey” game, lead traditional dances, carve masks, and more.

The Museum also offers a more in-depth tour for groups who reserve the “Cherokee Experience.” Cultural immersion includes food, hands-on crafts, storytelling, dance, and more, specially designed for your group’s schedule and budget. The Museum store even allows you to take a bit of the experience home. And don’t forget the Cherokee Voices Festival, happening on the second Saturday during June. It’s sponsored by the North Carolina Arts Council, and is free and open to the public with more than twenty-five arts demonstrators, traditional dance groups, music, storytelling, food, and more.

In fact, the second Saturday of every month offers an opportunity to immerse yourself in Cherokee culture at “Cherokee Heritage Days.” Make Cherokee stamped pottery, participate in dances, hear stories, and try Cherokee food, all free of charge.

To learn more about the Museum of the Cherokee Indian, call 828.497.3481 or visit CherokeeMuseum.org.
As you enter the Oconaluftee Indian Village, a faint whiff of wood smoke greets you. You see two or three fires burning nearby. Some, just for warmth. Others, made for building and creation. In the distance, you see the hull of a canoe being formed by the burning out of a great and mighty tree. Its sacrifice will propel you and your people downstream soon.

You walk a path carved in the earth, where you are greeted by a Tribal Elder teaching a younger woman the ancient art of beadwork. Meticulously, the old woman instructs, chuckling to herself as she sees the younger woman’s mistakes and mini-triumphs. All around them, examples of their work lie nearby. The colors are dazzling; the artistry, immaculate. You see them teaching others.


Blow darts sail through the air.

The roles their ancestors once lived in real Cherokee villages. You wander down paths to see their historic dwellings, and learn of their ancient arts and crafts—even their weapons. The Cherokees were very accomplished warriors and hunters. History passes right before your eyes.

There is a seven-sided Council House to visit—seven-sided to commemorate the mighty clans that once were the ruling bodies of the Cherokee Nation. But the young Cherokees nearby aren’t old enough yet to enter, or to care. Their game of marbles is their only concern this afternoon.

It’s like a history book come to life. Only history books never seemed this engaging.

A nature trail beckons you toward beautiful botanical gardens, filled with indigenous plants, trees, and shrubs, many of which once helped Cherokee medicine men, artisans, and craftsmen create and cure.

Oconaluftee is a village of intrigue and action.

It teems with adventure and possibility, pulling at you to explore this, do that. As such, the savvy traveler will be sure to arrive early and plan to leave late.

You depart with a “Denadagohiyu,” or “until we see each other again.” Because that’s what the Cherokees say, and you suddenly feel much, much closer to them.

For Oconaluftee Indian Village tickets and information, call 866.554.4557 or go to VisitCherokeeNC.com.
But today, you intend to make some of your own at Sequoyah National Golf Club. The conditions are idyllic: a bare, bright, blue sky and a forgiving sun.

You take a moment to acknowledge this vacation is special. Harrah’s® Cherokee Casino Resort has been kind and you’re feeling good. It’s as if the same Smokies the Cherokees believe were created by the flaps of the Great Buzzard’s wings, dripping with mud from the earth below, stand before you, pleading, “You can’t miss.”

Unobstructed views of the Great Smoky Mountains surround you. It’s just you, the ball, and the hole.

As you walk to the tee, you take a deep breath. It’s the first hole at Sequoyah National Golf Club. A tree-lined 539 yards, par 5. You have 6,517 yards of groomed bentgrass greens and bluegrass fairways in front of you—eighteen exciting puzzles still to solve.

Sequoyah National was designed by the famed Robert Trent Jones II.

His architectural signature is building courses sensitive to their particular environment, “of the earth…for the spirit.” It means each hole feels like it’s been there since the dawn of time.

Lined with oak and fir trees and interlaced with flowered valleys, the course feels like it was designed for you.

Or, your occasional slice, anyway. Today, it’s more of a gentle fade, and you feel like you could re-create it with your eyes closed.

Intriguing plaques on each tee offer bits of Cherokee legends, each silently noting that your round is as hot as the gentle breeze is cool. The time you spent on the immaculate driving range and putting green before the round is paying off.

Today feels effortless.

Feel the history of Cherokee on every hole—and maybe make a bit of your own—by booking your tee time today.
You stand there, slightly stunned. You’re literally holding history in your hands, and you thought you were just out for a little shopping trip. Cherokee’s allure is not limited to its rivers, mountains, and forests.

It’s also found under the roof of Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual, Inc., woven into the spirit of the artifacts that make Cherokee history tangible.

Born in 1946 out of a newfound market brought by the highway explosion of post–World War II growth and the 1934 opening of Great Smoky Mountains National Park next door, Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual, Inc. was conceived to preserve and promote some of the most exquisite aspects of Cherokee culture. More specifically, it preserves the craftsmanship, artisanship, and age-old techniques inherent to the authenticity and value of the items exhibited here. And it commercially promotes, via these same pieces, the quality, inventiveness, talent, and creativity of Cherokee handiwork for the whole world to admire.

Now, decades later, the success is evident.

With more than 350 artisan members, Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual, Inc. is the oldest and foremost Native American cooperative in the country, celebrating the journey of Cherokee arts from where it was, to what it is, to what it will be. Discover impeccable baskets painstakingly woven out of river cane and impressive masks carved out of buckeye. Find masterful pottery made of Kaolin clay indigenous to these parts and of such high quality it made its way, in 1767, into the first porcelain ware in the British Empire.

Be it the utility of weaponry, the decorative beauty of beadwork, the intricate skill of finger weaving, or the sublime self-expression of wood and stone carving—your walk through the gallery gives you context.

You look again at your hands, now filled with shopping bags. And you think, “It’s probably time I took on a hobby that’s more than just shopping.” Yes, today’s been inspiring in a lot of ways. Time to explore some of the outdoor beauty that surrounds and has long inspired the artists you’ve just met through their crafts.

Visit QuallaArtsAndCrafts.com to learn more.
Music by the River
This summer concert series is a celebration of all sorts of musical genres, with different lineups each weekend. The stages are conveniently located near restaurants and Cherokee’s river features.

Cherokee Voices Festival
It’s all things Cherokee: living history, traditional dances, music, singing, crafting demonstrations, and food. It’s hosted on the grounds of the Museum of the Cherokee Indian, featuring NC Arts Council Heritage Award winners and Elders who typically don’t travel, yet appear here. Fun doesn’t get more authentic than this.

Fire Mountain Inferno
If you think life is simply better on two wheels, join us this spring for an exciting weekend of mountain bike racing at Fire Mountain Trails. Cross-country racing for all levels of experience will take place on Saturday, and enduro-racing happens on Sunday. With prizes, vendors, and food trucks, it’s bound to be a stellar weekend on the trails.

44th Annual 4th of July Powwow
First Nation dancers from tribes across the country gather in Cherokee to compete for prizes, bragging rights, and fun. Dance categories include Traditional, Jingle, and Grass Dances, and a native drum competition is sure to get your toes tapping. Don’t miss this three-day event filled with amazing regalia, singing, drumming, food, and dancing.

Talking Trees Children’s Trout Derby
The centuries-old practice of teaching our young ones to fish is the foundation for this free, family-oriented event. Registered participants are invited to a pre-Derby celebration, followed the next day with a full morning of fishing fun. Parents do the teaching, and kids do the catching at Cherokee’s Oconaluftee Islands Park.

Open Air Indian Art Market
Fine Cherokee art, made right before your very eyes by master artisans, using age-old techniques, in broad daylight. Shop for the piece that speaks to you. Purchase the genuine article, made by the real deal. Located outside Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual, Inc.

7 Clans Rodeo
It’s time to see cowboys pay for hundreds of years of beef jerky. There’s bull ridin’, bronco bustin’, and a corral full of skills competitions. You might even see a cowboy get hurled into the stands. You know, fun for the whole family.

107th Annual Cherokee Indian Fair
For over 100 years, the Cherokees have gathered to celebrate the harvest, family, and friendship. In addition to traditional carnival rides and concerts, you can experience authentic examples of Cherokee art, crafts, and food. This five-day event celebrates a different aspect of Cherokee life each day.

Cherokee Bonfire Nights
This is your chance to come inside the bonfire circle and hear authentic Cherokees share the stories that make their culture so rich. Discover the Cherokee language, songs, dance, and history. You’re invited to come close, interact with the Cherokees (dressed in seventeenth-century attire), and even roast a marshmallow or two. No admission fee and all are welcome!