

## Self-Guided Hikes Near Blue Ridge Assembly



### 1. **Montreat Loop - Lookout Rock**

*Lookout Mountain Trail Head, 99999 Lookout Rd, Black Mountain NC*

This hike begins on the Lookout Trail with a moderately steep ascent of approximately 900 ft., and then a short but steep rock scramble up to Lookout Rocks where you can take in the long-range views. Continue the East Ridge Trail, then take the short Hickory Ridge Trail. At the junction with the Old Mitchell Toll Road, turn right and follow back down to the Lookout Trail. Take Lookout Trail back to trailhead. To avoid the steep rock scramble, turn right onto the Rainbow Road Trail and follow around 1.78 miles back to the Lookout parking area.

- Hiking Miles – 5
- Level of difficulty – Easy-Moderate
- Elevation Gain - 1300 ft.
- Free paper maps of the area can be picked up at the Montreat Store, in the Moore Center, Second Floor, 303 Lookout Rd. M-Sa 10am-5pm
- Driving Distance from Blue Ridge Assembly - 6.2 miles

### 2. **The Gate Trail to Lake Susan**

*The Gate Trail, Assembly Dr., Black Mountain, NC*

An easy out and back scenic trail that follows Flat Creek through Montreat from the stone gate to the college. Informative signs are posted and benches on which to rest. Take trail to lake, then return the same way.

- Hiking Miles – 2
- Level of difficulty – Easy
- Elevation Gain - 203 ft.
- Free paper maps of the area can be picked up at the Montreat Store, in the Moore Center, Second Floor, 303 Lookout Rd. M-Sa 10am-5pm
- Driving Distance from Blue Ridge Assembly - 5.5 miles

### **3. Folk Art Center Visit and MST**

*Southern Highland Craft Guild, Folk Art Center, 382 Blue Ridge Pkwy, Asheville, NC, BRP Milepost 382*

Visit the galleries and craft shop of the Southern Highland Craft Guild at the Folk Art Center along the Blue Ridge Parkway.

(1) Take a 1.3-mile out and back walk on the well maintained, wooded MST before returning.

(2) For a longer 5-mile out and back hike, take the MST to Lunch Rocks overlooking the Haw Creek Valley and return the same way.

- Hiking Miles – 1.3 to 5
- Level of difficulty – Easy
- Elevation Gain - 124 ft.
- MST
- Visit to Folk Art Center with optional walk on MST
- Driving Distance from Blue Ridge Assembly - 11 miles

### **4. Blue Ridge Parkway Visitor Center**

*BRP Visitor Center. 195 Hemphill Knob Rd, Asheville, NC*

Visit the Blue Ridge Parkway Visitors Center to browse the displays and merchandise. There is a 1.4-mile loop trail that starts at the far end of the visitor center parking lot that connects with the MST.

- Hiking Miles – 1.4
- Level of difficulty – Easy
- MST
- Driving Distance from Blue Ridge Assembly - 12 miles

## 5. **Craven Gap to Rattlesnake Lodge and/or Tanbark Ridge Tunnel**

*Craven Gap Trailhead, BRP Milepost 377.4, 3774 Blue Ridge Parkway*  
*Tanbark Ridge Overlook, BRP Milepost 376.7, 3767 Blue Rdg Pkwy,*  
*Asheville, NC*

(1) The section of the MST from Craven Gap is a popular and pleasant walk in the woods on trails lined with wildflowers. Hike to Rattlesnake Lodge with its ruins and history for an 8.8 mile out and back. The signage at the Rattlesnake Lodge site describes the extensive “estate” that once occupied the site.

(2) Great Day Hikes #6 is Craven Gap to Tanbark Ridge Tunnel/Overlook. At Rattlesnake Lodge, go right on the access trail down to BRP. Roundtrip is 9.2 miles. One way is 4.6-miles and shuttle car will be needed at each end.

- Hiking Miles – 4.6 up to 9.2
- Level of difficulty – Moderate-Strenuous
- Elevation Gain – 1600 ft.
- MST
- Driving Distance from Blue Ridge Assembly - 15 miles

## 6. **Craggy Gardens and Craggy Pinnacle**

*BeeTree Gap, BRP Milepost 367.6, Turn in at Craggy Gardens Picnic Area and park in gravel parking area. MST is on right side of the road.*

*Craggy Pinnacle, BRP Milepost 364.1, 3641 Blue Rdg Pkwy, Barnardsville, NC*

Hike the MST from BeeTree Gap to the Craggy Gardens Visitors Center and then return, which is a round trip of approximately 2.7 miles. Then drive up to the Craggy Pinnacle Trail, a moderate 20-minute walk from the upper level of the Craggy Dome Parking Overlook with spectacular 360-degree views. 1.4 miles round trip. Lots of wildflowers on both trails.

- Hiking Miles – 2.7 to 4.5
- Level of difficulty – Easy-Moderate
- Elevation Gain – 1100 ft.
- MST
- Cooler temperature at higher elevation. Approx 45-minute drive.
- Driving Distance from Blue Ridge Assembly - 28 miles

## 7. Mount Mitchell State Park from Summit

*Mount Mitchell State Park, 2388 NC-128, Burnsville, NC*

(1) Drive to the parking area at the top and walk up the .25-mile paved trail to the summit for magnificent 360-degree long range views from the observation deck.

(2) For additional hiking: The Balsam Nature Loop is a moderate .75-mile trail near the summit. The MST overlaps a small section of this trail.

- Hiking Miles – 0.5 to 2.0
- Level of difficulty – Easy-Moderate
- Elevation Gain – various
- **Warning: Weather is often unpredictable and can vary significantly from lower elevations (better or worse). Temperatures are often 10-15 degrees cooler at the summit. Always be prepared with layers, rain gear, proper hiking footwear and water.**
- Driving Distance from Blue Ridge Assembly – 41 miles

## 8. Mount Mitchell State Park from Midway

*Mount Mitchell State Park Headquarters, 2388 NC-128, Burnsville, NC*

(1) The Commissary Trail is an **easy** out and back Forest Service Road accessed behind the Park Headquarters building with great long-distance views. Two miles each way total but you can turn around at any time. The MST overlaps a small section of this trail.

(2) There are many other hikes ranging from moderate to strenuous difficulty. Trail maps are available at the Park Headquarters on NC-128 as you drive to the top or sometimes at the concession at the summit parking area.

- Hiking Miles – various
- Level of difficulty – Easy-Moderate
- Elevation Gain – various
- **Warning: Weather is often unpredictable and can vary significantly from lower elevations (better or worse). Temperatures are often 10-15 degrees cooler at the summit. Always be prepared with layers, rain gear, proper hiking footwear and water.**
- Driving Distance from Blue Ridge Assembly – 41 miles

## 9. Linville Falls

*Linville Falls Visitor Center, BRP Milepost 316, Warrior Ln, Marion, NC*

This popular hike with views of the upper and lower falls, begins behind the visitor center at the bridge across the Linville River.

(1) In less than .5 mile, go right to the Upper Falls viewing area. Return to the main trail and go left uphill to two viewpoints that are perched on the rim across from the lower falls. Return to the visitor center via the same trail.

(2) There is a strenuous trail to the Plunge Basin and Linville River on the left side of the Visitor Center. Check in Visitor Center for maps, recommendations, and conditions.

- Hiking Miles – 2.5 to 4 miles
- Level of difficulty – Easy=Moderate
- Elevation Gain – 900 ft.
- MST
- Driving Distance from Blue Ridge Assembly - 46 miles

