

Nantahala National Forest: The Complete Guide

Located in the southwestern corner of North Carolina, the 531,148-acre [Nantahala National Forest](#) is the state's largest national forest. Its name comes from the Cherokee word meaning "land of the noon day sun"—this is likely due to the park's deep gorges and valleys, where sunlight only peaks through the crevices in mid-day. Elevation in the park ranges from 1,200 feet along the banks of the Hiwassee River to 5,800 feet at the peak of Lone Bald, and the varied terrain makes it ideal for outdoor adventures. From the park's top attractions to where to stay and how to get there, here's everything you need to know to plan your next trip.

Where to Stay Nearby

If not staying inside the park, the closet hotels are in nearby towns such as Bryson City, Franklin, and Highlands. There are also numerous Airbnbs, vacation rentals, and yurts located in the area. Here are some of the best local hotels:

- **[Highlander Mountain House](#)**: Near the Whiteside Mountain Recreation Area and many of the area's most popular hiking trails, this hotel has luxury amenities, on-site dining, and access to the Highlands' many galleries and shops.

