

Sylamore Scenic Byway

Mountain Music, Mountain Drives



4 Days/3 Nights

Gateway City: Little Rock, Arkansas



It's an old Creek word (with no known definition) that named this beautiful Byway with giant clear-water lakes feeding sparkling mountain streams, ancient towering bluffs, magnificent underground caverns, abundant wildlife, mountain forests, a brilliant night sky, and intriguing history. Early coins discovered in a Native American burial ground point to Spanish explorer DeSoto traveling the area in 1541. The Creeks moved from North Carolina in the late 1700s. Soon after the Louisiana Purchase made the Arkansas Territory part of America, the first Scots Irish arrived from Tennessee making their way up the White River in 1807. By 1810, Mountain Home was quickly gaining settlers and cattle ranchers seeking huge spreads from which to drive their herds to Kansas City. Linking this heritage, the Sylamore Scenic Byway winds through the Ozark National Forest, which in fall is alive with lavish colors, sweet dogwood blossoms in spring, and gently falling waterfalls. Ozark communities live a relaxed modern-day lifestyle with little hustle and bustle and welcome visitors with authentic, warm mountain hospitality. Your days can range from high energy outdoor activities, climbing mountains and exploring mountain caves, to meandering unique artist's studios and a dip in a hot springs spa. All the while, you're surrounded by the ever present, age old, Ozark Mountains, carved by nature over the ages and worn down by millenniums of weather. They're an anchor of timelessness that's particularly soothing.



Touring the Byway

We recommend beginning your journey in Little Rock, where you can explore the Old South gracefully blended with a contemporary vision. The River Market District is bustling, and the William J. Clinton Presidential Library, nearby. The Old State House Museum is located in the old Arkansas State House constructed in 1833. Nine square miles of beautifully restored Antebellum and Victorian homes make up the Quapaw Quarter, where accommodations in the incredibly detailed ornate Victorian Empress of Little Rock, places you right there.

From Little Rock, it's short drive to Mountain View, the town that grew up around the original Sylamore settlement. The main attraction here is the Ozark Folk Center State Park, worthy of spending plenty of time exploring. The weekly syndicated program recorded at the Park features mountain music and more than 20 working artisans demonstrate, create, and sell handmade items. There are weekly live concerts every Thursday through Saturday in season. An overnight stay at the Wildflower Bed and Breakfast places you right off the town square. On Day Three, Blanchard Caverns is a must visit. The Sylamore Scenic Byway actually begins at the National Forest Service Blanchard Springs Caverns Visitor Center on

Forest Service Road 1110. That road takes you to Highway 14. Following it for a little less than seven miles takes you to Allison, where the highway hugs the side of the wide flowing White River below limestone cliffs. From there, you'll catch Highway 5, which winds through a beautifully scenic portion of the Ozark National Forest to Calico Rock. A charming landscape of rugged limestone bluffs and cedar glade outcrops offer glimpses of rushing water and calm ponds as it follows streams along the route. The Sugarloaf Fire Tower and Stone House of a 1930's CCC camp, National Forest pasture land, and wildlife fields are scattered along the Byway. Reaching the end of the Byway, it's a short drive to Mountain Home to explore and stay for the evening. We wish you safe passage if you're traveling on another Arkansas Scenic Byway or a safe and pleasant journey home.



DAY ONE



Little Rock

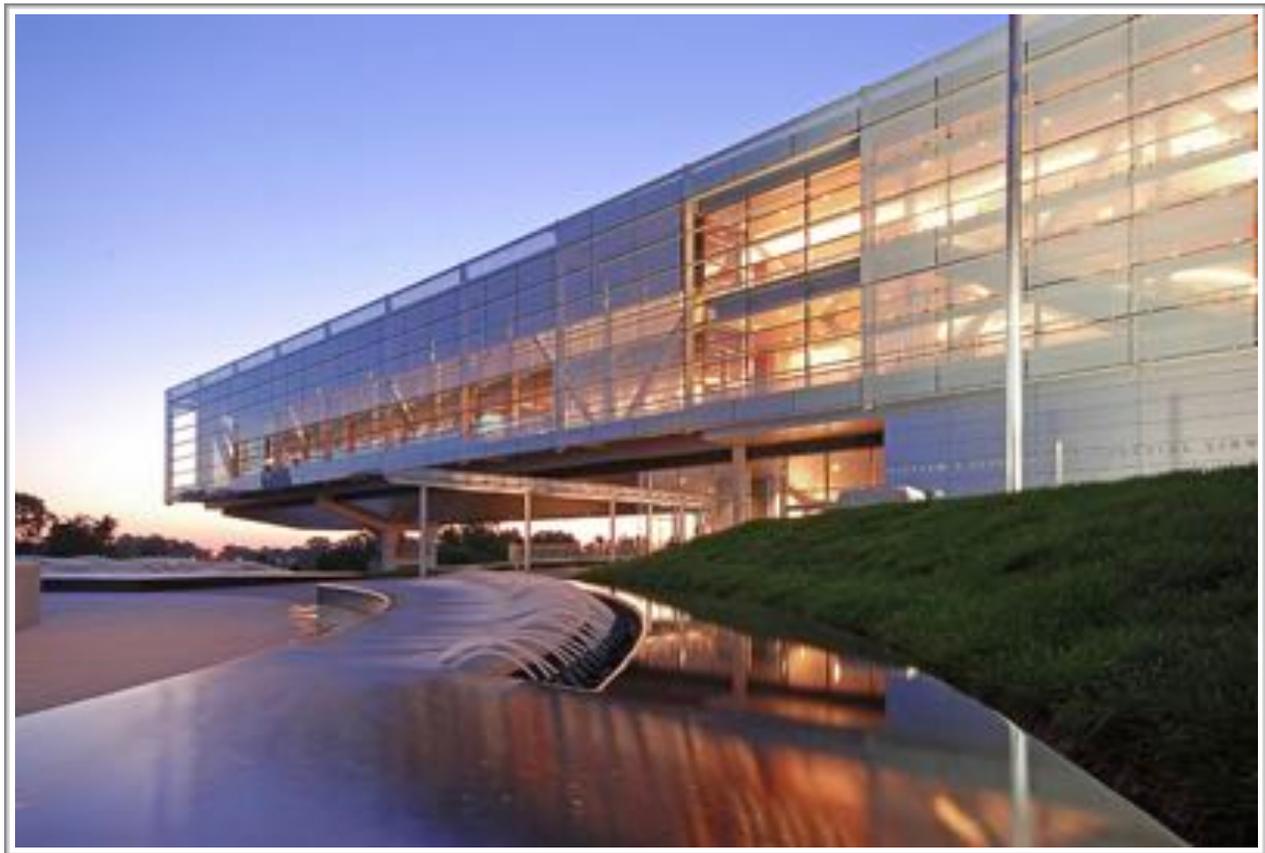
Little Rock began as a French trading post in 1722, and by 1769, a few pioneer families living in today's Quapaw Quarter were peacefully coexisting with a Native American tribe that had lived there for centuries. By the 1860's, the Quarter had become home to Southern mansions and the Arkansas State House. The grand Victorians in today's Quarter started appearing later. The 1940s and 1950s saw civil rights protests that strained the limits of school segregation and caused downtown Little Rock to experience a downturn. But it came back and today's city is bright and bustling, complete with broad boulevards, parks and new buildings. The River Market District hosts shops, restaurants, a new Arts Center and restored Curran Hall. The William J. Clinton Presidential Library and Park expansively spans the river — “a bridge to the future” as President Clinton says.

Clinton Presidential Library

There is a multitude of information about President Clinton in this very dramatic building with 20,000-square-feet of exhibits, featuring everything from presidential campaigns to Clinton's early life, life in the White House, a replica of the White House Cabinet Room and the Oval Office, and a whole library of presidential documents. A historical timeline covers Clinton's entire life, from being raised by a single mother and grandmother to the highest office in the land. The 42 Bar and Table is the onsite restaurant.

1200 President Clinton Avenue, Little Rock, AR 72201, 501-374-4242

Mon-Sat 9AM-5PM, Sun 1PM-5PM. Adults \$10 Admission is free on Presidents Day and Clinton's birthday.





Old State House Museum

Formerly called the Arkansas State House, the Old State House Museum is the oldest surviving state capitol building west of the Mississippi River. It has the unique history of hosting the secession convention during the Civil War and the constitutional convention which ensured voting rights for all freedmen after the war ended. The same architect who designed the Kentucky State Capitol created a Greek Revival building which was still under construction when the first assembly session was held in 1837. During that session, Speaker John Wilson killed Representative Joseph J. Anthony in a knife fight on the floor. The front entrance was the site of Clinton's presidential campaign announcement and election night celebrations. Permanent collections include the inaugural gowns of Arkansas First Ladies, art pottery, African American items, and historical artifacts.
300 West Markham Street, Little Rock, AR 72201, 501-324-9685

Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site

“Mob rule cannot be allowed to override the decisions of our courts,” said protestors in 1957, when the Little Rock Central High School became the first test in the United States to ensure African Americans an equal education under *Brown v. Board of Education*. When President Eisenhower was compelled by white violence to use federal troops to ensure the right to education, he became the first president since the post-Civil War Reconstruction period to use federal troops in support of African American civil rights. Explore the stories, people and places of this famous sacrifice and struggle over a half century ago that opened the doors to those seeking equality and education around the world.

2120 West Daisy L. Gatson Bates Drive, Little Rock, AR 72202, 501-374-1957

Quapaw Quarter Driving Tour

Since you will be staying in the Quapaw Quarter, it's time to explore the nine square miles of beautiful restored antebellum and Victorian homes in central Little Rock. Named after the Quapaw Indians, the Quarter encompasses 15 separate National Historic Register Districts with more than 200 majestically detailed enormous homes and buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The earliest home dates from 1843, yet most of the structures were built during the Victorian era. The exterior of Villa Marre, was known nationally as the office of Sugarbaker Designs, the fictional Atlanta design firm of Designing Women. The actual home on Scott Street, serves as the office of the Quapaw Quarter Association. The neighborhood surrounding MacArthur Park, the Arkansas Governor's Mansion, and Central High School hosts the oldest buildings. Homes in the Governor's Mansion Historic District date from 1880 to 1920. Although the homes are not generally open to the public, they can be enjoyed from the street or sidewalk.



Destination Distinctive Accommodations

The Empress of Little Rock, 2120 South Louisiana Street, Little Rock, AR 72206, 501-374-7966

This incredibly ornate mansion, described in the National Register of Historic Places as the best example of ornate Victorian architecture in Arkansas (and there are a lot) and the most important existing example of Gothic Queen Anne in the region, was completed in 1888 for \$20,000, using only Arkansas materials. The 3 1/2 story corner tower, stained glass skylight, and octagonal shaped rooms represents late 19th century architecture at its most flamboyant. Shunned from proper Scott Street society, James Hornibrook waited until his closest competitor completed Villa Marre, before building his most extravagant home. Legend has it that he kept a card game going in the tower room so he could watch for raids. Unfortunately, he died at the age of 49, shortly after the mansion was finished. In 1897, the mansion became the Arkansas Women's College, then stood vacant for years, and served as a nursing home before 1994, when it was restored to become The Empress.

Destination Distinctive Dining

Brave New Restaurant, 2300 Cottondale Lane, Little Rock, AR, 72202, 501-663-2677

A casual, warm environment, delicious food and excellent service at a reasonable cost. It is their goal to have every meal be a celebration of food and to always keep an edge of new in their work.

Lost Forty Brewing, 501 Byrd Street, Little Rock, AR 72202, 501-319-7275

Named after a 40 acre stand of pristine wilderness in Calhoun County that eluded logging for two centuries, the craft beers produced here are as unwavering, wild and uniquely Arkansas as the land itself. Their philanthropic mission contributes to the land's survival for generations to come.

Destination Distinctive Retail

The Barn Mercantile, 305 President Clinton Avenue, Little Rock, AR 501-615-5287

Bookends Café and A Thousand Words Gallery, 120 River Market Avenue, Little Rock, AR 501-376-1979

The Green Corner Store, 1423 South Main Street, Little Rock, AR 501-374-1111

Bella Vita Jewelry, 523 South Louisiana Avenue, Little Rock, AR 501-396-9146

Art Galleries

Art lovers will find a selection of galleries: Arkansas Arts Center, 501 E Ninth, Arkansas Studies Institute Galleries, 401 President Clinton, Art Outfitters, 900 W 7th, Hearne Fine Arts, 1001 Wright, and Matt McLeod Fine Art Gallery, 108 W 6th.

DAY TWO



Mountain View

Established in the 1870s, Mountain View is famous for the preservation of folkways and traditional music at the Ozark Folk Center State Park and the Arkansas Folk Festival. Traditionally, Saturday nights would find locals "pickin" in a neighbor's house or yard and still today, once the weather gets warm, musicians play late into the night around town square. The schools have joined in with a Music Roots Program, teaching young people to play traditional instruments. The town of Mountain View itself, is home to music stores, antique shops, restaurants, and more.

Ozark Folk Center State Park

Open from mid-April to mid-November, the Folk Center is dedicated to preserving the music, arts, crafts and culture of the Ozarks. Stroll in the Craft Village, while listening to live mountain music, where 20 working artisans demonstrate and sell their craft. The handiwork includes flame painted cooper jewelry, leather goods, baskets, brooms, stained glass, ironwork, pottery, knives, weaving, quilts, carving, yarn, candles, and more. The Heritage Garden is home to traditional plants, medicinal herbs, native plants, and edible herbs. Music is performed in the 1,000-seat theater by legendary artists from all facets of American music. You'll hear fiddle, banjo, guitar, mandolin, dulcimer, and autoharp all combined into the unique mountain sound. A weekly program recorded on the Ozark Highlands Radio is syndicated by radio stations and iTunes. Combination passes are available for the Craft Village and music shows. Artisans also hold workshops throughout the year and the Garden functions as a living classroom for culinary and medicinal herb events all year long.

1032 Park Avenue, Mountain View, AR 72560, 870-267-3851, tickets can be purchased online in advance.





Arkansas Craft Guild

The work of 62 juried artists producing unique fine quality arts and crafts, who are members of the Arkansas Craft Guild, is featured in the year-round showroom.

Special events such as the Christmas Show and Arkansas on the Square are held each year.

104 East Main Street, Mountain View, AR, 72560, 870-267-4120

Off the Beaten Path Studio Tour

Every September for the past 18 years, a group of fine and functional artists creating pottery, jewelry, painting, encaustic art, woodworking, knife crafting, fiber art, garden art, folk art, stained glass, brooms, calligraphy, baskets, chairs, and leather, have welcomed visitors into their private working spaces. You can visit all the artist studios, talk with your favorites, and consider purchasing, all while taking the tour. Any private tours conducted outside of this tour must be arranged directly with the artists. 870-615-4825



Destination Distinctive Accommodations

Wildflower Bed and Breakfast on the Square, 100 West Washington Street, Mountain View, AR, 72560, 870-269-4383

In a great location just off the square, enjoy a traditional mountain breakfast made from scratch each morning, laden with biscuits and gravy, sausage, bacon, pancakes, and more. Originally built as the Commercial Hotel in 1918, the property is a mix of old-time charm and modern conveniences. Guest rooms are exceptionally clean and comfortable with high quality mattresses, plush linens, pillows, and fluffy towels. The new cottages next door are pet friendly and handicapped accessible. King beds, comfortable sitting areas, and a full kitchen deliver a relaxing stay.

Destination Distinctive Dining

PJ's Rainbow Café, 216 West Main Street, Mountain View, AR 72560, 870-269-8633

Feast on traditional mountain food: biscuits, omelets, fried grits, pancakes, pinto beans, cheeseburgers, onion rings, and more. Gluten free items are available.

JoJo's Catfish Wharf, 237 Jacks Resort Road, Mountain View, AR 72560, 870-585-2121

Famous for hushpuppies, pinto beans and catfish, grilled, fried, or fixed however you'd like, served by an attentive friendly staff.

DAY THREE

Ozark National Forest

The 65% hardwood Ozark National Forest covers more than a million acres in Northwest Arkansas with very diverse flora including more than 500 species of trees and plants. There are over 400 miles of hiking trails and Blanchard Springs Caverns to explore.

Blanchard Springs Cavern

Nestled in the 1.2 million acres of Ozark National Forest, you'll find Mount Magazine, the tallest mountain in Arkansas and an incredible, living underground cave called Blanchard Springs. Referred to as a "living cave" always changing and growing, there are three tours led by knowledgeable Forest Service guides: The Dripstone Trail is shorter and easier, taking you half a mile through the Caverns, with no stairs so it is accessible for wheelchairs and strollers. At 1.2 miles long, the Discovery Trail is longer and more strenuous, encompassing nearly 700 stair steps to explore the middle level of the Cavern system. The newest trail, the Wild Cave Tour, takes you into the undeveloped sections of cave to experience off-trail caving in a structured environment. The Cavern stays at a very pleasant and comfortable 58 degrees year round.

704 Blanchard Springs Road, Fifty-Six, AR 72533, 870-757-2211, Adults \$12 and up, depending on tour selected



The Sylamore Scenic Byway

It's now time to drive the Scenic Byway which begins at the National Forest Service Blanchard Springs Caverns Visitor Center on Forest Service Road 1110. That road takes you to Highway 14. Follow it for a little less than seven miles to Allison and from there, you'll catch Highway 5, which winds through a beautifully scenic portion of the Ozark National Forest to Calico Rock at the end of the Byway.



Mountain Home

Even though Native Americans lived in the area for centuries, and settlers lived in a town named Rapp's Barren, it was not until the Male and Female Academy was founded in the 1850s, that the town began to grow. Even then, it was not incorporated until 1888. The town expanded again when construction began on the Bull Shoals and Norfolk Dams and many workers chose to live here, halfway between the dams. Today, it is primarily a retirement and resort destination.

Bull Shoals Caverns and Mountain Village 1890

Even though Bull Shoals Caverns is one of the oldest limestone caverns in the Ozark Mountains, it is still alive and growing. Formed 350 million years ago, the caverns have almost every formation known to be found in caves including stalactites, stalagmites, drapolites, box work, columns, cave pearls, flow stone, and waterfalls. It is also home to salamanders, pipistrelle bats, frogs, and camel crickets. The Mountain Village next door is a re-creation of a typical Ozark settlement built by hardy pioneers coming from the Carolinas, Virginia and Tennessee.

1011 CS Woods Boulevard, Bull Shoals, AR 72619, 870-445-7177, Mid-Mar-End Oct, Wed-Sun, 10AM-5PM, Adults \$19.95, tours are 45 minutes.





Destination Distinctive Accommodations

Cedar Springs Country Inn Bed and Breakfast, 590 Rivercliff Drive, Bull Shoals, AR 72619, 870-445-3211

Enjoy being nestled in a scenic area, where you can awaken to the smell of a full homemade breakfast daily. All rooms have private baths, Cable TV/VCR, and/or DVD, and a private deck or balcony, and queen size, handmade, cedar log beds.

Holy Smokes BBQ, 400 Arkansas Highway 201, Mountain Home, AR 72653, 870-425-8080
Best place in Mountain Home for barbecue, not too fancy, but who cares when you eat with your fingers.