

BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINEER

Step back in time, slow down, disconnect, and immerse yourself in the rugged life of the 18th-century frontier. The Blue Ridge Mountaineer program transports Scouts to a living history experience where primitive camping meets the spirit of exploration. Longhunters once roamed these mountains, trapping and hunting for months in the untamed wilderness. The famous Wilderness Road brought settlers and adventurers to nearby towns like Newbern, Radford, and Christiansburg, with Ingles Ferry serving as a crucial rest stop for crossing the New River. By the 19th century, the New River Valley was home to hard-working Scots-Irish and German families who carved out a life through sheer determination. They cut timber, farmed the rocky soil, and lived off the land by crafting their own tools, weaving their own clothes, and mastering skills like blacksmithing, leatherworking, and fire-starting without matches. With the crack of a muzzle-loading rifle, they hunted game to feed their families and defend their homesteads. Join us and relive the frontier way of life with hands-on experiences that will bring history to life like never before!



BEFORE CAMP

In addition to the pre-camp requirements for base camp participants, Blue Ridge Mountaineer participants must do the following:

- Register for Blue Ridge Mountaineer on Black Pug after December 31, 2025
- Let us know how you will arrive any and any special needs your group has with [this form](#)
- We recommend that you read some books or watch some videos about the area or the period before coming to camp

PARTICIPATION & LEADERSHIP

This living history experience is for Scouts aged 13 or older by the time of camp. Exceptions may be made for younger Scouts who exemplify maturity in their unit; please make the appropriate requests with our Camp Registrar before registration.

Groups of three or more youth **must send at least one adult leader** to aid in supervision. Larger groups must send at least two leaders per twelve Scouts. Attending female youth must be accompanied by **at least one adult female leader**. Adult leaders may have provisional Scouts from other units in their campsites. If this is the case, those adults will be asked to serve as leader for all scouts in that campsite for the week.

If there are one or two Scouts in your unit who wish to attend, they are welcome to do so as provisional Scouts. Most provisional Scouts who attend have a great time, though scoutmasters and parents should consider the individual Scout's maturity level. We will do our best to keep provisional Scouts from the same unit together, but it may not always be possible to do so. If the provisional Scout has any problems during the week, they must be mature enough to tell a staff member or camp director.

If we experience behavior problems from provisional Scouts, their Scoutmaster and/or parents will be notified. A Scoutmaster conference may be scheduled if adult leaders are present on the Reservation.

FACILITIES

We cannot guarantee that everyone in your unit will be in the same campsite, but we will do our best to camp your unit in the same general area (some may be in an adjacent site).

This camp is remote. Our landline is 1.5 miles from Blue Ridge Mountaineer operations. Do not plan to zoom, call, email, or instant message from this camp, except in case of emergency.

Prepare for primitive living. Showers and flush toilets are a one-mile walk from camp. Blue Ridge Mountaineer has potable water spigots and hand wash stations. Hot water may be had by heating water over a fire. Camp has several latrines.

We recommend that you practice cooking and cleaning up over an open fire. Participants with special dietary needs must let us know in advance with the [Special Dietary Needs Form](#). You will cook your meals with your patrol over an open fire, so individual meals are challenging. The camp is remote and small, and special foods are simply not available without notice, but we will do our best to accommodate. If you have a special diet, you are welcome to bring your own food.

Our Tavern has a variety of frontier souvenirs, snacks, and world-famous Mountaineer root beer. We recommend that Scouts bring \$100 to spend throughout the week. The Tavern is **strictly cash only**.

ADVANCEMENT

The purpose of Blue Ridge Mountaineer is not to earn merit badges, but to disconnect, slow down, and experience an earlier style of living. We will not be running merit badge classes and do not provide merit badge counselors. By participating in our programs, scouts may complete some of the requirements toward

cooking, metalwork, and leatherwork merit badges, but it will be up to the unit to count these requirements toward the badge. Many troops send older scouts and recent Eagles to Mountaineer for “one last big campout together.”

CHECK-IN & WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Plan to arrive at the Camp Ottari Welcome Center between 1:00 PM and 3:00 PM. Please do not arrive early. At check-in, you will meet with the health officer for medical form review and health check, and receive your 18th-century style Blue Ridge Mountaineer shirt.

If others in your unit are staying at Camp Powhatan, you may arrive at Powhatan and then ride a van shuttle to Ottari. Mountaineers do not need to do camp tours, swim checks, or medical check-in at Camp Powhatan. Be sure to let the check-in staff at Camp Powhatan know that you will ride the shuttle. It is helpful to let the Blue Ridge Mountaineer Director know that you will ride the shuttle as well (use this [link](#)!)

Non-camp vehicles are not permitted in the Blue Ridge Mountaineer area; therefore, troop vehicles should be parked in approved Ottari lots.

Once you have checked in at Camp Ottari, you will hike approximately 1.5 miles down to Blue Ridge Mountaineer. (Please use the special accommodations form if you or a scout needs transportation to the outpost. It is possible to transport people and gear, though hiking into Mountaineer is part of the experience.) At the outpost, you will have a brief orientation and a tour of the site. You'll be directed to your campsite and have the chance to set up your belongings in your tent. Our flag ceremony is at 5:45 PM and dinner will follow flags. Sunday night dinner will be prepared for you.

Each day begins with coffee and a briefing for leaders and senior patrol leaders. Patrols should have fires started at 6:30 AM and be ready to eat breakfast around 8:00 AM. During the day, you will learn about frontier life. You'll shoot and care for muzzle-loading rifles and shotguns, make your own Green River knife, spend time blacksmithing at the forge, throw knives and tomahawks, build fires without matches, and cook your own meals. You'll have time for activities ranging from basic blacksmithing to wilderness survival. Some evenings, the Blue Ridge Mountaineer Tavern will be open with root beer, snacks, and souvenirs. On some days you'll also have the opportunity to hike into Camp Ottari to take a shower. On one evening, we will have the opportunity to travel in time and space to Camp Powhatan to visit the Trading Post. On Thursday evening, we'll have a rendezvous - an opportunity to show off wares and crafts made during the week. Friday afternoon, we'll pack up and head to Camp Powhatan for a reunion with troops there, for the opportunity to visit the highfalutin trading post, and for the chance to participate in the Friday night campfire and OA callout. Throughout the week, Scouts and adults who participate in the Blue Ridge Mountaineer program will develop an appreciation for the life skills and slower pace of the 19th-century settler. You will learn to cook meals as a patrol over an open fire using dutch ovens and cast iron cookware, and learn to use blacksmith tools and metalworking skills at Clark's Forge. You can learn to build and light a fire using flint and steel and build a Russell Green River sheath knife and sheath. You will learn to safely shoot .50 caliber muzzle-loading rifles and shotguns and learn about survival, traps, snares, edible plants, tracking, and other skills.

After lunchtime on Friday, we will have a closing ceremony at about 1:30 PM. Scouts may self-transport directly from Ottari, or take the shuttle to Powhatan for Friday evening dinner, closing campfire, and Order of the Arrow callout ceremony. Troops who are only attending the Blue Ridge Mountaineer program are welcome to depart camp Friday afternoon if they wish to skip the Powhatan experience.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

If you have scouts or leaders with mobility issues or who otherwise require special accommodations, contact the camp registrar for more information. Though not flat, Blue Ridge Mountaineer is one of the flattest places on the Blue Ridge Scout Reservation, and the camp is smaller than most. The program has a relaxed pace. Let us know what you need, and we will try to accommodate.

LEADERS’ MEETINGS

Leaders and patrol leaders meet each morning on the tavern porch for coffee and a quick check-in. These meetings are an important source of information and a time to ask questions of our staff.

MOUNTAINEER GENERAL DAILY SCHEDULE

6:30 AM	Breakfast fires started
7:00 AM	Leaders’ meeting and coffee on the porch
8:00 AM	Breakfast and flags
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Morning program times
12:00 PM	Lunch
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM	Afternoon program times, including free time
5:00 PM	Dinner fires started
6:00 PM	Dinner
7:00 PM	Flags and evening programs
8:30 PM	Tavern
11:00 PM	All quiet in camp

EQUIPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

We will provide cots, wall tents (plan on sharing), and cooking and eating utensils, so you don't need to pack a tent or mess kit.

Pack your personal gear so that you can carry it 1.5 miles to the outpost. Bring gear of an early style. We will provide you with a Blue Ridge Mountaineer shirt. That shirt, with the earth tone long pants you bring, is the uniform for Blue Ridge Mountaineer. Scouts and leaders will wear the Blue Ridge Mountaineer uniform for the entirety of the camp. Pants should be long, earth-tone, and made of cotton, linen, or wool. Khakis or dockers are fine, but do not wear camouflage or jeans. Shorts are discouraged, and shorts and synthetic materials for clothing are a safety hazard at the forge, so are not allowed at all there.

Packing List

- backpack
- canteen/water bottle
- small flashlight with extra batteries
- matches
- bandana
- two wool blankets or a sleeping bag (it can drop to 40°F some nights)
- warm jacket
- pocket toiletry items
- two towels and washcloth
- shower shoes/sandals
- two pairs of earth tone long pants
- extra socks
- extra underclothing
- one spare shirt
- pair brown or black hiking boots
- pair of spare shoes
- pocketknife
- swimsuit (for creek day)
- wide leather belt to carry your camp knife
- early style broad-brimmed hat or scarf
- spending money for the Tavern (recommended \$100)

If you play a period-appropriate musical instrument such as a fiddle, harmonica, banjo, or guitar, you may bring it at your own risk.

Do not bring music players/speakers, firearms, sheath knives, or fireworks.