

# Optional Tour Recommendations

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**Oak Ridge “Manhattan Project Sites” Bus Tour** is operated by the American Museum of Science and Energy Foundation on behalf of the Department of Energy. The tour leaves from the museum (115 Main Street East, Oak Ridge) and stops to explore three key locations associated with the Manhattan Project: the K-25 History Center (open to public), the Oak Ridge National Laboratory Graphite Reactor (accessible only via this bus tour), and the CNS/Y-12 New Hope Center (open to public). Revisit the dawn of the nuclear age, the end of a world war, and the area’s amazing innovations that continue to this day. Limited tickets are available Monday through Friday; photo ID required; U.S. citizens only. For more information visit [amse.org/bus-tours](http://amse.org/bus-tours).

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The **Pigeon Forge/Gatlinburg** area is a little over an hour drive from Oak Ridge and is the primary tourist destination in East Tennessee. Here are just a few optional sites you might want to visit:

While the Titanic didn’t end up in Pigeon Forge, the **Titanic Museum** is a fascinating memorial to survivors and lives lost. (2134 Parkway, Pigeon Forge, [titanicpigeonforge.com](http://titanicpigeonforge.com))



If you’re interested in learning about “bad guys and gals” you might visit **Alcatraz East Crime Museum**. OJ’s car is there too! (2757 Parkway, Pigeon Forge, [alcatrazeast.com](http://alcatrazeast.com))

**The Island** is a big attraction, behind the Alcatraz Museum, with its restaurants (Margaritaville, Paula Dean, etc.), shops, moonshine tasting, and a giant Ferris wheel. (131 The Island Drive, Pigeon Forge, [islandinpigeonforge.com](http://islandinpigeonforge.com))



**Dollywood Theme Park** is a must-see, of course. Spanning 160 acres, the park offers more than 50 world-class rides, high-energy entertainment, award-winning dining, and the friendliest theme park atmosphere in the world! (2700 Dollywood Parks Boulevard, Pigeon Forge, [dollywood.com/themepark](http://dollywood.com/themepark))

Continue south on Parkway for the beautiful drive up to **Gatlinburg**. In addition to restaurants and shopping, there’s **Ripley’s Aquarium of the Smokies**, Gatlin’s Mini Golf, **Anakeesta’s** Rail Runner Mountain Coaster, and the aerial tramway to **Ober Gatlinburg**. And don’t forget to gaze through the glass bottom of the **Gatlinburg SkyBridge**, the longest pedestrian cable bridge in North America. (Parking is available at numerous public parking lots throughout Gatlinburg.)



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**Fall Creek Falls State Park** is one of Tennessee’s largest and most visited state parks. Located approximately 90 miles from the host hotel, this park encompasses more than 29,800 acres across

the eastern top of the Cumberland Plateau. At 256 feet, Fall Creek Falls is one of the highest waterfalls in the eastern United States. Available accommodations include a lodge, cabins and campsites. (Fall Creek Falls State Park is located within the Central Time Zone.) For more information visit [tnstateparks.com/parks/fall-creek-falls](http://tnstateparks.com/parks/fall-creek-falls).

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**Rugby, Tennessee** is a rural treasure listed on the National Register of Historic Places. As one of the most authentically preserved American villages, Rugby offers interpretive tours on most days during the year. The Thomas Hughes Library, which is believed to be the oldest completely preserved public lending library in the country, is currently pursuing National Landmark Status. Contact the village at 423-628-2441 ext. 1 to confirm the village buildings and dining options are open to visitors. For more information visit [www.historicrugby.org](http://www.historicrugby.org).



**Tellico Plains, Bald River Falls, Cherohala Skyway** Approximately 65 miles south of Oak Ridge, Tellico Plains is a vintage mountain town in East Tennessee at the gateway to the Cherohala Skyway and the Cherokee National Forest. Here in the foothills of the Smoky Mountains, a simpler pace of life prevails, where friends rendezvous at the bakery and local artisans sell their fine arts, crafts, and furnishings.

The **Charles Hall Museum** exists to preserve Native American, Appalachian and local history with an emphasis on the Greater Tellico Plains area. Born in Tellico Plains in 1924, Charles was a local historian since boyhood. Among the first white settlers in the area, his mother's family settled in Tellico Plains by 1830. His father's family settled in the area by 1908 and moved within the city limits in 1929. Charles served Tellico Plains as mayor for 31 years, as alderman-recorder for two years, as Justice of the Peace for six years, and as a county commissioner for six years. Showcased in two Museum buildings are his magnificent collections of historical memorabilia, artifacts, equipment, guns, antique telephones, coins and currency, photos, and so much more. Along with his collections, the museum has acquired many public donations since opening in 2003. There are currently over 10,000 artifacts and thousands of historical pictures and documents either displayed or archived for future reference. (229 Cherohala Skyway, Tellico Plains, [charleshallmuseum.com](http://charleshallmuseum.com))

Cascading over 100 feet onto the rocks below, **Bald River Falls** can be viewed from your car or you can hike above the falls through the Bald River Gorge. As the seasons change so does Bald River Falls, each season brings out different characteristics of the falls. Its located east of Tellico Plains just off of the Cherohala Skyway.



The **Cherohala Skyway** is a 43-mile National Scenic Byway that runs from Tellico Plains in Tennessee to Robbinsville in North Carolina. Some call it the "best kept secret" in East Tennessee. The Cherohala Skyway was completed in the fall of 1996 after planning and construction for some thirty-four years. It winds up and over mile-high foot mountains for 18

miles in North Carolina and descends another 23 miles into the deeply forested back country of Tennessee. The road crosses through the Cherokee and Nantahala National Forests thus the name “Cher — hala”. Its becoming well known in motorcycling and sports car circles for it’s long, sweeping corners, scenic views, and cool summer breezes. Note: there are no facilities other than a couple of rest rooms for the entire 41 miles so make sure you have enough gas to make the crossing. There is little evidence of civilization from views that rival or surpass any from the Blue Ridge Parkway.



The largest city in East Tennessee is **Knoxville** which was settled in 1786. Its the home of the flagship campus of the University of Tennessee (Go Big Orange!) and is also home to the headquarters of the Tennessee Valley Authority. As one of the largest cities in the Appalachian region, Knoxville has positioned itself as a repository of Appalachian culture and the gateways to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Sites to visit include the **Knoxville Museum of Art, Blount Mansion, James White Fort, Old Gray Cemetery, the Sunsphere, the Women’s Basketball Hall of Fame, Ijams Nature Center,** and a host of restaurants, shops, and micro breweries. Driving time from Oak Ridge to downtown Knoxville is around 40 minutes.

