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National Park Service News Release

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Blue Ridge Parkway

America's Best Idea: [National Park Getaway](#)

ASHEVILLE, NC – In “To Autumn,” an ode that draws together images and sounds of the season to capture its essence, the Romantic poet John Keats addresses fall as the “close bosom friend of the maturing sun.” The same spirit of camaraderie exists between autumn and the Blue Ridge Mountains. The season tickles the trees along the Blue Ridge Parkway and floods Appalachia with warm colors. Here, the land itself ripens, revealing a harvest of yellow, orange, russet, and various shades of red for your eyes to reap and savor as you hike the parkway’s trails, bicycle its roads, or simply gaze from one of its overlooks.

Other outdoor fun along the parkway, which meanders through North Carolina and Virginia, includes camping and visiting a variety of centers for crafts and folk art and historic buildings. One such place is the blacksmith’s shop on the Mabry Mill Trail, milepost 176. Mabry Mill itself welcomes children (and adults too!) on three special Saturdays – October 10, 17, and 24 – for seasonal activities such as making quilts and husking corn—a fall classic. Autumn lives up to the latter half of Keats’s description as a “season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,” on Fall Gathering Days at the mill, where visitors can help dry fruits and vegetables and turn a favorite fall crop into cider and apple butter.

The calls of migratory birds are the fall soundtrack of the Blue Ridge Parkway, where music of the mountains also reaches the ear. In fact, this weekend, on September 26, the Sheets family will be giving a 2 p.m. concert at the Blue Ridge Parkway Visitor Center, milepost 384 near Asheville, North Carolina. Participants in October’s Fall Gathering Days will also be able to enjoy music.

In literature autumn is often cast as melancholy despite its agricultural bounty. At the Blue Ridge Parkway, however, the season offers pleasure rather than sorrow. Imagine standing at an overlook at sundown, the mountains rising before you, their fall colors matching the hues of the early-evening sky. You might take in the landscape quietly, feeling the profound touch of its grandeur and beauty.

On Saturday, September 26, the National Park Service is hosting a day of service and celebration nationwide. The NPS is waiving park entrance and volunteers and visitors can see a sneak preview of a new Ken Burns documentary *The National Parks: America’s Best Idea*. Learn more at www.nps.gov/september26.

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