



WELCOME TO BRYSON CITY THE TOWN YOU WISH YOU'D GROWN UP IN

Bryson City, North Carolina is Classic Americana. The vintage locomotive slowly chugs into the old train station. As the curious passengers step out of the club cars, their eyes are drawn to the historic court-house prominently situated on the grassy town square. Just up the street, quaint shops are stacked to the ceilings with indispensable merchandise, some practical, some elegantly beautiful. Is this a scene from an early 20th century small town in the Midwest? Actually, it's a Norman Rockwell painting come to life that's taking place most every day in this picturesque hamlet in the Smoky Mountains. Welcome to Bryson City, North Carolina.

The Old Way. "We make 'em the old way," says Paul Crawley, referring to the luscious ice cream creations he serves at Soda Pops in downtown Bryson City. "Banana splits, sundaes, malts and shakes—blended with an old-fashioned mixer." Soda Pops is the quintessential '50s soda shop, complete with authentic tables and stools, Coke™ memorabilia and rocking chairs out on the sidewalk. "It's a great place to hang out," says Paul's wife, Wanda, as she tops a tantalizing banana split with a trio of cherries.

Just up Everett Street, Aryd'ell Hotelling is arranging a display of hand-carved bears at the Watershed Trading Company. "We sell rustic décor for Smoky Mountain living," she says. The fascinating shop is festooned with beds, chairs and tables made of solid teak, mahogany, oak and rosewood, some of it produced locally. "I think visitors are amazed at the wonderful shops here in Bryson City," she adds.

Take a Stroll Down Main Street. Under the restored tin ceiling at Madison's on Main, associate Victoria Creighton spruces up the window display of designer pet collars and clothing. "We're more than a gift shop," she asserts. "We have home accents, Emily Ray jewelry, candles, and we even sell chocolate by the piece. I was spending so much time here as a shopper, I decided I might as well get on the payroll," confesses Victoria.

Around the corner is Bryson General Store where owner, Tammy Burns, created a new store with the atmosphere of an old log cabin. "We have basics like women's and men's clothing, but we also offer unique gifts, furniture, home décor, glassware and we've just added Vera Bradley," she says. "You might say we're an 'upscale' general store."

As you walk back toward the depot and cross the river, you'll stop by a little yellow shop. Here at The Cottage Craftsman, Debbie Mills has assembled a broad array of crafts, almost all of which were produced locally. "We have yummy jellies and honey, candles, corn shuck dolls and music from mountain musicians," she says. "Some of these skills were handed down for generations."

Five Traffic Lights—Mostly Green. Named as one of the best outdoor towns in America, Bryson City is protected by its citizens and visitors who are mindful of the need to preserve the natural beauty of the area. Shopkeepers are careful to recycle materials, conserve water and sell a variety of products that are made from natural, sustainable components whenever possible.

For more information on touring the Smokies, contact the Swain County Chamber of Commerce, 210 Main Street, P.O. Box 509, Bryson City, NC 28713; chamber@greatsmokies.com; or 800-867-9246.