

Mountaineer Folk Festival

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The Mountaineer Folk Festival is an authentic annual mountain festival. It takes place the first weekend in September each year at the Fall Creek Falls State Park near Pikeville, TN. This is an amazing folk festival with over 100 handmade arts and craft booths, including pioneer demonstrations, craft

demonstrations, an assortment of foods, breads and baked goods, and live mountain music in three areas of the park. Music includes country, bluegrass, folk, and some picking and playing under the shade trees by musicians from the region and all over the Southeast. There are plenty of things for the kids to do and see, including wagon rides, mule pulls, marbles, a petting zoo, and crafts. This year we even saw a snake show! Fall Creek Falls State Park is a wonderful, expansive area, with lots of shade trees, which makes this folk festival even more attractive. These are normally still the hot days of summer, but the trees will shade you from the afternoon sun, keeping the visitors and vendors comfortable.

The quality of the crafts/crafters was spectacular, including lots of wood turners, artists, pottery, handmade purses, jewelry, candles, wooden toys, and so much more! It's the perfect place to stock up on presents or even start your Christmas shopping early. One of my favorite booths was the Dutch Maid Bakery of Tracy City, the oldest bakery in Tennessee, where Cindy Day, the owner was passing out samples of her sourdough bread, cinnamon rolls, cookies and apple butter. The Rock Pile Farm was distributing samples of their hot, tangy sauce that is excellent on fish, in cream cheese as a dip, and I love it on scrambled eggs. I bought one bottle and it was gone in no time! I enjoyed the roasted corn and the homemade fried apple pies that several of the church groups were selling. Then I saw one of my favorite vendors, The Bickfords, who set up their log cabin serving piping hot coffee, sausage and country ham biscuits, sourdough bread, and my favorite molasses cookies. Junior and Janice Ford, owners of Busy Beaver Crafts, set up with their awesome hand turned bowls and other fine woodcrafts. I fell in love with their etched wood carvings that displayed a little boy and girl. I met the West Girls, a close knit family musical group consisting of a mother and three daughters, who make their living in a beautiful valley; a horse and buggy community in the hills of Tennessee.

They were picking and playing under the shade trees in such wonderful harmony. Singing out some of their favorite melodic ballads, old country tunes, and some of their original music, they kept the crowd around them mesmerized, including myself! Their music was beautiful, soothing and so pure and amazing, that I had to purchase one of their CD's for the ride home to Dale Hollow Lake. You can purchase their CD on <http://cdbaby.com/cd/westgirls>.

Another great vendor reminded me of my "Opa's" (grandfather) blacksmith shop in Germany. Dale Davis set up a live blacksmith demonstration, pounding out horse shoes, garden ornaments, hanging plant holders, candle holders, fireplace tools, and much more throughout the weekend. He is a traditional blacksmith from Smithville, TN. He has some truly lovely authentic items.

It was an amazing day, and my only regret is that I didn't make a weekend of it with my family. There was so much to see and do, plus free music and activities for the kids and adults everywhere, not to mention the amazing beauty and scenery all around me. Make sure that you take time to visit either the annual Mountaineer Festival the first weekend of September or the much loved annual Christmas on the Mountain event the first weekend of December which offers Christmas decorations, singing, arts and crafts, children's activities, and Santa's arrival at the park. The park manager, Mr. John Faunville, is proud of the park and credits Stuart Carroll for continuing and organizing these wonderful annual events and so many other activities throughout the year that give families and visitors from all over the world a variety of great events, activities, outdoor challenges like their triathlon, and so much more. For overnight lodging, please see page 8 and make sure to visit some of the wonderful shops, restaurants and cities around the Fall Creek Falls region. For more information about these Fall Creek Falls State Park events, activities, and more, visit their website at www.tennessee.gov/environment/parks/FallCreekFalls.

