

# MOTOR CYCLE

A D V E N T U R E S  
IN THE SOUTHERN APPALACHIANS

## Ocoee River Run

In Partnership with



# Ocoee River Run

**T**his tour is a great introduction to beautiful eastern Tennessee. You'll enjoy the gently sweeping turns along Lake Ocoee and the Ocoee River. Scenery and activities are the best rationale for taking this ride.



## GAS

Gas is not available at all from miles 6 to 26 where US 64/74 runs along next to the Ocoee River. You might want to top off your tank in Ocoee at the beginning of the ride and again in Copperhill or McCaysville before your trip home.

## GETTING TO THE START

From I-75 near Cartersville, go north on US 411 (exit 293). After crossing the Tennessee state line, go east on US 64/74 toward Ocoee, TN. Note: to turn east onto US 64/74 from US 411, you'll have to turn left just before you go under the first overpass in Tennessee. Zero your trip meter as you turn east onto US 64/74.

## RIDE OVERVIEW

The ride begins on US 64/74 eastbound near Ocoee, TN. Don't let the clean, straight asphalt at the beginning fool you; there are plenty of twists and turns in the road ahead. Ocoee (the town, the lake, and the river) is known for outdoor adventure. Adventurous spirits can choose from river rafting, hang-gliding, ultralight airplane rides, and lake boating. Ocoee also has many businesses offering camping and lodging accommodations.

As you ride east, the first scenic view you'll see is the Ocoee Dam. This dam generates much of the electricity for this region. There's a pullout on the right side of the road where you can stop and look without dismounting your bike.

Continuing east, US 64/74 begins to make sweeping bends next to the lake. You'll pass the Lake Ocoee Inn which is a motel, restaurant, and marina rolled into one, and offers tasty meals at good prices. Watch for vehicles pulling boat trailers, and wet stretches of road even on dry days, due to the draining of boats onto the

road. Passing zones are scarce on this route, but this particular section offers more than the rest of the ride.

As the lake gradually becomes the river, the road curves go from long sweeping turns to twisties. Enjoy the scenery, but watch for river rafters and canoeists taking out of the river and crossing the road. Notice the large wooden sluice on the hillside across the river. The sluice carries water from the river upstream of the dam down to the power house 4.5 miles downstream. At the power house, the sluice empties into a giant pipe. The water rushes down this pipe into the power plant where it turns the huge turbines to produce electricity, eliminating the need to dam up the river and create a lake over this lovely gorge.

In 1996, the Summer Olympics in Atlanta brought the world to this quiet section of eastern Tennessee. The Ocoee River played host to the world's greatest whitewater canoeists and kayakers. At the site of the Olympic Whitewater venue the U.S. Forest Service built the Ocoee Whitewater Center, where you can stop and relive some of the excitement of the 1996 Olympics. Part of this mighty river was actually computer-enhanced and designed just for the Olympics. You may even see some world-class whitewater athletes in training during your visit.

As you leave the Ocoee gorge, don't miss the Boyd Gap overlook. The driveway to this overlook takes you just a few hundred yards off US 64/74. The view over the Ocoee River is spectacular, and the overlook parking lot is large, easily accommodating many picnicking motorcyclists.

After turning off US 64/74 onto TN 68, you'll head toward the towns of Copperhill, TN and McCaysville, GA.

*TOTAL DISTANCE*  
40 miles

*TIMEFRAME*  
1 hour from start to finish. Add time for stops and getting to and from the ride.

The large pile of sludge you'll see on the side of the road as you approach Copperhill is slag, a byproduct of copper mining. Copper mining is no longer an industry here. The mines were flooded with water and abandoned years ago. The smelting plants used to smelt the copper now manufacture acids, like sulfuric acid.

The towns of Copperhill, TN and McCaysville, GA are separated by a blue paint line (really!) and the Ocoee



This suspension bridge over the Ocoee was built for pedestrians at the 1996 Summer Olympic Games.

River, which is only 100 feet wide at this point. Both towns compete for your dining dollar. Between them, these small towns offer delicious choices ranging from coffee shop soups and sandwiches, Mexican fare, Japanese sushi, burger joints, and of course Southern barbecue.

#### *RIDE ALTERNATIVES*

Take this book with you on this ride. Most of east Tennessee's rides start from or intersect US 64/74. If you have time, try the Mile High ride (p. 114) or the Greasy Creek Trail (p. 110). Both are excellent reasons for getting "sidetracked." Another alternative is to start this ride in Blue Ridge and ride to Ocoee. It's just as beautiful either way.

#### *ROAD CONDITIONS*

Clean fresh asphalt abounds on this ride. Watch for fallen rocks and heavy river rafting traffic on US 64/74 near the Ocoee River. Railroad tracks provide an interesting obstacle as you enter the town of Copperhill on TN 68.

#### *POINTS OF INTEREST*

Ocoee outdoor activities, the Lake Ocoee Dam, Ocoee River sluice, Ocoee Whitewater Center and Olympic venue, Boyd Gap overlook, and the towns of Copperhill and McGaysville.

#### *RESTAURANTS*

In Ocoee, there is one fast food outlet on US 411 but if you have a minute or two, try to make it to the Outback Restaurant and Deli. The sandwiches there are a local favorite. On weekends and particularly on summer weekends, many roadside restaurants spring up to tempt whitewater rafters and passing motorcyclists.

On Lake Ocoee, the Lake Ocoee Inn has a restaurant that offers good

food at reasonable prices.

While the Ocoee Whitewater Center is not a restaurant, it does have ice cream downstairs in the gift shop. If you're going to stop there, it's nice to know you can get a snack.

In Copperhill there's Roger and Carol's Quick Burger, El Rio Mexican Restaurant, Michio's Japanese; The Rose Cafe a coffee shop that also offers soup and sandwiches; and the New York Restaurant—the only soda fountain in town.

Just across the river in McGaysville is the Village Bar-B-Q and The Guinea's Nest buffet-style restaurant. McGaysville also has a Sonic, which is a drive-in burger joint.

#### *DETAILED DIRECTIONS*

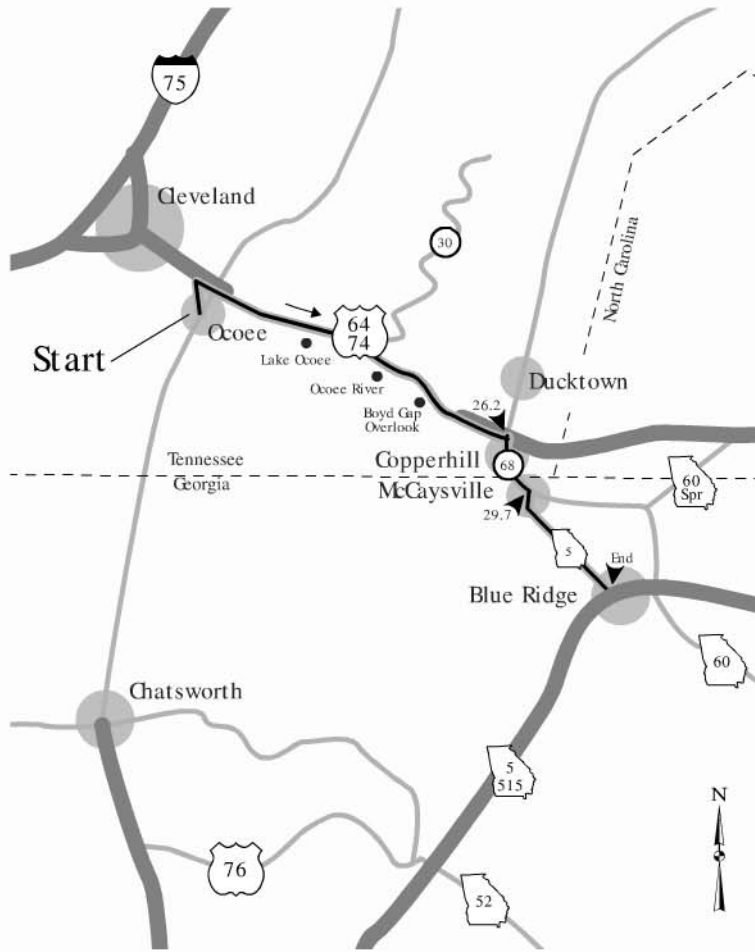
*MILE 0*—Turn east onto US 64/74 from northbound US 411 (remember it's a left turn just before you go under the first overpass). On US 64/74 don't miss the outdoor adventures in Ocoee miles 1 through 4. At mile 5 is the Lake Ocoee Dam and overlook. Watch for river rafters between miles 13 and 20. Stop in at the 1996 Olympic Whitewater venue at mile 20. The Boyd Gap overlook is at mile 21.7.

*MILE 26.2*—Exit right off of US 64/74 onto TN 68 south toward Copperhill.

*MILE 29.7*—Turn right in downtown Copperhill onto GA 5 and enter McGaysville, GA. Follow GA 5 into Blue Ridge.

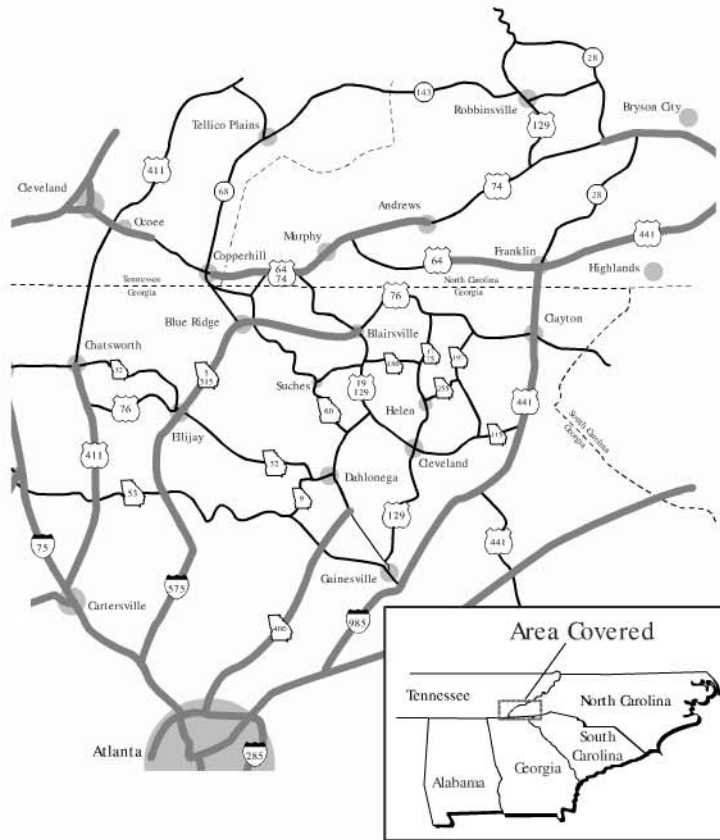
*MILE 40*—The ride finishes at the intersection of GA 5 and GA 515 in Blue Ridge. Turn right onto GA 515 south to eventually return to I-75 near Marietta.

# Ocoee River Run





# Southeast Tennessee & Western North Carolina



**E**ver wondered where all the good roads are? Many run alongside the streams and across the mountain peaks of southeast Tennessee and western North Carolina. The five rides in this section take you literally a mile high and then drop you into a gorge so deep the Cherokees named it Nantahala—"land of the noonday sun." The world-famous "Dragon" at Deals Gap, and lesser-known state routes like the one along Geasy Creek, will get your adrenaline pumping. Convenient fuel, food, and plenty of off-bike adventures make this a near-perfect riding destination.