Most Scenic Road trips – Blue Ridge Parkway (Carolinas/Tennessee/Virginia)

Day 1 – Asheville + Blue Ridge warm-up

Crafty mountain town energy before you hit the big scenic drives

🌞 Morning: Arrive into **Asheville** → coffee stroll around **Downtown** → quick supplies stop for the road (snacks, water, layers)

🌤️ Afternoon: Check-in at **Element by Marriott Asheville Downtown** → ease into the trip with a short drive to the **Blue Ridge Parkway Visitor Center**

🌙 Evening: Sunset viewpoint run on the **Blue Ridge Parkway** → dinner at **Chestnut**

Day 2 – 🗻 Peak scenery on the Blue Ridge Parkway

Overlooks, high ridges, and that "mountains forever" feeling

🌞 Morning: Early start on **Blue Ridge Parkway** → stop at **Blue Ridge Parkway - Craggy Gardens Visitor Center** → slow scenic cruising with pull-offs

🌤️ Afternoon: Picnic-style lunch with views → continue the Parkway with a key overlook stop at **Buena Vista Overlook** (great "big sky" photos) → return towards **Asheville**

🌙 Evening: Relaxed evening back in town → dinner at **Posana**

Day 3 – 🌲 Into the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (base: Gatlinburg)

Classic Southern Appalachians: forests, valleys, and wildlife

🌞 Morning: Check out of **Element by Marriott Asheville Downtown** → drive towards **Gatlinburg** with scenic stops → enter **Great Smoky Mountains National Park**

🌤️ Afternoon: Check-in at **Hampton Inn Gatlinburg Historic Nature Trail** → scenic loop drive at **Cades Cove Scenic Loop** (prime wildlife time)

🌙 Evening: Easy stroll in **Gatlinburg** → dinner at **The Peddler Steakhouse**

Day 4 – 🌊 Forest roads & rushing water: Smokies motor trails

Waterfalls, cabins, and one of the prettiest drives in the park

🌞 Morning: Drive the **Roaring Fork Motor Nature Trail** → short trail stops (as you fancy) → historic cabin pull-offs

🌤️ Afternoon: Choose one "hero" hike (keep it relaxed and safe) → return for a late lunch/nap break at the hotel → optional second scenic spin on **Roaring Fork Motor Nature Trail** if you want golden-hour light

🌙 Evening: Dinner with a view at **Vista Grill**

Day 5 – 🧭 Ridge-to-river road trip day: Chattanooga

Big viewpoints + a fun, walkable city to reset between drives

🌞 Morning: Check out of **Hampton Inn Gatlinburg Historic Nature Trail** → scenic drive south to **Chattanooga**

🌤️ Afternoon: Check-in at **Hampton Inn & Suites Chattanooga/Downtown** → riverside downtime along the **Tennessee Riverwalk** (easy, scenic, great for sunset photos)

🌙 Evening: Dinner at **State of Confusion** → optional nightcap stroll around **Southside**

Day 6 – 🗺️ Southern Icons drive finale: Talimena National Scenic Byway

High-elevation overlooks and wide-open mountain views (worth the detour if you want maximum "road trip")

🌞 Morning: Early departure from **Chattanooga** → long but scenic travel day west (plan breaks) → arrive near the Ouachitas

🌤️ Afternoon: Drive the **Talimena National Scenic Byway** → stop at the best overlooks → short, safe walks at viewpoints

🌙 Evening: Return to **Chattanooga** (or overnight en route, depending on your pace) → dinner at **Wooden City**