

2011 Upstate 3-Day Golf Itinerary

Discover South Carolina's mountain beauty in three-day golf trip...

Stretching 115 miles across the northwest corner of South Carolina, the Cherokee Foothills Scenic Highway – aka S.C. 11 – runs through some of the Palmetto State's most gorgeous topography. With lush forests and mountain views, the 2-3-hour drive alone between the Georgia state line and Gaffney is worth a visit. Read more about the amazing road trip from SC Insider, Marie McAden. (www.discoversouthcarolina.com/Insider/Outdoor/Stories/2374)

But besides the route's natural beauty, S.C. 11 also is surrounded – within a few minutes' detour in most cases – by nearly 20 golf courses open to the public, plus three of The Cliffs private layouts. If you're looking to combine golf with outstanding scenery (especially in the fall), this three-day itinerary is just the ticket.

Base your stay out of Greenville (www.greenvillecvb.com) or Spartanburg (www.visitspartanburg.com) with those cities' wide array of accommodations and dining options (one of the itinerary's courses offers on-site cottages). And prepare for "mountain golf" – OK, foothills golf – at its finest.

Day 1 – Cherokee Valley Golf Course, Travelers Rest

Day 2 – Links O' Tryon Golf Club, Campobello

Day 3 – Woodfin Ridge Golf Course, Inman

Details, Details...

Day 1 – Cherokee Valley

450 Cherokee Valley Way, Travelers Rest

Tee times: (800) 531-3634 or (800) 4-TIMESNOW

www.cherokeevalleysc.com

An easy drive up U.S. 25 from Greenville, then east on S.C. 11, this P.B. (son of Pete) Dye design offers a 6,586-yard, par-72 layout with Champion Bermuda greens that are among the Upstate's best. The Blue Ridge Mountains offer a backdrop on virtually every hole, and dramatic elevation changes offer a multitude of challenges, notably at the signature 15th hole, a 234-yard par-3 that plays from a mountain-top tee to the green far below.

Cherokee Valley offers more than just a terrific golf course, however. The facility's home Golf Academy (Monday-Saturday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., by appointment only) features a short game school and the John Jacobs Golf School, headed by former Golf Digest School instructor Dave Maga. Players can be fitted for equipment (50 percent of the cost is applied to purchases), then try out their new gear on the 300-yard driving range, chipping area, sand bunkers practice area and putting green.

Cherokee Valley also offers "stay and play" options starting at \$149 for accommodations in luxury cottages, breakfast and 18 holes. Check for details and seasonal specials.

Day 2 – Links O’ Tryon

New Cut Road, Campobello

Tee times: (864) 472-6723

www.linksotryon.com

South Carolina native and architect Tom Jackson has designed some of the state’s top courses, including nearby The Cliffs At Glassy and North Augusta’s Mount Vintage, and Links O’ Tryon, located 10 minutes west of Interstate 26 (Exit 5), easily belongs among his best work. Minutes from S.C. 11, the 7,150-yard, par-72 course (four sets of tees make it playable for all) is nestled amid views of seven distinct mountains in the Blue Ridge chain.

Voted “Best in the Upstate” by Golfweek magazine, and named one of the nation’s top courses in 1992 and 1993, Links O’ Tryon features grass bunkers and bridges and walls of imported fieldstone that lend a Scottish touch to the course. The course’s rolling fairways, sand bunkers and water hazards demand a variety of shot-making skills from start to finish.

The course’s signature hole is the 326-yard par-4 13th, featuring an all-carry approach over water to a peninsula green. Facilities include a golf shop and restaurant, plus a practice complex with driving range and putting green.

Day 3 – Woodfin Ridge

215 South Woodfin Ridge Drive, Inman

(864) 578-0023

www.woodfinridge.com

Just east of I-26 (Exit 5) off S.C. 11 and S.C. 9, Woodfin Ridge stretches 7,107 yards and plays to par-72. Lake Bowen and the Blue Ridge Mountains form a beautiful background, while Jacob’s Creek winds through the property coming into play on the second, third and fourth holes. Water from the lake’s reservoir is part of the challenge on the eighth and 15th holes, while the ninth and 18th holes play uphill toward the clubhouse with ponds and waterfalls in play.

Designed by Bill Bergin, a former PGA and European Tours player, the course reflects the architect’s experiences with rolling fairways and multiple playing options into well-bunkered and guarded greens. The nearby mountains and surrounding hardwoods forests guarantee cool temperatures even during the hottest months, and breezes that factor into play as well.

The course’s signature hole, the 340-yard par-4 seventh, plays from an elevated tee to a dogleg-left fairway, then to a green guarded by bunkers front and rear with water on the left. Woodfin Ridge is home to the University of South Carolina-Upstate men’s and women’s teams, as well as to Boiling Springs High School’s boys and girls.