

## Stargazing in Monroe County, TN

There are so many daytime activities to enjoy when you go outdoors, so what can you do at night? Go stargazing!

### Where to go:

- The further from civilization, the better with great choices including Cherokee National Forest, the Turkey Creek and Lakeview overlooks on Cherohala Skyway, Buck Bald, Bushy Pine Ridge, and Indian Boundary Lake.
- Find a wide open space so you can see as much of the sky as possible.
- The higher the altitude, the better.
- You can remain close to the road and still get amazing views.

### What to do:

- Stargazing apps and calendars of what can be seen are available online. These apps may not be usable in the forest due to the lack of cell phone reception.
- Pay attention to what phase the Moon is in. The light of a full Moon can block the view of the stars.
- Take time to allow your eyes to adjust to the dark.
- Be mindful of your surroundings at night, especially in the forest.

### What to bring:

- Stargazing can be done with the naked eye but is better with a telescope. If you are using a computerized telescope, don't forget to bring a power source.
- Beach towels are also recommended for both you and your telescope to sit on.
- Bring what you would if you were going camping such as bug spray, blankets, and snacks.

### When to go:

- October-March is observing season and most stargazing happens during this time.
- Winter is the best season to go stargazing because the cold air is more clear and it gets dark earlier.
- Summer is not as good as the rest of the year but you can still get great views in good weather.

### Check out:

[Knoxville Observers Astronomy Club](#)

[Smoky Mountain Astronomical Society](#)

[The Barnard Astronomical Society of Chattanooga](#)

Photos by Brandon M. Johnson

If you spot any UFOs, well, we can't help you there. Sorry.