



# OUR FAVORITE



## CAMPGROUNDS

### GORGEOUS STAYS BRYSON CITY, NORTH CAROLINA

*By Caroline Eubanks*



#### LOCATION:

Located on the North Carolina side of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park near Bryson City, Gorgeous Stays is a funky glamping resort. The nearly seven-acre site is on a stream that connects to the Nantahala River. It's close to restaurants and shops in downtown Bryson City, as well as the National Park entrance, Fontana Lake and the Cherokee Reservation.

#### NUMBER OF SITES:

There are 4 tiny homes, 3 glamping tents, 5 platform tent campsites, 1 bunkhouse, 1 vintage Shasta camper, 1 converted school bus and 1 shipping container.

#### WHAT MAKES THIS CAMPGROUND UNIQUE:

Gorgeous Stays allows for all types of outdoors lovers, whether you're looking for a basic campsite to set up your tent or a full-sized bed and air conditioning. As owner Helene Elbein says, all you need is your clothes and a smile. Everything else is either supplied or available for purchase. It's different from both standard campsites and hotels and offers a

wholly unique experience to enjoy nature. There are also shared spaces, like the lodge and fire pits, to allow for guests to meet one another.

#### BACKGROUND OF THE CAMPGROUND:

Mother-daughter team Helene and Micaela Elbein transformed a primitive campsite into a glamping resort in 2018. Micaela had worked at the nearby Nantahala Outdoor Center and the family had spent years visiting the area. Helene became interested in the tiny home community, attending conferences and touring different communities. This idea later blossomed into the resort.





She used her background in set decorating to make each of the accommodation options different, unable to choose just one.

**MOST POPULAR SITE:**

Visitors love the Skoolie bus option for its plentiful space for big groups and its whimsical style, making it the most-requested option at Gorgeous Stays. It's great for families, with its brightly painted exterior and room for six, with a king bed and bunks. Red Woof Inn is another favorite because it's one of the pet-friendly tiny houses, with high ceilings and a sleeping loft. The Boho is the most popular tent, complete with vintage-inspired floor pillows and lanterns.

**POPULAR ACTIVITIES**

Gorgeous Stays' location is convenient for year-round exploration. It's close to the Appalachian Trail crossing and the resort offers a hiker shuttle. The Nantahala Outdoor Center offers tubing and ziplining. Downtown Bryson City is only 15 minutes away, home to the Great Smoky Mountains

Railroad. The region has some of the world's best fly fishing. Fontana Lake has boating and swimming and Tsali National Forest has mountain biking trails. Tail of the Dragon is a popular route for motorcyclists.

**TIPS FOR FIRST-TIME VISITORS:**

- The resort is closed in January and February.
- Book during the week for the lowest prices.
- Weekends, especially during the fall, are busy with festivals and events like elk season and the Polar Express train rides.
- Two of the tiny homes are pet-friendly, as are the campsites, but be sure to mention when booking.

**AMENITIES:**

- Memory foam mattresses
- Linens and towels in glamp sites
- Community fire pits
- Food pavilion with propane grills

- Lodge with showers, fireplace, TV and games
- Food for sale

**COST:**

Tiny homes, \$125-\$145; glamping tents, \$110-\$125; campsites, \$40-\$55; and unique sites, \$65-\$155.

**HOW TO RESERVE:**

gorgeousstays.com or 828-421-2282

