

How to Spend a Weekend in Johnson City, Tennessee:

A Guide from a Local

By: Taylor Harr

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Downtown Johnson City. Photo by J. Michael Jones, iStock images

Find yourself in the Johnson City area for a few days? Have absolutely no clue what to do for the short time that you're here? Do you think Johnson City has nothing to offer since it is such a small area?

Whatever situation you are in, I am here to help. My name is Taylor Harr and I have grown up around the tri-cities area my entire life. The tri-cities includes Bristol, Kingsport, and Johnson City, along with their surrounding areas. I am originally from Bluff City, about 30 minutes outside of Johnson City. I currently live in Johnson City and attend ETSU, so I know my way around the area very well. East Tennessee State University, which has a population of

about 16,000 students, is the college located in the heart of Johnson City. It is home to great academic programs, such as the nursing program that draws in students from all over. Johnson City is located in east Tennessee and is surrounded by stunning views of the mountains. It may seem like just another small country town, with a population of just 66,000 people, but I can assure you it has so much more to offer than what meets the eye. There is plenty to do to fill in your weekend. You might even find yourself coming back to Johnson City just so you can finish exploring the area.

This guide has activities for people of all ages. Johnson City is very family friendly, while also being a college town with ETSU nearby so there is a lot for young adults to do as well. I have seen the city from both perspectives, as a child and a young adult, so I know what's fun and what's a waste of time. Well, let's get right to it! Here is a guide from a local to a weekend in Johnson City, Tennessee.

Day One:

To start off your day, I recommend getting some breakfast to fuel your morning. Near downtown Johnson City, there is a coffee shop called Open Doors Coffee House. This quaint shop offers specialty coffee and amazing breakfast. They have everything from southern biscuits and gravy to avocado toast. They are most known for their huge Belgium waffles that come in flavors like cinnamon roll and peanut butter. I recommend the iced white chocolate mocha and the little Chicago egg plate,

Open Doors Coffee House:

Breakfast Cafe

101 E 8th Ave, Johnson City, TN
37601

(423)-268-2997

Mon-Fri 7 a.m.-5 p.m.

Sat-Sun 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Price Range: \$

that comes complete with scrambled eggs, biscuits and gravy, skillet potatoes, and your choice of sausage or bacon for \$11.



Downtown Johnson City

After breakfast, it's time to start exploring! Since downtown is so close to Open Doors, I recommend going there to see all of the shops downtown has to offer. Downtown Johnson City is very unique and boasts a lot of different shops for every kind of person. It is a good idea to park in a central location, like near the Downtown Square. There are shops like Artisans' Village, which has fair trade goods, Azlinn Hope, which is a women's boutique, and Atlantis, which offers crystals, candles, and other spiritual gifts. If you have a sweet tooth, Cakebud's Bakery has excellent cupcakes, cake pops, and ice cream. And for those who want to up their Instagram game, downtown is home to many beautiful murals hand painted by local artists.

Downtown is also home to many breweries, like Yee-Haw Brewing Company, for those over the age of 21.

For a fun family night, Badl Axe Throwing is sure to bring a good time. Badl Axe is located inside of Quantum Leap, the largest



trampoline arena in Tennessee. Badl Axe offers axe throwing for anyone over the age of 13 at

Badl Axe Throwing

Located inside of Quantum Leap

117 E King St, Johnson City, TN
37601

(423)-928-5327

Fri-Sat 5 p.m.-11 p.m.

Sunday 1 p.m.-8 p.m.

\$18 a person. This price includes one hour of as much axe throwing as you can fit in. If you have kids under 13, they can enjoy themselves in the trampoline arena or arcade. If you're worried about the technique of axe throwing, they also have coaches at each lane to guide you through your

throwing. They offer drinks and food options. It is recommended to make reservations to ensure you have a spot at your desired time!

Day two:

For your last day, I recommend exploring the mountains that make Johnson City so beautiful. There are many great hiking options for any level hiker. So, start off with breakfast at Penny Man's Diner. This is a cute little diner that serves a great breakfast, like French toast and bacon, for less than \$6. Penny Man's is located on East Main Street and serves home cooked food for breakfast and lunch. It is open until 3 p.m. every day. After breakfast, it's time to hit the road!

Buffalo Mountain Park is by far the best view of the Tennessee mountains. It is a fairly short hike with trails that lead to waterfalls and scenic overlooks. It is open



from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. during summer hours, so you have plenty of time to explore and watch the sunset. I recommend packing a picnic just in case you get hungry, as the Noggin Loop trail takes about an hour and a half to get to the very top. This is a great hike for those who are looking for panoramic views without overly difficult trails!



The Tweetsie Trail

For a more relaxed trail, the Tweetsie Trail is perfect for those looking for a hike without the climb. The trail is a railroad bed that goes on for 10-miles. It connects Johnson City to Elizabethton, so if you go the whole 10-miles you will

end up in a different town! The Tweetsie Trail is the most fun when biking, so I suggest renting one for your journey. Local Motion Cyclery offers day bicycle rentals for around \$40 per person for the entire day. It is located near the start of the trail, so grab your bikes and start cycling! There are several paths connected to the Tweetsie Trail which lead to other scenic views and routes. The trail offers restrooms and picnic areas along the way, so pack a lunch and explore this historic part of Johnson City.

If you get back in time for dinner, I recommend stopping at Label Restaurant for your last meal in Johnson City. It was recently voted the best restaurant in Johnson City, and for a good reason. It is located in Downtown, and parking is available directly in front of the building. They

offer burgers,
sushi, steaks,
and fish. I get
the Kobe Beef
burger with



garlic parmesan fries, and it is easily my favorite meal I've had in Johnson City. The parmesan fries come with their special barbeque aioli sauce that is absolutely delicious. The prices are fair for the quality of food you get. Label is a local and native favorite alike, so be sure to give it a try at least once.

Johnson City offers many great restaurants, activities, and trails to enjoy while you're here. This guide is just a drop in the bucket of what you can find in this East Tennessee town. Two days is not enough time to explore Johnson City and the surrounding areas, so be sure to come back soon if you are just visiting!

About the Author:

Taylor Harr is a student at East Tennessee State University. She is an English major with a minor in digital marketing. Taylor has grown up in the Tri-Cities area her entire life. She enjoys reading, writing, playing soccer, and spending time with her family and dog.