

# Autumn at Great Smoky Mountains National Park

with John Gerlach and Dixie Calderone

October 20 – 26, 2024



*Figure 1 The typical autumn stream in the Smokies.*

We enjoy photographing the autumn colors in Great Smoky Mountains National Park and you will love it too. Please join us for an incredible photo workshop that is super fun while you become an accomplished landscape photographer.



*Figure 2 Bud Ogle Cabin at dawn with an inner glow provided with our LED lights.*

Many of you know me already through the hundreds of photo magazine articles and the best-selling instructional nature photography books I wrote over the years that include *Digital Landscape Photography*, *Digital Nature Photography*, *Close Up Photography in Nature*, *Digital Wildlife Photography*, and *Outdoor Flash Photography*.

I have been teaching photo workshops, leading international tours, and conducting seminars on nature photography since 1982. I believe in producing high-quality images, and I know you feel the same. Dixie and I are enthusiastic instructors who encourage you to master your camera and today we both use mirrorless cameras. Dixie is especially good with the Nikon Z9 camera and lenses she uses. We can teach all camera systems,

and particularly the Canon EOS R5 that John has used for years. John has written technical articles for Canon USA and continually discovers new ways to use cameras to produce better images. Please visit our website:

[www.gerlachnaturephoto.com](http://www.gerlachnaturephoto.com)

Our Facebook page is all nature photos that includes cutting-edge photo tips.

<https://www.facebook.com/JohnGerlachPhotoWorkshops>

Topics covered in this workshop:

- The best focusing techniques
- How to shoot razor-sharp images
- Creative compositions with emphasis on autumn color
- Compositions with panning and zooming
- Focus stacking for the ultimate in overall sharpness
- Focus stacking advantages for macro, landscape, and wildlife images
- How to shoot ideal exposures fast and easy
- HDR to manage extreme contrast
- Manual metering strategies
- Making the most of Auto ISO
- The best ways to photograph waterfalls
- The benefits of polarizing filters with fall color
- What to look for in a tripod and using it easily and effectively

- Mirrorless camera techniques that work so well

In this workshop we lead you to gorgeous locations where you are sure to find inspiring subjects to photograph. We show you how to select prime photo prospects from the chaos of nature. Then we demonstrate how to shoot superb images with high-quality techniques that anyone can learn and master. In the field we spend 100% of our time helping you shoot photos with your equipment. We demonstrate certain equipment and techniques like focus stacking and HDR.



*Figure 3 Aspen leaves swirling about a rock in Big Creek.*

To ensure that instruction is complete, informative, and helpful, the group size is **limited to only ten (10) participants**. That is a helpful 1:5 instructor/client ratio!

John presents three detailed instructional programs on **landscape, close-up, and wildlife photography**. The materials contained in these programs are suitable for beginners through professionals. We kindly critique your images during the week and present a spirited showing of everyone's best images made during the week on the final night.



*Figure 4 Mingus Mill*



*Figure 5 Sun rays at dawn from Clingman's Dome*

We ask each of you to bring some digital images or prints from home to share with the group. It is a fun way for us to see where you have been. If you would like a critique of your images, just ask, and we will gladly do this for you. We eat, breathe, and sleep nature photography at each workshop, but that does not mean it is all work and no play. We take our field trips at a leisurely pace, so there is time to relax and enjoy the beautiful Smoky Mountains. We get a little silly at times, but then laughter and humor enhance the workshop experience.



*Figure 6 Thousand Springs littered with leaves.*

Participating in this nature photography workshop is not only a super way to improve your nature photography and to learn about nature, but also a wonderful "learning vacation." It is always a pleasure to share experiences and knowledge with like-minded nature photographers. We believe in taking our field trips at the times that we would be out capturing our own images. Therefore, we take field trips every morning, generally beginning at

least an hour before sunrise, and stay out until late morning. Typically we eat breakfast together at a local restaurant where we were photographing. Getting up for our early morning field trips is not going to be as tough as it sounds after you see the first magnificent sunrise from Clingmans Dome (we leave at 6am for that one).



*Figure 7 Bull Elk*

Evening field trips begin in the late afternoon, depending on the day's destination, and we always stay out for the sunset, weather permitting. We will conduct our instructional programs during the middle of the day when photo conditions are less



favorable. All mornings and evenings are reserved for field trips.

### Field Trips

Field trips are 3-4 hours long, allowing you to shoot many outstanding nature images. We will visit scenic overlooks, leaf-covered forests in excellent autumn color, moss-covered streams, gorgeous waterfalls in the autumn woods, historic cabins and mills, elk fields, and much more of the incredible Smoky Mountains where subjects abound. We will carpool on each field trip.



*Figure 8 View from the Foothills Parkway.*

### Physical Abilities

This is a nature photography workshop, so participants must be physically able to participate with the group. While there is not any “extensive” hiking, there will be a little walking at times. Only normal physical exertion is necessary for this workshop. You must be able to walk slightly elevated trails and carry your equipment. Please know your abilities and if you have any questions about the physical nature of these workshops do not hesitate to ask.



*Figure 9 Fog in the valley*

## Bring Some Images from Home

We project your images with our computer and display them on a large screen. Give us a copy of your images on a jump drive to let us view them. Our presentation software only lets us view JPEGs, so submit only JPEGs please. Bringing your own laptop computer is highly encouraged to allow you to review your images shot during the week!

## Meals

We eat many meals as a group, but mealtimes are highly variable. The weather dictates our field trips. Meals are worked in around photography. We will eat breakfast as a group after the morning field trip. All other meals depend on our schedule. Since predicting the weather accurately is not possible, we simply react to what happens on site. In all cases, when we go to restaurants, everyone orders off the menu and pays for their meal then. Nobody has ever gone hungry, but we do work our meals in around taking beautiful images, not the other way around!



*Figure 10 Autumn cascades.*

### Non-participating Spouses

As we are headquartered in Gatlinburg, non-participating spouses are encouraged to attend. While participants are in the field, nonparticipating spouses have ample time to explore Gatlinburg, and everything is within easy walking distance. We encourage you to visit [www.gatlinburg.com](http://www.gatlinburg.com) to learn about all that this gateway city to the Smokies offers. Non-participating spouses are allowed to attend all of the meetings at the hotel. However, due to extremely limited parking at many locations, non-participating spouses cannot join field trips with their spouse. **It is crucial to keep the number of vehicles following us to as few as possible.**



*Figure 11 The view from Clingman's Dome*

Workshop Dates:

**October 20 – 26, 2024**

This workshop begins on the evening of October 20 and ends after viewing your images after the pizza dinner we provide on Oct. 25. The first meeting begins in the conference room at the Greystone Inn at 7 pm on Oct 20. October 26 is a travel day for you to return home or stay on to do things on your own.

### **Lodging**

Our workshop is based at the Greystone Lodge and your room is assigned close to our meeting room. Staying at the Greystone Lodge is ideal for beginning our early morning field trips! You must

make your own hotel reservations. Lodging is not included in the tuition. Please call (800) 451-9202 to make your room reservation at the hotel. Tell them you are attending the Gerlach Photography Workshop to get a lower rate. We have reserved a block of rooms to accommodate the group, but they will be released in mid-September, so do not wait to book the hotel for the six nights needed to attend our workshop.

### **Travel and Equipment Information**

After making a reservation, we will send you pre-departure information describing photographic equipment and clothing that is most suitable for the workshop.

### **How to Get to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.**

Since most of our workshop participants drive to the Smokies, we rely on carpooling. For those participants flying in, you should choose either the Knoxville McGhee Tyson Airport (TYS), which is only about 45 miles from Gatlinburg or the Asheville (North Carolina) Regional Airport (AVL) which is about 54 miles away. There are car rental companies at both airports. We recommend renting a car because it is convenient to have your own wheels. The fee for a taxi ride to Gatlinburg from Knoxville Airport is about \$85 one-way.

Please join us for a solid week of being fully immersed in nature and photography.

### Tuition

Tuition for the workshop is \$1500.

### Refund Policy

A \$750 non-refundable deposit is required to enroll in this workshop. The balance is due 90 days before departure.

### Cancellation fee:

89 to 61 days before departure: 50% of tuition is forfeited

60 or fewer days before departure: no refund

Gerlach Nature Photography understands that challenges in life may cause you to cancel your trip with us. Broken bones, illness, severe weather, natural disasters, covid concerns, sick pets, family troubles, and many other reasons may cause you to have to change your plans. No matter the reason for your cancellation, we will follow our cancellation policy exactly as written. Now that we are conducting many all-inclusive workshops, fees for rental housing or motels, ranch fees, snowcoach fees, and many other fees must often be paid far in advance, and most are non-refundable to us. Should you decide to cancel the photo workshop, we still

must pay for what you would have used even though you are not there. That means we cannot refund your money beyond what is in our cancellation policy. We wish we could be more generous, but we simply cannot afford to absorb significant financial losses because you cancel. When you enroll in our workshop, we reserve a spot for you and most often turn away others who would have gladly paid for your spot. Even though we often have a waiting list, in most cases those on the waiting list make other plans and are not available to replace you. If we can get a replacement for you (no guarantee) or you get a replacement, then we are happy to be more generous with the refund. We hope you understand our position. We wish to continue to offer high-quality photo workshops for small groups at reasonable prices. Gerlach Nature Photography encourages everyone to purchase Trip Cancellation Insurance that covers the most likely reasons you would cancel. And to be safe, you can buy 'Cancel for Any Reason' trip cancellation insurance for a higher price. Many companies that provide trip cancellation insurance are found on the web. Two well-known insurance companies include:

[www.allianztravelinsurance.com](http://www.allianztravelinsurance.com)

[www.travelguard.com](http://www.travelguard.com)

***To Enroll:***



*Please contact us first to make sure space is available in the workshop. The group size is limited to ten providing a super experience for everyone.*

**Contact:**

***Dixie Calderone***

***812-350-0799***

***John Gerlach – Dixie Calderone***

***johngerlachphotography@gmail.com***

*We can take a credit card (3.5% service fee applies) over the phone, or you can save the 3.5% and send a check to:*

**John Gerlach**

**PO Box 318**

**Island Park ID 83429**

**812-350-0799**

***Make your check payable to: Gerlach Nature  
Photography***



*Figure 12 This is a 7-shot focus stack of Big Creek at peak autumn color.*



*Figure 13 After a rainy evening, the water saturates the colors, and the views are magnificent.*



*Figure 14 The colors from the viewpoints high in the Smoky Mountains.*



*Figure 15 Mingo falls is worth the 161 steps up to the viewing platform!*