



Bridge Day attracts BASE jumpers who parachute off the bridge.

Immediate Release

Bridge Day Turns 40 this October; Here's Why That's Wonderful

FAYETTEVILLE, W. Va., May 13, 2020 -- This year marks the 40th anniversary of [Bridge Day](#), Southern West Virginia's heart-pounding, high-flying and charmingly wild festival that celebrates the life-changing, architecturally significant [New River Gorge Bridge](#) in Southern West Virginia. Held the third Saturday of October since 1980 - this year, that's Oct. 17 - spectators line the closed-to-traffic bridge to watch some of the world's most experienced BASE (Building, Antenna, Span and Earth) jumpers parachute, rappel and catapult 876 feet to the [New River](#) below.

The event has evolved into a wonderfully raucous weekend celebration, with many celebrants setting up a home base at [Adventures on the Gorge](#), an adventure resort overlooking the bridge. The resort offers



Bridge Day weekend coincides with the end of Gauley Season.

accommodations in freestanding cabins along with wild adventures like rafting the New and Gauley Rivers, rock climbing, kayaking and ziplining.

Although the COVID-19 crisis will inevitably impact the event in ways that are not yet clear, [Official Bridge Day](#) is “officially” on.

Bridge Day coincides with “Gauley Season,” which occurs on 22 days in September and October. During that period, the nearby Gauley River is flooded with Summersville Lake water released with precision by the Army Corps of Engineers. The resulting foaming, churning water continues below Summersville Dam to create the daunting Class V rapids with names like Lost Paddle and Pillow Rock.

“This is the weekend we all get to show our wild side,” said Roger Wilson, CEO of Adventures on the Gorge and a lifelong rafting enthusiast.

“Although there will certainly be some adjustments this year to promote social distancing, the 40-year milestone of Bridge Day is incredibly significant to the region. Plus, it is great fun to watch the jumpers. I raft rivers for a living and I’m pretty intrepid, but these BASE jumpers have nerves of steel.”

More about the New River Gorge Bridge

The bridge is a marvel of innovative engineering. Completed in 1977 at a cost of \$37 million, the New River Gorge Bridge is the longest single-arch bridge in the Western Hemisphere, the third-longest single-arch bridge in the world and the third-highest bridge in the U.S. Spanning the 3,030-foot New River Gorge 876 feet above the river, the bridge is the most-photographed site in the state.

The bridge cut travel time across the gorge from 45 minutes to 45 seconds, effectively opening up Southern West Virginia to travelers and significantly improving the lives of West Virginians who live in the region. Even though it is not yet 50 years old, the bridge is listed on the National Register of Historic Places because of its life-changing impact on locals and its architectural significance.

The bridge can be experienced on a thrilling [Bridge Walk](#) along a 24-inch catwalk situated 25 feet below the bridge’s surface and by rafting beneath it on the New River. Visitors can learn more about the bridge at the [National Park Service’s Canyon Rim Visitor Center](#), adjacent to the northern end of the bridge. Guests of Adventures on the Gorge can also enjoy and photograph the bridge daily from the spacious outdoor dining deck at [Smokey’s](#) and a variety of perches overlooking the river.

More about the Bridge Day Festival

Plans are in the works for this year’s events. In previous years, the festival has included “Taste of Bridge Day” featuring food from the area’s top restaurants, live music and other fun events.

More about Gauley Season

Called the “Beast of the East,” the Gauley River during Gauley Season is one of the best river-centric experiences in the world. The Army Corps of Engineers releases water on [22 days](#) beginning Friday, Sept. 11 and concluding Sunday, Oct. 18.

Rafting the [Upper Gauley](#) during Gauley Season is considered by rafting enthusiasts to be a bucket list paddling adventure, and rafters travel from around the world to experience it. The section drops more than 335 feet in less than 13 miles, resulting in high-volume, technically challenging water. The Upper Gauley is recommended only for experienced rafters over the age of 15. The slightly less challenging [Lower Gauley River](#) section also features Class V rapids.

Adventures on the Gorge offers a variety of rafting options, including a two-day rafting adventure with overnight camping and a [Gauley River Rafting Pass](#).

Potential visitors can stay up-to-date about Bridge Day, Gauley Season and Adventures on the Gorge travel packages by connecting with the resort on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [TripAdvisor](#), [YouTube](#), and [Vimeo](#) and by signing up for AOTG [e-newsletter](#).

Reservations can be made [online](#) or by calling 1-855-379-8738.

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What to know about Adventures on the Gorge

Named one of the top six adventure resorts in the country by [U.S. News & World Report](#), Adventures on the Gorge is located on more than 250 acres along the rim of the majestic New River Gorge near Fayetteville, W.Va. The resort provides an array of outdoor experiences including whitewater rafting on the New and Gauley Rivers, aerial adventures, rock climbing, rappelling, kayaking, stand up paddle boarding, fishing, mountain biking and hiking. There are also restaurants, bars and shops as well as a small-group conference center. Visitors can choose from a variety of [accommodations](#) and [vacation packages](#).

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