

Roadside Café Somewhere in the Appalachians near Boone, North Carolina

Reviewed by Kyle Potvin

The name of this restaurant actually escapes me. It didn't have a name that you would remember. In all seriousness, it may have been 'FOOD'. Additionally, I don't even know for sure if it was in North Carolina or in Tennessee. However, the experience I had at this little restaurant along highway 321 was one that I will never forget.

After a day of hiking around on the Appalachian Trail and not paying attention to my stomach as much as I regularly do, I finally came to the conclusion that I really needed to eat. We had a drive ahead of us to get back to Johnson City, Tennessee and decided to stop at the first place we came across on the way there. After a bit, we found this little diner and stopped. I distinctly remember wondering out loud in the parking lot whether or not the place accepted cash as payment. Not being from those parts, we didn't bring anything to barter. However, several state patrol cars were parked in front, with their lights and sirens off, so we took that as a good sign and made our way in.

This place was not one where you would dress up and take your significant other with plans of proposing. It was simply a country diner. Three menu items were written in chalk on the black board, each priced at less than four dollars! One was a mountain trout dinner, another a ham dinner, and I don't remember the third. I saw mountain trout and kinda stopped there. When I placed my order for the fish, the waitress stopped me mid-sentence and yelled back to the cook "how many fish did you catch today?" This huge man came out from the back and replied "three, two left." Apparently you can get fresh seafood in the mountains.

The meal included the pan fried trout, broccoli, salad, mashed potatoes, a dinner roll, a piece of pie and a glass of milk. Did I mention it was less than four dollars? It was delicious. I became chatting buddies with the state troopers enjoying coffee and left with a new appreciation for home cooking. It was obvious that there was a reason this place remained open in the middle of nowhere. If you ever find yourself driving from North Carolina to Tennessee on highway 321, wait until you see the 'FOOD' sign to eat. You may be apprehensive, but you won't leave hungry or disappointed.

