



2026

TrailLink Unlimited 

Guides



Salem Lake Trail
North Carolina



Salem Lake Trail

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Originally created in 1911, the 365-acre Salem Lake offers a recreational haven on Winston-Salem's east side. Holding approximately a billion gallons of water, the lake provides a third of the drinking water for the city, as well as exceptional recreational opportunities. Those who love to fish, boat, kayak, bird-watch, or simply stretch their legs can enjoy the 1,400-acre park surrounding the lake.

Following the perimeter of the lake, the Salem Lake Trail offers a lush, mostly shaded 7-mile loop on a primarily natural-surface trail for mountain biking, running, or walking. There is a wheelchair-accessible section of approximately a mile near the lake's marina and playground area. Mile markers are visible for those traveling counterclockwise, which is the easiest direction to travel due to the trail's grade.

About the Route

Leaving the Salem Lake Marina Center, there is a large parking lot, as well as restrooms in the marina office. Boat rentals and fishing supplies are also available here. Fishing for crappie, bream, bass, catfish, or perch is permitted from a boat or from the main pier; a fee is charged. Keep in mind that the gate to Salem Lake is locked every evening at 7:30 p.m., so park outside the gate if you don't think you'll make it back in time.

In 0.3 miles, the expansive and brightly colored Salem Lake Playground comes into view. This area also offers parking, restrooms, and drinking fountains. Be aware of a hill that climbs 35 feet at an 8% grade at roughly the 1-mile mark from the marina—though it does give you a great view of the area with a bench at the top.

From the playground, the trail reaches the Linville Parking Area on the east end of the lake in 3.4 miles (about the halfway point of your trip). There is another restroom and drinking fountain available here. About 200 feet from the end of the parking lot, the trail begins to parallel Linville Road over the water. Continuing along the north side of the lake, mature trees envelop the trail.

From Linville Road, in 2.5 miles, the trail reaches a small bridge that provides a terrific vantage point for picturesque views of the lake and bird-watching. In 0.5 miles, the trail has a large elevation gain on either side of the spillway where Salem Creek meets the lake. A nearly mile-long stretch of pavement begins just before the dam, allowing for a smooth ride up and coast down that continues back to the marina.

Connections

Near the Salem Lake Marina, the Salem Lake Trail connects with the [Salem Lake Greenway](#).



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States: North Carolina

Counties: Forsyth

Length: 7miles

Trail end points: Linville Rd. SE to Salem Lake Rd.

Trail surfaces: Asphalt,Dirt

Trail category: Greenway/Non-RT

Trail activities: Fishing,Mountain Biking, Walking, Wheelchair Accessible

Parking & Trail Access

The Salem Lake Trail runs in a complete loop around Salem Lake.

Parking is available at:

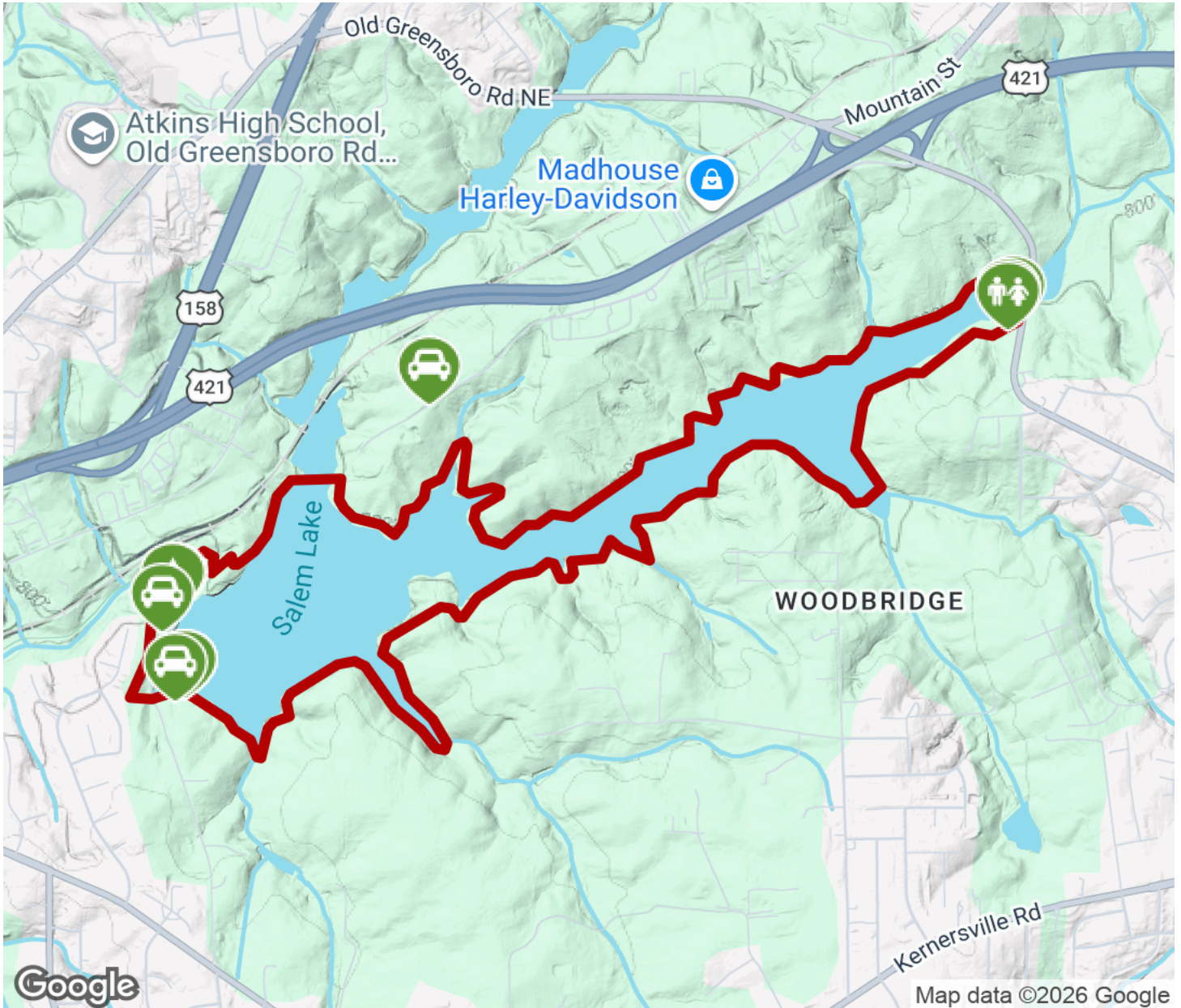
- 815 Salem Lake Rd (Winston-Salem)
- 226 Linville Rd SE (Winston-Salem)

See [TrailLink Map](#) for all parking options and detailed directions.



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Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



TrailLink
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

TrailLink.com