

North Georgia Mountains

Attractions and Points of Interest

The **North Georgia Mountains** hold the highest point in the entire state, Brasstown Bald. In addition, this neck of the woods is responsible for the 'Cabbage Patch Kid' mania, and is home to the Alpine village of Helen, which celebrates the annual Oktoberfest fall festival. These mountains are also infused with a rich heritage of culture and folklore, having been home to an American Indian civilization as well as the site of the first Gold Rush in the United States. Most importantly, The North Georgia Mountains appeal to those who love natural beauty and an easy-going life style. From fine dining, to adventurous outdoor recreation, you can find it here. 'Breath taking', 'inspirational', and 'beautiful' are but a few words used to describe this region we call "Our North Georgia Mountains."

Surround yourself with the beauty, relaxation and natural fun that are uniquely Georgia's Blue Ridge Mountain Experience. Leave your cell phone and laptop at home and enjoy the splendor and exhilaration of a day hiking to nearby waterfalls, horseback riding on forested trails or whitewater rafting in our unspoiled mountain beauty. Looking for quiet romance or peace of mind? Try spending the day watching the sun glimmer across the aqua blue waters of Lake Blue Ridge, Lake Nottely or Lake Chatuge. If you prefer Rivers there is crystal clear Toccoa River, Nottely River, Hiawassee River, Ocoee River and Nantahala River, all within a 1 hour drive or less. Check out any of the links below:

Rafting:

www.rollingthunderriverco.com

www.theblueridgehighlander.com

www.rafting.com/georgia-whitewater-rafting.htm

www.georgiagetaway.com/recreation/river.shtml

www.oceerafting.com

Golf:

The best golf courses in the entire state of Georgia are found right here in the North Georgia mountains. Some of the most challenging golf courses around can be found in Union, Towns and Fannin Counties. Not to mention our North Carolina neighboring counties.

www.brasstownvalley.com

www.butternutcreekgolf.com

www.theridgeresort.com

Hiking, Biking & ATV Trails

The North Georgia Mountains offer a variety of hiking trails from the paved Anna Ruby Falls Trail which leads to one of North Georgia's many waterfalls to the first (or last) steps of the Appalachian Trail. There are many hiking trails, bike trails, horse trails and ATV trails. Several of the trails lead to waterfalls; all the hiking trails will allow you to see some of the outdoor beauty of the Georgia Mountains.

Union County Georgia

Located along the North Carolina border, Union County Georgia is home to Vogel State Park, Lake Nottely and Georgia's highest point: Brasstown Bald. With over half the county's acreage located within Chattahoochee National Forest, Union County offers a variety of outdoor recreation choices. There are 18 hiking trails, 6 bike trails, 2 atv trails, 1 publicly owned camping area and 2 waterfalls. Follow the link below:

www.mountaintravelguide.com/georgia/union/Union%20County.htm

Fannin County Georgia

Located in the North Georgia Mountains, Fannin County offers a variety of outdoor recreation choices. There are 20 hiking trails, 9 bike trails, a horse trail, 6 publicly owned camping areas and 5 waterfalls. Follow the link below:

www.mountaintravelguide.com/georgia/fannin/fannin_county.htm

Towns County Georgia

Towns County offers a variety of outdoor recreation choices. There are 5 hiking trails and 11 waterfalls. In the Towns County. Follow the link below:

www.mountaintravelguide.com/georgia/towns/Towns%20County.htm

Boating:

Lake Nottely Reservoir lies in the state of Georgia on the southeastern edge of the Tennessee River watershed, nestled in the mountains and valleys of the Chattahoochee National Forest. The reservoir features a beach and camping area and is a great place for viewing wildlife, fishing and boating. Nottely Reservoir serves a number of purposes other than recreation, including flood control and power generation.

Lake Chatuge Reservoir, located on the Hiwassee River in western North Carolina, is 13 miles long and extends southeast from the dam into north Georgia. The reservoir is named after a nearby Cherokee settlement.

Sport fishing is popular at Chatuge, both in the reservoir and in the Hiwassee River below the dam. Concrete weirs have been installed below the dam to provide a steady flow of water and to increase oxygen levels for fish and other aquatic animals. Wade fishing for trout is popular here since fish are attracted to the weirs, where food is abundant. Chatuge is operated for many purposes, including flood control, power generation, and augmentation of water flows for navigation downstream.

Lake Blue Ridge Reservoir is on the Toccoa River in north Georgia, stretching 11 miles southeast from the dam. The river flows northwest into Tennessee, where it's called the Ocoee River. Blue Ridge Reservoir is located in the Chattahoochee National Forest of north Georgia. There's a scenic overlook above the dam and a shaded picnic area near the powerhouse. The canoe and kayak launch site below the dam gives non motorized boaters access to the Toccoa River. The river is noted among fishermen for its sunfish, trout, and bass. When water is released from the Blue Ridge Dam to generate electricity, the river becomes a class I-II float through the Georgia hills. Besides providing power and recreational opportunities, Blue Ridge also helps control flooding.

Dining:

Eating traditional southern Appalachian foods is part of the fun when you visit the Blue Ridge area. The favorite, of course, is local mountain trout -- fried, broiled, pecan-cruste, smoked -- pick your variety. There is apple everything - apple bread, apple butter, fried apple pies, apple cider, you need to taste them all! Of course, there's Georgia ice cream -- i.e. grits -- for breakfast, along with hot cat-head biscuits with honey or sorghum syrup. Barbeque ribs, country ham, fried chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, watermelon. There are many fine restaurants in the local area.

Local Points of Interest:

Union County

Appalachian Trail – A wilderness footpath over 2,100 miles along the crest of the Appalachian mountains, through fourteen states, Towns and Union counties, with it's southern terminus at Springer Mountain on the Gilmer-Fannin border.

Brasstown Bald - The highest peak in Georgia, rising 4784 feet. From the observation tower on summit, there are breathtaking 360 panoramic views of four states, and on a clear day it's possible to see Atlanta. The mountain is open daily from memorial Day through October and on weekends in early spring and late fall (weather permitting). 706-896-2556.

Sorghum Festival – The Blairsville Jaycees will be cookin' and jarrin' Sorghum Syrup, celebrating the ancient art of cooking sweet syrup from Sorghum Cane. See the Grinding Mill, Arts & Crafts, Biskit Eatin' Contest, and Parade the 2nd, 3rd, & 4th weekends in October.

Union County Courthouse – A Romanesque style brick and granite structure built in 1899, unique in it's Appalachian Georgia setting. Visit the museum in the courthouse. 706-745-5493.

Cooper's Creek Scenic & Recreation Area – 1,240 acre area for camping, picnicking, hiking, fishing, and hunting. Lots of trout in these waters.

DeSoto Falls Scenic Area – Mountainous 650 acre area with 2,000 - 4,000 feet elevations and 3 beautiful waterfalls, camping, fishing, picnicking, and hiking.

Dukes Creek Falls – Drops about 150 feet down a sheer granite canyon into Dukes Creek. The area has scenic beauty, excellent gold panning, and a slippery-rock water slide. An observation deck by the parking area offers a great view of the falls.

Georgia Mountain Experiment Station – A branch of the University of Georgia established in 1930 to provide a diversified program in agricultural research and demonstrations. Call 706-745-6197 for tours.

Helton Creek Falls – Double falls, that drop more than a 100 feet, set in deep hardwood forest. A 300 yard trail leads to the falls.

Lake Nottely – A 4,180 acre lake with 106 miles of shoreline. Boating, swimming, fishing, picnicking, and camping. Two marinas and several public boat ramps.

Lake Winfield Scott – Clear 18 acre lake high in the mountains with picnicking, camping, swimming, fishing, boating, and hiking. There is a covered pavilion and bath house near swimming area.

Trackrock Archeological Area – 52 acres with preserved petroglyph of ancient Indian origin. Carvings resemble animal and bird tracks, crosses, circles, and human footprints. Historical markers locate the area.

Vogel State Park – One of Georgia's oldest and most popular state parks. Major facilities include 280 acres, 110 tent and trailer sites, 36 rental cottages, store, 20 acre lake, miniature golf, swimming beach, 4 picnic shelters, pioneer camping, pedal boats, and family group shelter. There are 17 miles of hiking trails. 706-745-2628.

Fannin County

Ocoee Whitewater Center – Site of the 1996 Olympic Whitewater events, this one of a kind environment combines information resources, waterplay, picnicking, hiking, history & more. 423-496-5197 or 423-338-5201.

Ducktown Basin Museum* – Exhibits depicting the Native American & mining heritage of the Copper Basin.

Downtown McCaysville – A twin city of Copperhill, TN, McCaysville is host to historic buildings, unique restaurants, shops, & the River Park.

Horseshoe Bend River Park – This park is a picture-perfect setting of the Toccoa River, with playgrounds, picnic shelters, horseshoe pits, volleyball courts, grills, restrooms, & a boat ramp.

The Cohutta Wilderness – 35,268 acres of National Forest land designated as a wilderness area. The largest wilderness area east of the Mississippi, with elevations from 950 feet low to 4,200 feet on Big Frog Mountain.

Mercier Apple Orchards – Open July through December, quality apples & cider, additional fresh fruits in season, sorghum & sourwood honey, an on-premises bakery for mouth watering homemade pies & pastries.

Downtown Blue Ridge – The historic downtown features many antique & specialty stores, the Blue Ridge Depot (home of the Blue Ridge Scenic Railway) built in 1906, the Fannin County Courthouse* built in 1936, & a lovely City Park with picnic areas, playground & gazebo.

Chattahoochee National Forest Fish Hatchery – Constructed in 1937 by the USFS, the hatchery produces 850,000 rainbow trout each year, which are stocked into waters of north Georgia. Tours are available.

Blue Ridge Scenic Railway – Enjoy a 26 mile roundtrip along the scenic Toccoa River, spring through fall. Trip begins and ends in Blue Ridge with a one hour layover in McCaysville for eating and shopping. In 2000, another trip will be added to Ellijay.

Aska Road/Toccoa River Area – Experience tubing, canoeing, and fishing the Toccoa River. Use the Aska Trails System for hiking and biking and its home to the Annual Blue Ridge Mountain Adventure Race.

Lake Blue Ridge – Located in the center of Fannin County, this is a recreational lake with a full service marina. Boating, skiing, fishing, jet skiing, & swimming.

Waterfalls of the Toccoa Ranger District – Long Creek Falls, Fall Branch Falls, Sea Creek Falls, & Little Rock Creek Falls can be accessed from short & easy to more strenuous hikes.

Towns County

Accommodations – Towns County boasts a variety of accommodations from upscale resorts and romantic bed and breakfasts to hideaway cabins.

Brasstown Wilderness – In 1986, Congress designated 11,405 acres within the Chattahoochee National Forest as the Brasstown Wilderness, which does not include Brasstown Bald Mountain.

Lake Chatuge – Built by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) in 1941 and covering 7,000 acres, the lake offers many recreational opportunities.

Georgia Mountain Fair – Started in 1950, it is an enduring attraction held in late summer. It's Pioneer Village preserves the heritage and skills of early mountain settlers. Crafts, produce, and talent fill each year's fair. 706-896-4191.

Fall Festival – October marks the opening of the Fall Festival, which includes the famous Georgia's Official State Fiddler's Convention. For ten days this is a look into the past. 706-896-4191.

Country Music Superstar Concerts – Nine big concerts of country music's great national stars. Come to the Anderson Music Hall at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds on selected Saturdays for two showings May through October. 706-896-4191.

Fred Hamilton Rhododendron Garden – Located within the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds in Hiawassee, this famous rhododendron garden is the largest in the state with approximately 400 varieties and 2,000 plants. Open to the public year round, free of charge, the garden always has something blooming in spring: dogwoods, tulip magnolias, native azaleas, lady slippers, and trilliums in addition to the rhododendrons which bloom spring, summer, and into early fall.

Former Georgia Governor Zell Miller has said of his home county, "The combination of all these things in one community is a rare occurrence. It is what people refer to as "quality of life". I challenge you to experience it in the Enchanted Valleys of Towns County!"