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#9 Water Adventure: Area Waterfalls and Whitewater

Easiest More Difficult Most Difficult GPS Fix

1 Benton Falls. Located on the Benton Falls Trail in the Overhill country of southeastern Tennessee. From Blue Ridge take GA 5 north to McCaysville, then turn left on Tennessee Highway 68. In Ducktown, take U.S. 64 west past the Ocoee Whitewater Center, then go 11 miles to Forest Service Road 77, located by the Cherokee National Forest Service / Chilhowee Recreation office. Turn right on Hwy 77 up Chilhowee Mountain approximately 7.3 miles and turn right at Chilhowee Campground. Go 0.4 miles to the Chilhowee Recreation Area. The trail is 1.5 miles to the falls.

2 Turtletown Falls. Turtletown Creek Trail follows Turtletown creek and loops back to Shinbone Ridge. Beautiful views emerge of the Hiwassee River below along with overlooks of two major waterfalls, Turtletown Falls and Lower Turtletown Falls. From Blue Ridge take GA 5 north to McCaysville, then turn left on Tennessee Highway 68. Go north onto Tennessee Highway 68 for approximately 15 miles. Bear left on Farner Road (CR 2317) following it for 2.8 miles. Turn left on FS 1166, there should be a sign for the falls. Travel this dirt/gravel road for 1.5 miles to the trail head.

3 Ocoee River Rapids. Home to the 1996 Olympic whitewater events, this is world class water. A great place to bring a picnic, do advanced paddling, hike and bike. In addition to whitewater sports, the Ocoee Whitewater Center has a one-mile hiking trail which crosses a 330 foot suspension bridge and circles the center. The trail is entirely accessible for those who are physically challenged. There are an additional 20 miles of trails for hikers and mountain bikers. From Blue Ridge take GA 5 north to McCaysville, then turn left on Tennessee Highway 68. In Ducktown, take U.S. 64 west for 6 miles to the Ocoee Whitewater Center on the left.

4 Jacks River Falls. Located in the Cohutta Wilderness Area on the Jacks River, this beautiful waterfall is the most visited site in the Cohutta and is reached by a 4.5 mile trail through rugged wilderness. It is highly recommended to get the USFS map of the Cohutta Wilderness and carry the 10 essentials. For the shortest hike in, approach from the northwest access point. Start in Ellijay and drive Hwy 52 west to Chatsworth. From Chatsworth, go north on US 411 for 13 miles to Cisco. Turn right on Old Hwy 2. Continue on this road 9.6 miles to FS 62 on the right. Turn right on FS 62 and go 4.4 miles to Beech Bottom Trailhead. **N34° 59.44' W84° 35.28'** Hiking experience highly recommended. Rugged and remote wilderness.

5 Fall Branch Falls. A double waterfall with mountain laurel and rhododendron growing along the trail and creek bank. The hike to the falls is about 30 minutes round trip. In Blue Ridge, follow Aska Road south for eight miles. Turn right on Stanley Creek Rd. (Toccoa Riverside Restaurant is on the left). The trailhead is about three miles on the right (.2 miles from where pavement ends). TIPS: never climb on a waterfall. It is very slippery and dangerous. There is a nice platform in front of the falls. **N 34° 47.017' W084° 18.166'**

6 Amicalola Falls & Trails. About 21 miles from Ellijay on Hwy 52 is a spectacular 729-foot falls, the tallest cascading waterfall east of the Mississippi River. Also, a strenuous 8.5 mile approach trail leads from the

park to Springer Mountain, the start of the famous Appalachian Trail. There is an optional trail that provides stroller and wheelchair access to this trail. Inquire at gate. **N 34° 33.263' W084° 15.027'**

7 Long Creek Falls. Go 13.5 miles south on Aska Road to its end. Turn right onto Newport Road, go 4.5 miles to end. Turn left onto Doublehead Gap Road, cross a concrete bridge where the road will become dirt/gravel. Continue .3 miles and turn right onto dirt/gravel Forest Service Road 58 (just past the cemetery and church). Ride 5.3 miles on FS 58 to Three Forks area (Hikers Crossing Sign). Noontootla Creek is on the right as you drive. The trail begins on the north side of the road (on the left) and starts as a gradual hike alongside Long Creek. There are three short ascents before reaching the blue blazed side trail to the falls at 1.1 miles. **N 34° 39.815' W084° 11.053'**

8 Toccoa River, Swinging Bridge. This is a beautiful area with huge old growth hemlocks, whitewater and shoals on the Toccoa River. A popular destination for day-hikers, Benton MacKaye Trail through hikers & paddlers making the journey down the Toccoa River Canoe Trail. Plan on a weekday visit to avoid crowds. The swinging bridge over the Toccoa River is a 260 foot long bridge and the longest swinging bridge east of the Mississippi River. From the intersection of Hwy 515 and Hwy 5 (McDonalds) in Blue Ridge, follow Hwy 515 East approximately 4 miles to the traffic light at Hwy 60. Turn right and go to the stop sign; then turn left on Hwy 60. Go 1.5 miles into Morganton, then turn right on Hwy 60 South toward Dahlenega for 11.3 miles passing Skeenah Mill. Another .7 miles on the right is FS 816, turn right and follow this rough gravel road (no low cars) 3 miles to the parking area. A short hike down to the Toccoa River on the Benton MacKaye/ Duncan Ridge National Recreation Trail brings you to the Swinging Bridge. **N 34° 44.350' W084° 10.213'**

9 Sea Creek Falls. A 30-foot waterfall with a shallow pool at the bottom, about one hour from Blue Ridge. From Morganton, follow GA Hwy 60 South 17.7 miles to the Cooper Creek Recreation Area turnoff on the left. Continue on FS Road 4, 2.9 miles to a fork. Turn left and follow road .3 miles. Park and walk .1 mile to the falls.

10 Vogel State Park. One of Georgia's prettiest state parks, including scenic Lake Trahlyta, which has a swimming beach with paddle boats. A short hiking trail along the lake leads you to an observation deck to view the falls. Directly below Lake Trahlyta is a stepping stone waterfall. Go south from Blairsville on US 19/129 for eleven miles. Just before the entrance to Vogel State Park on the right is a one lane pullover which allows handicap access to view the falls.

11 Helton Creek Falls. There are two falls on Helton Creek near Blairsville. A short trail descends to the first waterfall then climbs to the second larger waterfall. Please be careful – the rocks are slippery! From Blue Ridge, take Hwy 515 north to Blairsville. In Blairsville, take US 19/129 south about 11 miles. Turn left onto Helton Creek Road, the first road past the entrance to Vogel State Park. Go 2.2 miles; the road turns to gravel. There will be a small parking lot on the right in a curve, and the trail is marked.

12 Desoto Falls. There are five beautiful waterfalls along the 3-mile section of the DeSoto Falls Trail. Trail begins at the bridge in the lower loop of DeSoto Falls Recreation Area. From Blairsville, take US 19/129 south toward Dahlenega for 15 miles. The entrance will be on the right at the bottom of the mountain.

13 Ravens Cliffs Falls. Gorgeous falls cleaving through a cliff. From Blairsville, take 19/129 south for 6.9 miles, turn left on 180 and go .9 miles to Hwy. 348/Richard Russell Scenic Hwy., follow Richard Russell Scenic Hwy. 11.3 miles to parking area. 3.3 mile trail (one way) begins at 3000 Richard Russell Hwy. (Hwy. 348), Helen, GA.

14 Dukes Creek Falls. A majestic waterfall that drops 150 feet down a sheer granite canyon into Dukes Creek. Scenic beauty and gold panning opportunities. Trailhead for this 1.25-mile trail is at the parking lot. Round trip is 2.5 miles. From Blairsville, take 19/129 south for 6.9 miles, turn left on 180 and go .9 miles to Hwy. 348/Richard Russell Scenic Hwy., follow Richard Russell Scenic Hwy. 13.3 miles to parking area. 1699 Richard Russell Hwy, Helen, GA.

15 Anna Ruby Falls. About 1.25 hours from Blue Ridge. From the town of Helen, GA, go north 1 mile on Georgia Highway 17 to Robertstown and the intersection of Hwy. 17 and 356. Turn right on Hwy. 356 and go 1.3 miles. Turn left on Anna Ruby Falls Road and go to the entrance booth. This 0.4-mile paved foot trail takes you along the banks of Smith Creek from the visitor center to the two observation decks near the base of the twin waterfalls.

16 High Shoals Falls. About an hour from Blue Ridge. A succession of five waterfalls grace this 170-acre scenic area. These falls have an estimated total vertical drop of 300 feet. The High Shoals Trail (1.2 miles) follows along High Shoals Creek to observation decks beside two of the five streams cascading in the High Shoals Scenic Area. Take Hwy 515 to Blairsville turning right onto US 19/129 south for 6.9 miles, turn left on 180, and drive 13 miles, turn right on GA 75 South, in .35 miles turn left on Indian Grave Gap Road. Follow this road for 1.5 miles, trail head will be on your left.

A Word to the Wise ... GPS and cellphones do not work reliably here, please don't rely upon them. Be prepared for wilderness and carry the 10 Essentials (wiki or Google it). See the USFS web site at www.fs.fed.us/conf/. The law of the forest is "leave no trace". See www.LNT.org for info. Please pack in all you will need and pack out all your trash. If you build a fire, never leave it unattended. Use good judgment when hiking, particularly around waterfalls where rocks are often wet, moss covered and slippery. If hiking during hunting season, wear a brightly colored vest. Carry a copy of Trails Illustrated Map #777, available at our Visitor Centers.



FANNIN COUNTY
CHAMBER & CVB

Main Visitor Center: 152A Orvin Lance Drive, Blue Ridge, GA 30513 1-800-899-MTNS

Downtown Visitor Center: 282 West Main St., Blue Ridge

Downtown McCaysville Visitor Center: 53 East Market St.

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