Welcome to the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests in Georgia! Featuring nearly 118,000 acres of designated wilderness, hundreds of miles of clear-running streams and rivers, 850 miles of recreation trails, and dozens of campgrounds, picnic areas, and other recreation opportunities, these lands are rich in natural scenery, history, and culture. We hope this guide helps you to see and explore this beautiful area. Sixteen recreation opportunities in north Georgia are highlighted that are all easily accessible by car and within leisurely driving distance of the featured communities. If you decide to come back, there’s more to explore. With 867,000 acres of the finest outdoor recreation opportunities and natural resources in Georgia, there is always a new adventure awaiting so come find yourself in the woods!

Plan your trip and play it safe!

We want you to stay safe! The most effective way to prevent mishaps is to adequately prepare for your travel. Here are a few tips to help you ensure a safe and enjoyable trip.

Let someone know - Always tell someone your plans for travel. Tell them where you are going and when you expect to return.

Don’t rely on your cell phone - Cell phone coverage may be limited. Be prepared that your cell phone may not work while traveling through the mountains.

Protect your valuables - When leaving your vehicle unattended, hide all valuables from view. Secure your vehicle.

Know that GPS routes are not always best - GPS navigation systems may suggest taking routes not identified on this map. In some cases, these routes may be impassable or unsafe.

Drive with care - Many of the featured roads on this map are favorite routes for motorcyclists and bicyclists, too. Drive cautiously and don’t forget to fill up with gas before you leave!

Be prepared for all weather - In the mountains, weather can change very quickly. Visit www.weather.gov for weather updates.

Russell-Brasstown National Scenic Byway

Cool in the summer, mild in the winter, the Russell-Brasstown Scenic Byway encircles the headwaters of the Chattahoochee River and is surrounded by the Chattahoochee National Forest. The drive is ideal for viewing colorful wildflowers or dazzling fall color. Secluded valley views of Wilderness Areas abound along the way. Stretch yout legs at Dukes Creek Falls A, where a mile-long hiking path delivers you to a pretty poolside below a cascading waterfall. Keep an eye out your window for views of Mount Yonah’s B prominent summit in the distance. Cross the famed Appalachian Trail at Hogpen Gap. Linger atop Brasstown Bald C, Georgia’s tallest mountain, to absorb all 360-degrees of rolling highlands and learn more about the area at the visitor center there. Hike or bike at Smithgall Woods State Park D to explore hardwoods, trout streams and watch for wildlife. A rustic haven of cottages, campsites, lodge rooms and trails, is easily accessible from the byway at Unicoi State Park E. Roll up the 0.4-mile paved path to Anna Ruby Falls F, and see where two creeks converge in the rare, 150-foot twin falls. Share a meal at a cozy picnic site along the way, or break bread in Helen, a Bavarian-themed hamlet located near the byway. The 40-mile loop follows State Highways 348, 180, and 177S. Allow at least three hours driving time.

The 60/180/129/19 Scenic Loop

Winding mountain highways surrounding the Blood Mountain Wilderness Area offer travelers amazing views and many opportunities for outdoor adventures. Traveling along U.S. Highways 129 and 19, and State Highways 180 and 60, this 40-mile loop offers much to see and do. On Hwy. 129, visit DeSoto Falls Recreation Area B for peaceful, streamside camping under large hemlock trees, and trail access to beautiful waterfalls views. I travel off the beaten path a short distance to reach a quick and easy trail to Helton Creek Falls A. Nearby Vogel State Park B, a 233-acre historic park located at the base of Blood Mountain, offers camping, hiking, backpacking, boating, fishing and swimming. Just past Vogel, journey onto Hwy. 180 to be completely immersed in the Blood Mountain Wilderness. Along the way, Wolf Pen Gap and Noseeum Lovers are renowned for wildflowers and wildlife. Lake Winfield Scott Recreation Area D is a perfect picnic spot, with historic pavilions, hiking trails, and a scenic mountain lake. It is also an ideal spot to view spectacular autumn colors. Continue the loop on Hwy 60, where a stop at Woody Gap G allows a hike on the famed Appalachian Trail. Just down the road, Chestatee Overlook H gives another grand view of the Wilderness. Plan at least three hours driving time for this winding route.

Tell us what you think!

We would appreciate your thoughts on how we can improve this product. Contact us at ChatOconeepublicAffairs@fs.fed.us

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