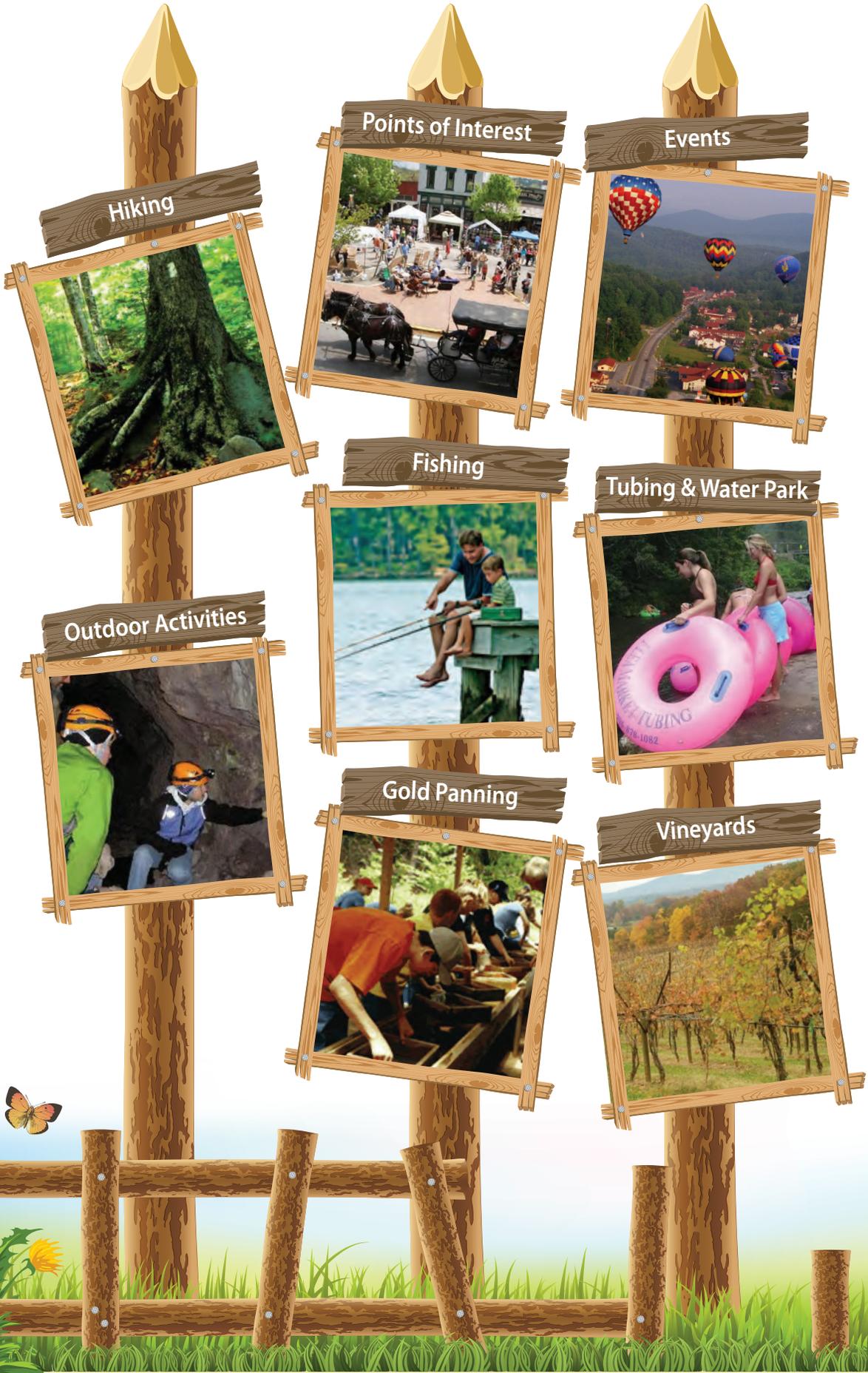




**CEDAR CREEK
CABIN RENTALS**



**THINGS TO DO IN AND
AROUND HELEN GA**



Hiking

Points of Interest

Events

Fishing

Tubing & Water Park

Outdoor Activities

Gold Panning

Vineyards



THINGS TO DO IN AND AROUND HELEN GA

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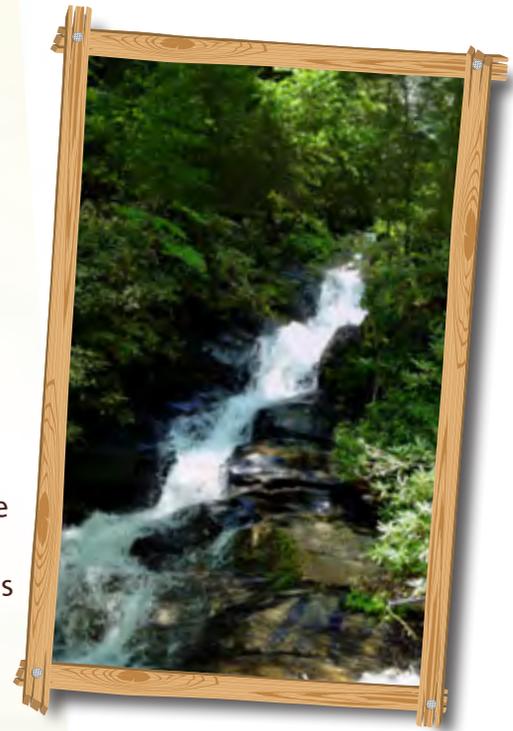


OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Getting out into the outdoors during your stay in northern Georgia is the best way to see all the majestic scenic beauty this area has to offer. Before you set off on your outdoor adventure, though, there are a few basic general hints and tips you should follow to stay safe and make for a pleasurable outing.

- 1. Maps & Directions:** Sure, GPS can get you most places. But how many times have computer-generated directions taken you through the “not-so-shorter” route or to wrong locations? We have put together a map with accurate directions that will take you to your vacation home, hassle-free.
- 2. Dress for the Occasion:** Northern Georgia experiences four distinct seasons and you need to dress accordingly. Wear layers, dress warmly enough and consider a hat during warmer months to keep the sun off your face. When hiking, wear long pants to protect your legs. Bring dry clothes to keep in the car for water activities like tubing, fishing or rafting.
- 3. Get the Gear:** Many outdoor activities in northern Georgia require no more than a bottle of water and a light snack. However, you may need more specialized gear for activities like mountain climbing, fishing or more strenuous hikes. Binoculars and small plant and wildlife identification guides can make your outings more engaging as well.
- 4. Safety First:** All activities come with some degree of risk. Protect yourself so your outings go off without a hitch. Consider adding a basic first aid kit, flashlight, compass and area specific maps to your backpack.

Now, get out there and enjoy the great outdoors!



FISHING

Northern Georgia and particularly the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest are known for having superb fishing opportunities particularly for trout and bass fishermen. You can find great fishing spots for fly-fishing or rod and reel fishing anytime of year in the rivers, streams and lakes of that national forest area. Many fishing areas are regularly stocked so you know you'll have a good chance at reeling in a few beauties for your photo album or maybe even your dinner table.

Before you set out on an angling adventure, make sure to check with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources to see what fish are currently in season and what you can catch and what you can't. You will also need to purchase a valid Georgia fishing license, which you can do online. You can also pick up licenses, gear and local fishing tips at Betty's Country Store and Unicoi Outfitters, both located in Helen. +

Andrew's Cove Recreation Area



While many people come to hike the more accessible trails at Andrew's Cove, anglers prefer tossing a line into a creek that extends above the recreation area for about two miles and flows into Spoilcane Creek below Andrew's Cove. You can easily hook a trout or two without having to venture too far into the deep woods. Andrew's Cove is just 15 minutes north of Helen right off of Georgia 17/75. You'll find yourself coming back to explore this lush and thickly forested area time and time again. +



Low Gap Campground

Get ready for a great day of fishing when you visit the Low Gap Campground, just six miles north of Helen on Georgia 75. The creek running through the campground and recreational area is regularly stocked with brook, rainbow and brown trout so even novice anglers can catch the big one. Low Gap Campground is within the Mark Trail Wilderness and has become well known for bringing folks close to nature while keeping them near amenities.

From Georgia 75, turn right onto Chattahoochee River Road to get to the campground. +



Smithgall Woods, 61 Tsalaki Trail, Helen, GA.

This state park has become well known for its fantastic fishing opportunities. It has become a true angler's paradise catering to both veteran fishermen and first-timers.

Dukes Creek runs right through the park itself and has a catch and release policy so the creek is always brimming with trout. Because the park has become so popular, Smithgall Woods limits the number of fishers who can dip their rods in the creek each day. Be sure to call ahead and reserve a spot before heading out to fish.

Smithgall Woods sits just three miles west of Helen on Georgia 75 so it's easy to get to and easy to get back home. If the fish aren't biting, which is unlikely, you can also enjoy wandering the several easy nature trails and exploring the wetlands. +

ROCK CLIMBING

Are you ready to rock? Rock climb, that is. Northern Georgia is well known for bouldering opportunities and other rock climbing routes. Mount Yonah is even used by Army's 5th Ranger Battalion for mountaineering training. Both first time and seasoned climbers will find a route to suit them. If you're new to climbing, consider taking a class or hiring a guide, such as the folks at Granite Arches. As with any sport, rock climbing does come with a certain amount of risk. Be sure to follow all safety protocols and use the proper safety equipment when climbing.



Smith Lake Unicoi State Park

Fishing in streams and rivers is great. Lake fishing is also a great activity providing ample opportunity for fishing and relaxing along the shore or on a dock. Smith Lake in Unicoi State Park, located two miles northeast of Helen via Georgia Highway 356 offers several spots to enjoy lake fishing for catfish and large mouth bass. Choose a spot along any of the several docks around the lake, especially the dock behind the small visitor's center.

If kids get tired of fishing, the whole family can take a hike on the many trails in the park, try their hands at geocaching or participate in the ranger programs.

Georgia. +



Mount Yonah, Helen, GA.

Years ago, the Army Rangers recognized the excellent climbing at Mount Yonah in the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest and began using the granite brows that sit just below the summit for their mountaineering training. The Rangers placed bolts and cables in several areas along the cliffs making climbing safer and more convenient for everyone. The Army still uses Mount Yonah for training but it's also immensely popular for civilian climbers.

Mount Yonah, standing 3,166 feet tall, is just a few miles south of Helen on Georgia 75. Turn onto Chambers Road. From the parking area, you follow a short 1.5-mile path to the climbing area. Because the path to the climbing area is more rugged, this area is not recommended for young children or people with physical limitations. +



Rocktown, LaFayette, GA.

Take a longer trip outside of Helen to experience the unique activity of bouldering. Boulders as large as 30 to 40 feet tall dot this region and early Cherokee Native Americans challenged each other to climb these boulders. Climbers today still enjoy this challenge.

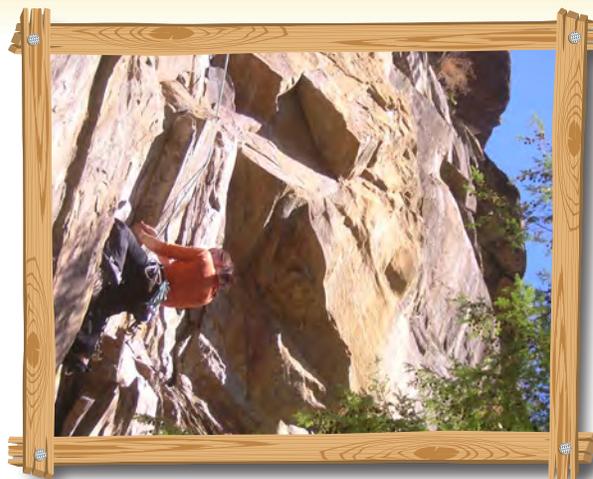
The boulders in Rock Town are perfect for beginners because many of the boulders feature natural hand and foot holds making these climbs slightly easier. The house-sized boulders also make for great sight seeing. Many of them formed in unique and unusual shapes and sizes. The sheer variety of boulders will delight everyone.

The bouldering site is off of Georgia 27/193 and near the Crockford-Pigeon Wildlife Area on Chamberlain Road. +

Tallulah Gorge State Park, 338 Jane Hurt Yarn Dr., Tallulah Falls, GA.

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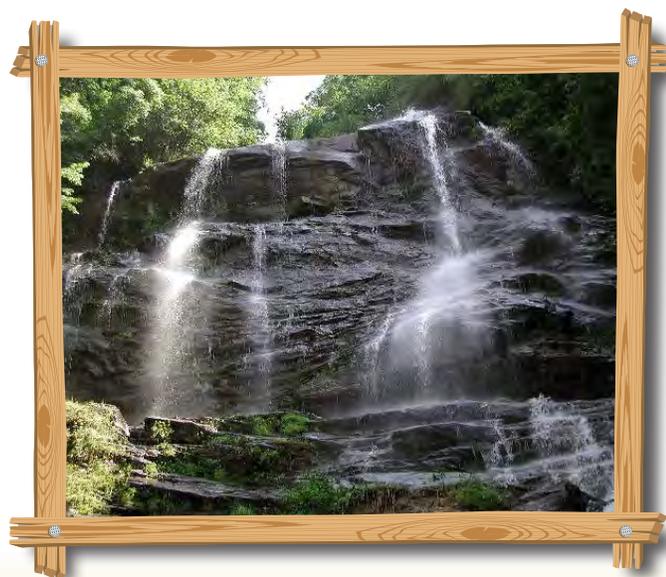


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WATERFALLS

Waterfalls hold a special, mystical allure. The cascading waters fall past rocks and plunge into deep pools below. All around, a lush, green backdrop sparkles and glistens with droplets and rainbows burst in and out of the spray. The beautiful Appalachian foothills in and around Helen hold the promise of several magnificent waterfall sites, which promise to entrance and enchant you.

Amicalola Falls, 418 Amicalola Falls State Park, Dawsonville, GA.



This popular waterfall and Georgia state park is located west of Helen on Georgia 52. The falls at this state park and lodge get exceptionally busy during the autumn when you can get a birds-eye view of the changing fall foliage. You can also choose your level of hike; the park includes more than 12 miles of trails.

Choose from an easier walk on an accessible path to a more challenging climb up a set of staircases and mountain trails. Serious hikers can take the 8.5-mile hike from the falls to Springer Mountain, the southern end of the famous and historic Appalachian Trail. Make a day of your visit here and picnic, hike and even fish at the park. +

Horse Trough Falls

At the headwaters of the Chattahoochee River, you'll find Horse Trough Falls. As you peer up at the falls, you almost feel like you're peering into ancient Mayan ruins as the water flows and cascades down the rocks of Horse Trough Mountain. Like Anna Ruby Falls, this waterfall is just a short walk from the parking lot making it another ideal spot to take the family. The observation platform provides the best view of Horse Trough Falls so you can take in the power and majesty of the cascading water.

This trail is adjacent to the Upper Chattahoochee River Campground. To get there, take Georgia 75 north from Helen and turn left onto the graveled Chattahoochee River Road. 📍



Dukes Creek Falls



The Dukes Creek Falls thunders 200 feet down forming Dukes Creek and Dukes Creek Gorge. The trail is well maintained making it a perfect visit for children, older adults and everyone in between. Three observation decks allow for the best views of this cascading waterfall. The 1.2-mile walk from the parking lot to Dukes Creek Falls takes you through the green ferns and deep forest of the Chattahoochee National Forest. It's also close to nearby attractions including the Dukes Creek Mine and Smithgall Woods Recreation Area. The Dukes Creek Falls Recreation Area is located west of Helen on Georgia 358, the Richard B. Russell Scenic Highway. 📍

Anna Ruby Falls, 3455 Anna Ruby Falls Road, Helen, GA



Most people familiar with Helen know about the amazing and rare double waterfall at Anna Ruby Falls in the Chattahoochee National Forest. Anna Ruby Falls forms just before two creeks — Curtis Creek and York Creek — merge together making this one of the more memorable waterfalls in northern Georgia.

Anna Ruby Falls is also one of the more accessible falls. A short, half-mile footpath leads from the parking lot to the base of the falls. To get there from Helen, head north on Georgia 356 and turn onto Anna Ruby Falls Road. +

HIKING TRAILS

If you come to visit northern Georgia, it's almost a requirement that you hit the trails at some point during your stay. With state parks, national forests, wilderness areas and the trail of all trails — the Appalachian Trail — it's nearly impossible not to go hiking. In this part of the country, any activity could turn into an impromptu hike.

The area features hikes for all skill levels and ability levels. Serious hikers can take on steep switchbacks ascending up hillsides while younger hikers can run and skip down paved paths. ADA accessible paths on some trails even make it possible for older or disabled hikers to participate as well. Hiking might as well be the state sport. We encourage you to get off the beaten path and see what you can find in and around Helen but these hikes will at least get you started.

Raven Cliff Falls

If you came to Helen looking for a more difficult hike than offered at the other waterfalls, make sure to visit Raven Cliff Falls. This waterfall drops 30 feet into a plunge pool, passing through a huge block of granite split into two from centuries of erosion. The total hike is about 5 miles and covers some more difficult terrain in the Mark Trail Wilderness Area. Along the path, which follows Dodd Creek and winds through hemlock and rhododendron forest, you will also see several smaller falls making this hike well worth the effort if you're up to it. Like Dukes Creek Falls, this hike is located west of Helen on the Richard B. Russell Scenic Highway. +



Appalachian Trail

Starting up in Maine, the historic Appalachian Trail winds through 14 states and covers more than 2,000 miles before reaching its southern terminus in northern Georgia at Spring Mountain in the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest. The trail includes nearly 80 miles in Georgia. Serious and dedicated hikers can start their Appalachian Trail trek here and head north. Curious onlookers can reach the trailhead via Forest Service Road 42 near Amicalola Falls. Those in between can hike about nine miles from the Amicalola Falls visitor center to the Springer Mountain site. Anyway you get there, seeing this historic site is worth the effort. +



Smithgall Woods, 61 Tsalaki Trail, Helen, GA.

This park, known primarily for its fantastic fishing, has a hidden gem. Smithgall Woods boasts five miles of nature trails for hikers looking to explore the woods in and around Helen.

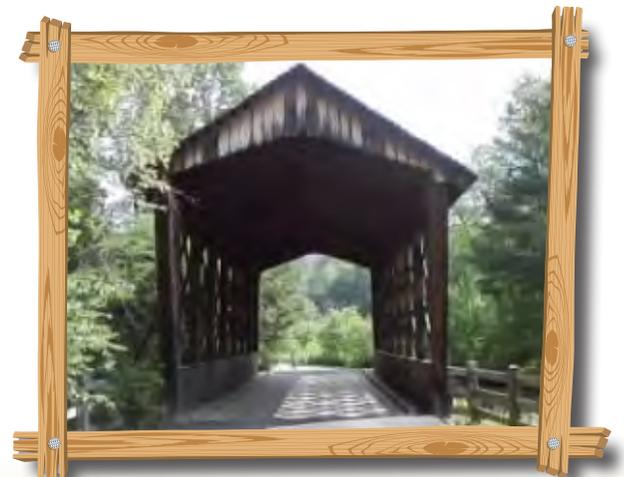
The park sits just three miles west of Helen on Georgia 75. The park has another 23 miles of roads and trails open to cyclists as well. Choose a leisurely half-mile stroll to get a look at the scenic Dukes Creek or a hike that interprets the gold mining past of this region, complete with a look into Martin's Mine shaft, now a habitat for bats. Another hike takes you right through Dukes Creek, a unique way to explore the woodlands surrounding this waterway. +

Cloudland Canyon, 122 Cloudland Canyon Park Road, Rising Fawn, GA.



For a longer daytrip out of Helen, head west to Cloudland Canyon, located in the western corner of the state on Georgia 136. The Cloudland Canyon State Park boasts five distinct hiking trails ranging from two miles round trip to nearly 12 miles in and back.

Many consider this park one of the most scenic in the state because of its rugged geology. The park straddles Sitton Gulf Creek and trails can take you either around the rim for a peak into the canyon or even take you down to the canyon floor, covering more than 1,000 feet in elevation. Be sure to take the supplies you need for the longer and more strenuous hikes here and plan for a longer daytrip from Helen. +



Smithgall Woods, 61 Tsalaki Trail, Helen, GA.

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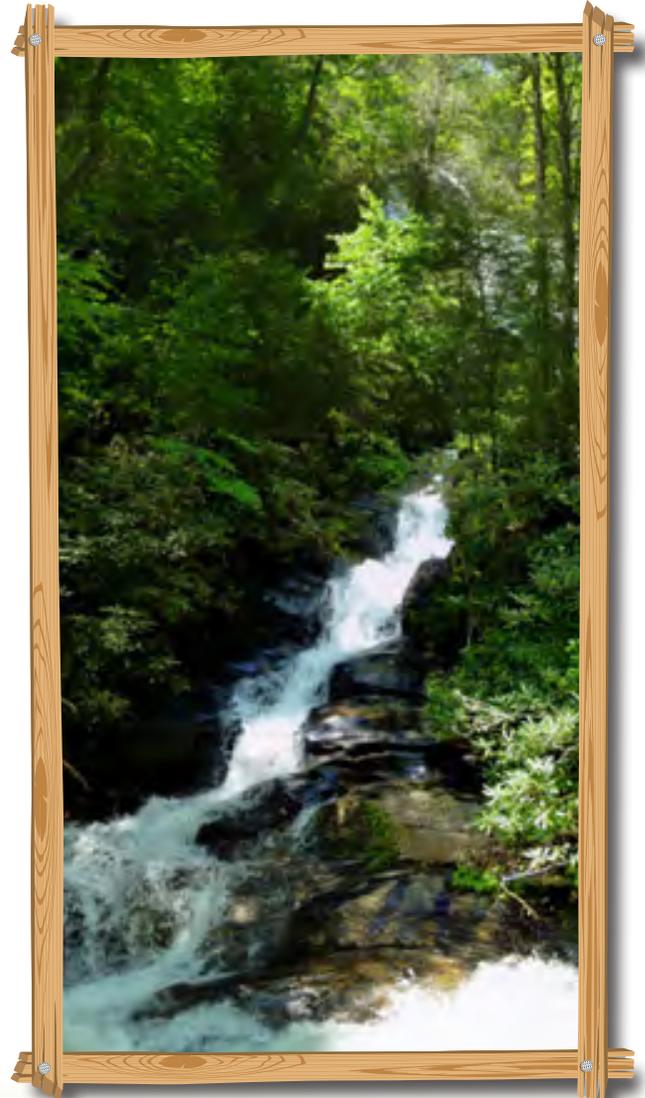
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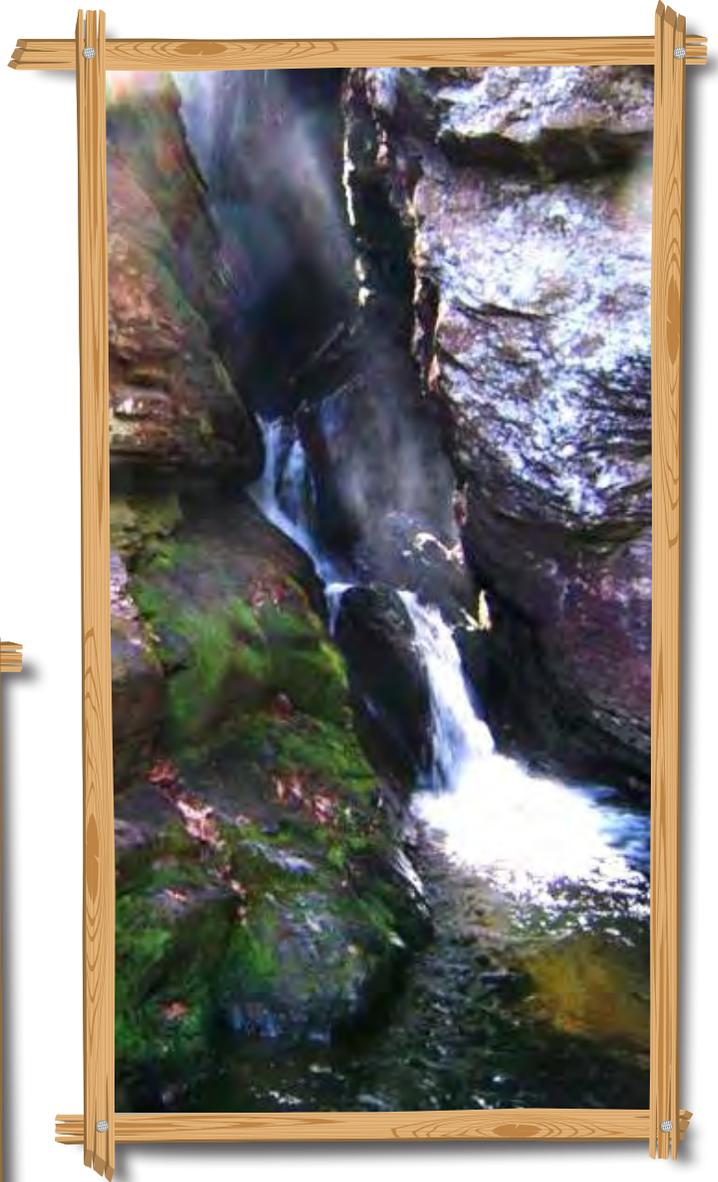
The 1.2-mile walk from the parking lot to Dukes Creek Falls takes you through the green ferns and deep forest of the Chattahoochee National Forest. It's also close to nearby attractions including the Dukes Creek Mine and Smithgall Woods Recreation Area.

The Dukes Creek Falls Recreation Area is located west of Helen on Georgia 358, the Richard B. Russell Scenic Highway. 📍



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Andrew's Cove Recreation Area

Andrew's Cove Recreation Area off Georgia 17/75 and just six miles outside of Helen. The main hiking trail is approximately two miles long and follows an old logging road so the terrain is even and navigable for younger hikers. The trail follows Andrew's Creek, also known for its trout fishing. You'll see large yellow poplars, maples, oaks and along the stream, rhododendrons and mountain laurel thickets. +



KID FRIENDLY ACTIVITIES

Visiting Helen with your kids makes for a fun-filled family vacation. From nature walks to gold panning to horseback riding, northern Georgia offers a vast playground for the young and the young at heart. With such a wide variety of kid friendly activities to choose from, your trip to Helen will be a vacation you will never forget.

Before getting started on your family adventure, always double check hours at various locations and make sure the activity is right for your child. What is fun for preschoolers won't hold the interest of an 8th grader and the zipline tour your high school sophomore can't wait to try might be dangerous for your 2nd grade child. As always, pack layers of clothing, snacks and water for whatever activity awaits you.

WHAT TO BRING ON A NATURE WALK WITH KIDS

Helen, GA and the northern Appalachian foothills offer breathtaking views, scenic forests and untold natural beauty. Taking nature walks with kids brings them closer to the outdoors and helps them appreciate the beauty in the natural world. To make this an enjoyable experience for everyone, plan ahead for the specific needs of younger hikers.

1. Choose your walk wisely taking into account the length of the walk and the attention span of your hikers. Walks with a wide variety of flora and fauna to see will hold a child's interest longer. Keep the route short remembering that even a mile could take an hour or longer as you stop to interact with nature. Check out our suggestions for the best kid-friendly trails later on in this guide.
2. Dress in layers appropriate for the season and make sure everyone wears comfortable, sturdy clothes. Hats keep heads warm in the winter and prevent sunburn in the summer months.
3. Bring along small snacks to revive and reenergize tired kiddos along the trail. And, of course, bring water for everyone on the walk.
4. Engage your children along the walk. Point out both large and small features of the local landscape. Consider bringing along a small bag to carry found treasures (if the trail allows) like plants, rocks and leaves.
5. Binoculars, magnifying glasses and a small plant or bird identification book can turn the nature walk into a treasure hunt as you all learn more about the ecology of the area.

Nature walks can spark a love for the outdoors in children. Make sure your walks foster appreciation for nature and not frustration by preparing yourself ahead of time.



KID-FRIENDLY TRAILS

Andrew's Cove Recreation Area

Andrew's Cove Recreation Area off Georgia 17/75 and just six miles outside of Helen follows an old logging road so the terrain is even and navigable for younger hikers. The trail follows Andrew's Creek, also known for its trout fishing. You'll see large yellow poplars, maples, oaks and along the stream, rhododendrons and mountain laurel thickets. +



Anna Ruby Falls

This favorite tourist spot lures children just as much as it appeals to adults. Anna Ruby Falls is a rare double waterfall in the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest. The falls forms just before two creeks — Curtis Creek and York Creek — and merge together making this one of the more memorable waterfalls in northern Georgia.

The hike appeals to younger hikers because Anna Ruby Falls is also one of the more accessible falls. A short, half-mile footpath leads from the parking lot to the base of the falls. Plus, the falls is close to town so tired little hikers won't have to wait too long to get back to Helen for a meal or a rest. To get to Anna Ruby Falls from Helen, head north on Georgia 356 and turn onto Anna Ruby Falls Road. +



Smithgall Woods

This park, known primarily for its fantastic fishing, is a perfect hidden gem for kids. Smithgall Woods boasts five miles of nature trails perfect for beginner hikers. The park sits just three miles west of Helen on Georgia 75.

Kids will love the easy and leisurely half-mile stroll to get a look at the scenic Dukes Creek. Another hike interprets the gold mining past of this region, complete with a look into Martin's Mine shaft, now a habitat for bats. Another hike takes you past a beaver pond and wetland area with plenty of opportunities to see frogs, water fowl and other wildlife. +



FISHING HOLES

Tips

There's nothing quite like seeing the expression on your kids' faces when they catch their first fish and Helen, GA offers some of the best trout and bass fishing around. No matter where you fish or your age, make sure to purchase a Georgia fishing license. You can pick one up at Betty's Country Store or Unicoi Outfitters in Helen and get some fishing gear and bait as well. Or, you can purchase a license online from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. +



Smithgall Woods

This state park has become wellknown for it's fantastic fishing opportunities, an angler's paradise. It's a great place for kids to get their first taste of fishing.

Dukes Creek runs right through the park itself and has a catch and release policy so the creek is always brimming with trout. Because the park has become so popular, Smithgall Woods limits the number of fishers who can dip their rods in the creek each day.

Be sure to call ahead and reserve a spot before heading out to fish. Smithgall Woods sits just three miles west of Helen on Georgia 75 so it's easy to get to and easy to get back home.

If the kids get tired of fishing, the rest of the park beckons with several easy nature trails, geocaching and wetlands to explore. +



Smith Lake Unicoi State Park

Fishing at Smith Lake in Unicoi State Park, located two miles northeast of Helen via Georgia Highway 356 will have the kids with a net full of catfish and large mouth bass. Choose a spot along any of the several docks around the lake, especially the dock behind the small visitor's center.

If kids get tired of fishing, the whole family can take a hike on the many trails in the park, try their hands at geocaching or participate in the ranger programs. Georgia. 



Low Gap Campground

Young fisher-boys and girls will have no problem hooking a fish at Low Gap Campground, a scenic and expansive recreational site just six miles north of Helen on Georgia 75. The creek running through Lower Gap Campground is regularly stocked with brook, rainbow and brown trout.

This campground is also within the Mark Trail Wilderness and has become well known for bringing folks close to nature while keeping them near amenities.

From Georgia 75, turn right onto Chattahoochee River Road to get to the campground. 



GOLD PANNING

Today, northern Georgia is known for its natural scenic beauty. However, many of these small mountain towns were first home to gold prospectors as this area experienced the country's first gold rush in the early 1800s. Kids will love exploring this aspect of Georgia's history with the many recreational gold panning outfits in and around Helen.





Crisson Gold Mine, 2736 Morrison Moore Parkway East, Dahlonega, GA.

The Crisson Gold Mine, located just outside of Dahlonega on Georgia 60 offers an afternoon of fun for the whole family seeking treasure. The mine originally got its start in 1847, during the first gold rush in the United States. It opened to the public in 1969 and continued operating as a commercial mine through the 1980s.

Today, kids will love the old-timer experience of panning for gold using pans, water and their own two hands. You can also use a trommel — a machine that more quickly separates gold from sand — to find your treasures a little bit faster. In addition to panning for the gold stuff, you can look for gemstones to then polish and turn into your own special and unique jewelry. +

Dukes Creek Mine, 6145 Helen Hwy., Helen, GA.

You can also strike it rich at Dukes Creek Gold & Ruby Mines where families can get their hands dirty searching for precious gemstones and gold nuggets. Kids will love discovering their own treasures of rubies, emeralds, amethysts and sapphires. Trained and helpful staff members will help you identify your finds after you screen for gems and pan for gold.



Many historians say Dukes Creek is the site of the first discovery of gold in Georgia. Panning for gold at Dukes Creek Mine puts you directly in touch with Georgia history. Dukes Creek Mine, in operation for more than 40 years, is located between Helen and Cleveland on Georgia 17/75. +



Gold 'n Gem Grubbin, 75 Gold Nugget Lane, Cleveland, GA.

. Kids can get an up close and personal look at an operation gold mine at the Gold 'n Gem Grubbin mine in Cleveland. The mine opened its doors to the public in the 1980s, inviting families to mine and pan for gold, just like the old timers who fueled the first gold rush in Georgia. Choose from mining right in the creek or from more convenient sluices.

After you and the kids find your treasures, you can choose a variety of mounts to bring your jewels and gold home with you. Gold 'n Gem Grubbin also keeps a pond stocked with catfish and bass for you to fish in and maintains an 18-hole miniature golf course. Stay at the mines and make a day of it!

Get to Gold n' Gem Grubbin by following Georgia 115 south out of Cleveland to Town Creek Road. Turn right on Gold Nugget Lane. +



MINI GOLF COURSES

Miniature golf provides a fun day for the entire family. Golf tends to be all about the adults or the dads leaving the rest of the family behind. But miniature golf brings everyone together for a fun adventure. This game isn't about winning. It's about the fun you have along the way.

Alpine Mini Golf Village, 7914 S. Main St.

The Alpine Mini Golf Village on Main Street in Helen makes for a fun-filled day. The course features beautiful gardens, picnic grounds and an ice cream parlor. Alpine Mini Golf Village welcomes pets, kids, mom, dads, grandmas, grandpas — everyone can join in the putting fun!

You will especially enjoy the gorgeous flower gardens accentuating the scenic views of the mountains and rivers surrounding the course. The course also stays open late so you can have fun into the evening on those warm summer nights. +



Pirate's Cove, 1081 Edelweiss Strasse, Helen, GA.

Arr, matey! Brush up on your pirate talk for a day at the Pirate's Cove miniature golf course in Helen. At Pirate's Cove you can putt your way through secret caves, behind cascading waterfalls and romantic footbridges as you make your way through this adventure course.



The open course design allows easy access for strollers and wheelchairs so all members of the family can enjoy the pirate adventure. Pirate's Cove is located in downtown Helen across from the Oktoberfest Festhalle. +

Helen Amusement Park, 419 Edelweiss Strasse, Helen, GA.

The Helen Amusement Park offers all kinds of fun in Helen in addition to an 18-hole miniature golf course. The course welcomes mini golfers of all ages to explore the "links."



You can also take a spin on the go karts, the tilt-a-whirl, a miniature train or a boat ride. This park takes the mini golf experience to the next level and offers a full day of family fun and entertainment.

The village is in downtown Helen on Edelweiss Strasse near other family attractions. +

HORSEBACK RIDING

You can see the Georgia countryside from several vantage points including high atop mountains, from the deck of your cabin rental or from deep inside the forest trails. Horseback riding offers a unique perspective to the Appalachian mountains and kids will relish the adventure of interacting with majestic horses. Several stables in and around Helen cater specifically to families.



Sunburst Stables, 3181 Georgia, 255, Clarkesville, GA.

Sunburst Stables in Clarkesville on Georgia 255 offers family adventure rides for kids of all ages. Journey together as a family down a leisurely mountain trail to a miniature animal farm where you and the kids can fish and get to know the pot-bellied pig, peacocks and rabbits. Sunburst also offers horse camps for boys and girls.

After a great ride through the forests, enjoy the other adventures at Sunburst including zipline tours, boating adventures and even camps for kids. +



Chattahoochee Stables, 2180 Hwy 17, Sautee, GA.

For a little something different, book a family horseback ride with Chattahoochee Stables in Sautee. Chattahoochee Stables offers the only river ride in the area as guides take you through the Chattahoochee River on your horse during summer tours.

Chattahoochee Stables also have no age limit letting riders under the age of five ride with an adult so everyone in the family can participate in a horseback riding adventure.

The Chattahoochee Stables are located just about 4 miles outside of Helen on Georgia 17. +



TUBING & WATER PARKS

You can't visit northern Georgia without feeling the lure of the water all around you. One of the most popular activities for kids and adults is tubing down the Chattahoochee River. On summer days, you'll see multitudes of bright inner tubes floating downstream carrying kids of all ages and sizes. So grab a tube and hop in. The water is just fine.

Helen Tubing Waterpark, 9917 Hwy 75 North, Helen, GA.

The Helen Tubing and Waterpark offers all day fun in the sun. This facility offers four giant water slides. Choose from a curvy, crazy ride into the waiting pool or a slower, more relaxed descent. Kids will love flying down these slides, splashing into the pool and then racing back up to the top once again.

Adults will enjoy taking a relaxing float down the 1,000-foot lazy river meandering around the water park. You can keep an eye on the kids, soak up some sun and enjoy the soothing current of the river. Who knows? Your kids may even jump in the lazy river for a few spins when they get tired of the slides. (Yeah, right.)

The Helen Tubing and Waterpark, next to the Helen Flea Market, also offers tubing trips down the Chattahoochee River safe for everyone in the family. Choose a long trip or a short trip depending on your spirit of adventure. +

Cool River Tubing Company, 590 Edelweiss Strasse, Helen, GA.

Another of the great Helen water parks is the Cool River Tubing Company. From Memorial Day through Labor Day, the entire family can choose from a wide range of tubing adventures in Helen.

At Cool River, you can shoot down a “twists and turns” slide or a “smooth and relaxed” slide, both ending with a splash into the waiting pool. Or really embrace the spirit of your youth by launching your tube down a slip’n’slide, just like you did as a kid.

Cool River, in the heart of downtown Helen on Edelweiss Strasse, also offers several different trips down the Chattahoochee River. +



ZIPLINE TOURS

For a little more heart pumping fun and adventure, families with older children can swing out over the treetops and view the forest canopy from a new angle with zipline tours. A zipline is a strong, steel cable stretched across a scenic or natural landscape. Zipline riders hook onto the cables with a pulley and a harness and then zip from one platform to another, soaring high above treetops, rivers, pastures and more to get a birds-eye view of the world – and an adrenaline rush!

North Georgia Canopy Tours, 5290 Harris Road, Lula, GA.

Children ages 10 and over and weighing at least 70 pounds can explore the forests with North Georgia Canopy Tours located south of Helen off of Georgia 52. There are three tour packages to choose from and more than one mile of cables that send you soaring over ponds, the North Oconee River and a thrilling 695-foot zip over the Hilltop Pond. Your kids will remember this adventure for a lifetime. Some of the packages include photos and videos to remember your unique adventure. +



Sunburst Stables, 3181 Georgia Hwy 255, Clarksville, GA.

In addition to great horseback riding packages, Sunburst Stables in Clarksville offers zipline tours as well. The zipline routes at Sunburst Stables are more suited for younger children and may just inspire a love for high flying adventure in your little ones. Kids weighing at least 40 pounds can participate at Sunburst and zip across four lines, three of which are more than 1,000 feet long. The tour covers 82 acres of pastures, ponds and forests. In addition to zipline tours, you can book horseriding packages, boating adventures or sign your little cowboy or girl up for exciting camps at Sunburst. +



ONLY IN HELEN

You can hike, fish and ride horses just about anywhere in the world. The scenery and unique natural landscape of the northern Georgia region make those activities more special here in this part of the state. Additionally, Helen has some activities, especially for children, that you just won't find anywhere else in the world that make visiting northern Georgia all the more special.

Babyland General Hospital, 300 N. Oak Dr., Cleveland, GA.

Take home a special souvenir from your vacation in northern Georgia by “adopting” a Cabbage Patch Kid from Babyland General Hospital, where the Cabbage Patch Kids wait to be adopted. Northern Georgia is where Xavier Roberts followed the magical Bunnybees to the secret cabbage patch behind the waterfall. He built Babyland General Hospital to help all the Cabbage Patch Kids find a home.

The Travel Channel has voted the hospital one of the top 10 toylands in the country. The hospital, a southern style mansion, sits on 650 acres of beautiful forestland north of Cleveland off of Helen Highway. Admission is always free. Check the website ahead of time for special events like tea parties and holiday celebrations. +



Lilly Pad Village, 24 Adelaid Dr., Blue Ridge, GA.

You can find several different places to explore the treasures of northern Georgia. Or you could just take the kids to Lilly Pad Village in Blue Ridge, a place that has it all and that your kids will love. Lilly Pad Village offers several fun and exciting adventures all set against the scenic backdrop of

the north Georgia mountains. Here, kids can fish, play miniature golf, pan for gold or hike one of several kid-friendly trails.

The entire Lilly Pad Village is built around a one-half acre pond stocked to the brim with fish including catfish, brim and small mouth bass. The village provides all the equipment kids need to make their first catch.



You have never seen a mini golf course quite like the one at Lilly Pad Village. The folks here threw out conventional miniature golf wisdom when building their course in order to preserve the natural surroundings. So instead of loud music and brightly colored obstacles, you'll hear the sounds of wildlife and see the natural colors of trees and foliage.

Lilly Pad Village also offers kids to try their luck at gold panning and gem finding. Grab a bucket and start mining for precious gems. You might find emeralds, sapphires, rubies and beautiful quartz as you wash away dirt in the flume and use your sieve to sort through rocks. Then, you can turn your rough gems into fine jewelry by taking a jewelry class at Lilly Pad Village.

Additionally, choose a guided hike offered by Lilly Pad Village and immerse yourself in the natural beauty of Blue Ridge's waterfalls, mountains and rivers. Lilly Pad also offers snow hikes and walks so you can see the beauty of the four seasons. The village provides all transportation and a hiking supplies for the walks.

To get there, follow Georgia 515 west, turn left on Windy Ridge Circle and turn left onto the Lookout Mountain Scenic Highway. +



POINTS OF INTEREST

Why do you travel? We travel for all sorts of reasons. Sometimes we need to escape the daily grind of our lives for a while and relax with family or friends. But we also travel to experience new places, new activities and new people. Traveling to northern Georgia offers several opportunities to get out and see the local sights.

Explore the small mountain towns full of history. Discover the unique art scene of northern Georgia. And explore the area's rich history through museums. Here a few hints and tips to make your excursions into the northern Georgia mountain culture fun and exciting, not frustrating.

- 1. Call First:** Or visit the website. Hours of operation vary by season and can change for special events, festivals and holidays. Make sure to call a special location or visit the website first to check the hours and rates, if applicable.
- 2. Get a Map:** Sure, GPS can get you most places. But how many times have computer-generated directions taken you through the "not-so-shorter" route or to wrong locations? We have put together a map with accurate directions that will take you to your vacation home, hassle-free.
- 3. Be Spontaneous:** This guide offers some of the best of what northern Georgia has to offer. However, there are unique gems to be found on your own as well. If you see something of interest, be open and flexible to changing your plans to check it out. Those secret, special and surprising finds are what make vacations the most memorable.



Russell-Brasstown National Scenic Byway

The Russell-Brasstown National Scenic Byway takes you on a leisurely tour through the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest. The byway is mild in the winter and cool in the summer and has plenty of stops along the way to make a day out of driving the byway.

The Russell-Brasstown National Scenic Byway forms a complete loop that takes about three hours to drive and longer if you plan to linger at the many sites along the route. The drive takes you around the national forest, the Mark Trail

Wilderness and the Brasstown Wilderness. Take the byway spur to Brasstown Bald and take in the 360-degree view of the Appalachian foothills.

Looking for a good hike? The byway goes past numerous trailheads including several waterfall hikes including the rare double waterfall at Anna Ruby Falls, a favorite Helen destination.

You can connect to the byway just a few miles north of Helen by following Georgia 75 to Robertstown. 



ART GALLERIES

Many people come to Helen because of the natural beauty and scenic location. Waterfalls, rolling mountains and lush landscapes inspire more, though, than a love for nature among the people who call this part of the state home. Nature's wonders have also inspired entire communities of artists who together have turned the small mountain burgs of northern Georgia into a serious destination for art lovers and enthusiasts. Tour the small mountain towns and discover some of the best in painting, pottery, glass, photography and more. The northern Georgia arts community hosts several special events and festivals throughout the year as well including the Arts Tour held each June and November. This self-guided tour lets you plot your own course and set your own pace as you explore art galleries in four northern Georgia counties

Helen Art Gallery and Heritage Center, 25 Chattahoochee St., Helen, GA.

The Helen Art Gallery and Heritage Center is dedicated to promoting the work of local artists and preserving the unique, fascinating history of the Alpine village of Helen. The gallery is located in the former city hall building and is in the heart of downtown.

In addition to regular exhibits in the gallery, the center hosts special events including receptions and art competitions. The center also offers classes for adults and youth. The Helen Art Gallery and Heritage Center is open Thursday through Monday from noon-4 p.m. The public is welcome and admission is always free. +



Glass Mountain Gallery and Studio, 257 Clayton Road, Helen, GA.



This art gallery in Robertstown, just one mile north of Helen, has been creating unique glass art from hand blown, fused and recycled glass since 1996. The studio allows the public into their operations each fall to see first hand how these artists “dance with fire,” as they say.

If you visit when the studio is open, you will get to see and experience first hand how beautiful art is crafted. Furnaces operating at more than 2,200 degrees Fahrenheit invite both awe and respect. In the cold room, you can see first-hand how artists put the finishing touches on their glass masterpieces through cutting, polishing and grinding techniques.

You can see many of the creations from the Glass Mountain Gallery and Studio in other local galleries as well including the Helen Art Gallery and Heritage Center. The studio is usually open Friday through Saturdays from Labor Day through Christmas or by appointment. To visit, head north on Georgia 356 toward Unicoi State Park. +



Hickory Flat Pottery, 13664 Hwy 197 North, Clarkesville, GA.

Visit Hickory Flat Pottery in Clarkesville and you'll find potters hard at work on their latest decorative, functional stoneware. The resident artist and gallery owner Cindy Angliss emphasizes that her artful creations were made for you to use in your home. You'll find teapots, platters, plates, bowls, bakeware and more. All the pottery made at this studio is oven safe, microwave safe, dishwasher safe and free of lead. Hickory Flat Pottery has been in operation for more than 30 years and is open year-round. Every few weeks, the artists hold kiln openings where you can see the unveiling of the artists' latest creations. Hickory Flat Pottery is located east of Helen. Take Georgia 356 east to Highway 197 North. +



The Willows Pottery, 7275 South Main Street, Helen, GA.

You can try your hand at creating pottery masterpieces at The Willows Pottery just one-half mile south of downtown Helen on Georgia 75. This working studio invites you to paint your own pottery and make your own artful memories while also watching professional potters at work. The potters at this studio are often working at their potting wheels creating functional and decorative pieces including dinnerware sets, accessories, custom vessel sinks and much more. Several other local artists from photographers to fiber artists contribute to the selection of local art you can find at The Willows Pottery. +



MUSEUMS

Georgia was one of the 13 original colonies, established in 1732. Before the Europeans settled this region, the native Cherokee people had established themselves in this region. Northern Georgia celebrates this history through the many museums dotting the small mountain communities. Museums celebrate all aspects of Georgia history from the deep artistic roots in this region to the gold rush days of the 1800s. Immerse yourself in the history of the day and visit these museums during your stay in Helen.

Folk Pottery Museum of Northeast Georgia, 283 Highway 255 North, Sautee, GA.

The pottery traditions of the northeast Georgia region are nationally known with roots reaching back nearly a full century. However, until recently, no organization had dedicated itself to preserving the pottery heritage of the area.

The Folk Pottery Museum of Northeast Georgia showcases the handcraft skills of one of the state's top art forms, exploring the historical importance and ever-changing role of pottery in the life of northern Georgians.

The museum has a large and high-quality permanent collection and rotating exhibits that highlight more than 200 years of folk pottery traditions. You can learn about the labor-intensive and hazardous methods necessary for the production of potter in a kiln. You can also see how pottery was used in traditional mountain community life, particularly in food preservation prior to refrigeration.

The museum is open seven days a week, though hours vary. The museum is located just south of Helen on Georgia 17/255 and on the Sautee Nacoochee Community Association. +



Gourd Place, 2319 Duncan Bridge Road, Sautee, GA.

Part art gallery, part museum and all the unique-ness of northern Georgia, the Gourd Place in Sautee epitomizes the independent spirit of the people who call this region home.

Back in 1976, artist Priscilla Wilson began experimenting with gourds, creating all manner of art and useful, everyday objects from these vegetables. Since those early days from before Priscilla knew of any other gourd artists, the Gourd Place has become known for promoting gourd arts and inspiring ingenuity.

The Gourd Place is the oldest retail gourd-crafting business in the United States. IN addition to the shop where can peruse the latest gourd creations — everything from puzzles to children's toys to natural jewelry — there is also a dedicated museum space featuring more than 200 varieties of gourds from 23 different countries, all celebrating the versatility of gourds in everyday life and art. The Gourd Place is south of Helen off of Georgia 384. It is open April through December and by appointment during the winter months. +



Sautee Nacoochee Community Association, 283 Highway 255 North, Sautee, GA.

The Sautee Nacoochee Community Association started out as a small group of community members looking to protect the beauty and history of the historic Nacoochee Valley back in the 1970s. Today, the association has grown to include a theater, dance and art studios, a history museum, the Folk Pottery Museum, an environmental education center, a heritage site and extensive programming and festivals throughout the year. The Sautee Nacoochee Community Association offers something for everyone. The Center Gallery features a rotating exhibit of local artists. The Art Studio, Arts Programs for Kids and the Let's Dance studio offer art and dance instruction. Take in a concert or Broadway revue in the performing arts center. And explore the traditions and history of Appalachian folk life at the heritage sight, host of the annual Folk Life Festival each May. Through the association's efforts, the Nacoochee Valley was designated as a historic district and the town of Sautee was declared one of the top 100 small art towns in the United States. See for yourself what makes the Sautee Nacoochee Community Association so great. The SNCA campus is located just south of Helen on Georgia 17/255. (+)



Dahlonega Gold Museum, 1 Public Square, Dahlonega, GA.



There's gold in them thar hills!" declared Matthew Stephenson, assayer of the U.S. Branch Mint, from the second floor patio of the Dahlonega Court House way back during the nation's first gold rush. In the 1840s, Mr. Stephenson was exhorting gold miners to remain in northern Georgia and continue gold mining rather than join the rush to California. You can stand in Mr. Stephenson's footsteps today at the Dahlonega Gold Museum in downtown Dahlonega housed in the old courthouse. This museum honors the regions golden past, which reached its heyday from 1829 to the 1860s. The museum includes equipment used during gold mining at the time, a set of gold coins made at the U.S. Branch Mint, a five-ounce gold nugget and much more. Additionally, the museum hosts special events during Dahlonega's many festivals including the annual Bear on the Square festival each spring and the Gold Rush Days in October. The courthouse itself also holds a lot of history. It was built in 1836 using materials from the gold-rich Cane Creek and actually contains a surprising amount of gold in the structure itself. The museum is open seven days a week though hours vary. There is a small admission fee of \$3.50 to \$6. (+)

MUSIC SCENE

Bigg Daddy's American Tavern and Music Club, 807 Edelweisse Strasse, Helen, GA.

Part art gallery, part museum and all the unique-ness of northern Georgia, the Gourd Place in Sautee epitomizes the independent spirit of the people who call this region home. Back in 1976, artist Priscilla Wilson began experimenting with gourds, creating all manner of art and useful, everyday objects from these vegetables. Since those early days from before Priscilla knew of any other gourd artists, the Gourd Place has become known for promoting gourd arts and inspiring ingenuity. The Gourd Place is the oldest retail gourd-crafting business in the United States. IN addition to the shop where can peruse the latest gourd creations — everything from puzzles to children's toys to natural jewelry — there is also a dedicated museum space featuring more than 200 varieties of gourds from 23 different countries, all celebrating the versatility of gourds in everyday life and art.



The Gourd Place is south of Helen off of Georgia 384. It is open April through December and by appointment during the winter months. 

Saturday Evening Concert Series, Unicoi State Park, 1788 Highway 356, Helen, GA.

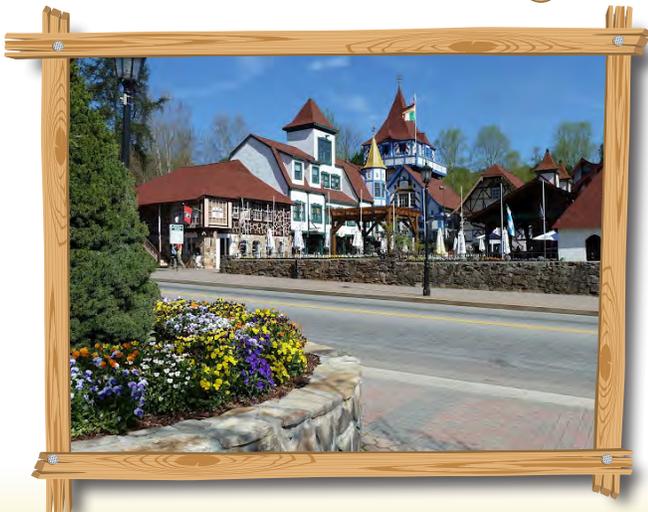
From Memorial Day through November, Unicoi State Park offers up some of the best local music around each Saturday night at 8 p.m. in the lodge. Experience a wide range of music including bluegrass, Appalachian mountain and Southern gospel music. The concerts are free and open to the public though a voluntary donation helps support the local musicians. The park is just east of Helen on Georgia 356. 



HISTORY

Town of Helen , GA.

The town of Helen was the center of Cherokee culture and heritage prior to the 1800s. Several sites around Helen are named after historic Cherokee figures and tourists can visit historic Native American landmarks. By the 1820s, the area around Helen was better known for its gold mines and the northern town saw a brief but profitable gold rush. Prospectors worked the hills around Georgia for nearly a century in the pursuit of this precious metal. After the miners moved on, logging was the next industry to keep Helen at the center of commerce in Georgia with the Matthews Lumber Company sawmill leading the boom. At the same time, railroad found it's way up the Chattahoochee River to the town of Helen, which was named after the daughter of a railroad surveyor. But by the 1930s, the timber company and the sawmill abandoned the town of Helen and residents left for other opportunities. With economic ruin on the horizon, town leaders got together in 1968 and proposed turning their town into a recreation of a Bavarian alpine village complete with gingerbread trim, cobblestone alleyways and old world towers. The Helen of today harkens back to a much earlier time and celebrates its new Bavarian heritage with several German and alpine inspired festivals each year. The Oktoberfest celebration, which runs from September through October, is known far and wide as the place to celebrate this rite of fall. +



Town of Dahlonega, GA.



California may be famous for the great American gold rush, but the first gold rush in the United States was in Dahlonega. Back in 1828, prospectors and miners came to look for gold in the Appalachian foothills until the California gold rush began and many miners began to head west. Today, you can visit the Dahlonega Gold Museum in the center of town or attend the annual Gold Rush Days in October to learn about this golden period in the town's history.

It's not just the old days that draw visitors to Dahlonega anymore though. This mountain town has become known as a hub of creative and visual arts in Georgia. There is the Bear on the Square festival in April with a juried artist marketplace featuring traditional mountain arts and crafts. The Mountain Fine Flower Art Festival in May gives folks the opportunity to watch artists at work. Visit Dahlonega and many other art-inspired mountain towns during the Northeast Georgia Arts Tour in June and November.

Dahlonega, GA also sits in the middle of the growing northern Georgia wine country. You can visit several wineries or participate in the Dahlonega wine festivals held throughout June. +

Town of Cleveland

Though it's often overlooked as visitors travel to places like Helen and Dahlonega, the historic mountain town of Cleveland offers tourists plenty to see, do and experience in.

Cleveland, named after the War of 1812 figure Gen. Benjamin Cleveland, first developed as a town as early as 1830, when it was known as Mount Yonah. By 1858, the town had a post office, hotel, a village square and several business establishments. From early on, it was clear Cleveland would serve as the county seat of White County, which it has since the 1870s.

The town of Cleveland has long been an agrarian community though later developed into a

commercial strong hold in the 1940s and 1950s, becoming synonymous with Americana and small town living.

Today, Cleveland is known for its proximity to many outdoor recreational activities like rock climbing at Mount Yonah or starting on the Appalachian Trail. Kids of all ages delight in visiting Babyland General Hospital, home of local Xavier Robert's Cabbage Patch Kids. The town also hosts several popular festivals throughout the year including the Easter Eggstravaganza Celebration and Christmas in the Mountains, complete with a lighted Christmas parade. 🍷





VINEYARDS

Yes, Georgia is officially the Peach State. However, the vineyards sprouting up in northern Georgia and gaining national attention may soon turn Georgia into the Wine State. The terrain, climate, elevation, soil and drainage all combine to provide a true sense of place — or terroir as the winemakers call it — for this region.

The area around Helen and the other north Georgia mountain communities is most similar to Italy's famous Piedmont region, the region famous for Asti Spumante and big, bold red wines like Barolo, Barbaresco and Nebbiolo. You may have come to Helen for the hiking, shopping or local culture, but you'll find yourself coming back again and again for the wine.

Habersham Vineyards and Winery, 7025 North Main Street, Helen, GA.

Habersham Winery first started up in Georgia in 1983. Since that time, the winery has amassed more than 150 medals for its wines, both nationally and internationally. The tasting room in Nacoochee Village, open daily, offers complimentary tastings and self-guided tours. Habersham produces three distinct labels. The Habersham Wines are the most popular of the three and feature cabernets, chardonnays and merlot. The Creekstone Wines utilize the best grapes for a premium wine. And the Southern Harvest wines evoke nostalgic memories for southerners with wines like Peach Treat. The Habersham tasting room in Helen off of Georgia 75 is open daily, though hours vary. 



Yonah Mountain Vineyards, 2454-B Highway 17, Sautee, GA.

The imposing Mount Yonah serves as a backdrop for the rolling hills of the Yonah Mountain Vineyards private estate. Fields of Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon and five other varieties of noble grapes spread across 13 acres of this landscape.

Yonah Mountain Vineyards focuses on producing high quality Chardonnays, full-bodied white wines, and Tuscan and Super Tuscan style blends. The tasting room is open most days though hours vary by season. It's best to call ahead or visit the website first before heading out to this gem of a winery and vineyard. The tasting room is just east of Helen on Georgia 17. +



Blackstock Vineyards and Winery, 5400 Town Creek Road, Dahlonega, GA.



The Blackstock Vineyards and Winery were started by the northern Georgia wine pioneer David Harris. Mr. Harris received a viticulture and enology degree from Fresno State University in 1985 and used his skills to build the Georgia wine industry.

In 1994, he set off on his own to create and develop the Blackstock Vineyards and Winery in Dahlonega. Today, Blackstock wines have received over 75 awards including Best Viognier and Best Georgia White in 2004.

The Blackstock tasting room is open seven days a week, year round though hours vary daily. Enjoy the Appalachian lodge with views of the Blue Ridge Mountains while you sip a glass of wine on the deck. In addition to tastings, Blackstock also offers deli selections, baked goods and live music on the weekends.

To get to Blackstock from Helen, take Georgia 75 south. Turn right on Hulsey Road, turn right on Hwy 129 and turn left at Adair Mill Road. Travel three miles to the dead end at Town Creek Road and turn right. +

Three Sisters Vineyards and Winery, 439 Vineyard Way, Dahlonega, GA.

The Three Sisters Vineyards in Dahlonega prides itself on presenting a small, family oriented farm that embodies Georgia and southern traditions. To that effect, not one member of the wine making team holds the sole title of winemaker.

The Three Sisters Vineyards cultivate Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Pinot Blanc, Pinot Noir, Touriga, Cynthiana-Norton and Vidal Blanc grapes for their Chestatee, Three Sisters Vineyards, Walasiyi Wine Company and Fat Boy Wines labels.

The winery and tasting room, situated on 184 acres in north Georgia, offers regular tours and tastings. The tasting room is open to the public from February through Christmas each week from Thursday through Sunday. Take Highway 115 towards Dahlonega. Turn right on to Town Creek Road. Turn left onto Town Creek Church Road. Turn right on to Shoffeitt Rd. and turn right at Vineyard Way. +



Wolf Mountain Vineyards and Winery, 180 Wolf Mountain Trail, Dahlonega, GA



A visit to Wolf Mountain Vineyards and Winery in Dahlonega yields several surprises. First, you'll get to taste outstanding wines including sparkling wines made in the Methode Champinoise tradition. You'll also be treated to outstanding views of the Appalachian foothills from the magnificent tasting room and cellar encased in fieldstone. Visit on a Sunday and you'll be surprised by the elaborate vineyard luncheon featuring live blue grass music and menus that include delicious Southern specialties. Wolf Mountain Vineyards produced its first vintage in 2001. All the grapes used in their wines are grown on the Dahlonega Plateau at an elevation of 1,800 feet. The award winning estate wines include dry white wines, dry rose wines, red wines, semi sweet and port wines, and Methode Champenoise sparkling wines. The tasting room is open Thursday through Sunday. The luncheon is offered by reservation on Sunday and the Vineyard Café offers lunch by reservation Thursday through Saturday. +

Tiger Mountain Vineyards, 2592 Old Highway 441 South, Tiger, GA.

The Tiger Mountain vineyards cover 10 acres in Rabun County. The winery owners, John and Martha Ezzard, planted their vines in 1995 and 1996 on the farmland worked where John was born and that his family worked for the past five generations. All their wine is produced from 100 percent Georgia grown grapes.

Tiger Mountain Vineyards prides itself on its traditional European approach to making wine including meticulous attention to open, small batch tanks for fermentation. The vineyard has become known across the state for introducing the Petit Manseng varietal to Georgia. Along with this wine, expect to find traditional French varietals as well as the American Norton grape, a grape native to Virginia. Tiger Mountain Vineyards opens to the public seven days a week from May through November and has limited hours December through April. Starting each spring, the vineyard opens the Red Barn Café for live music and fine cuisine on the weekends. Tiger Mountain Vineyards also operates a tasting room in downtown Dahlonega. Tiger Mountain Vineyards is located east of Helen near the town of Clayton. Check the website for specific driving directions. +



Sharp Mountain Vineyards, 110 Rathgeb Trail, Jasper, GA.



Sharp Mountain Vineyards in the western Georgia mountain town of Jasper was established in 1995 on the ideal that the finest wines come from the finest fruits.

Sharp Mountain makes their traditional white and red wines from grapes grown on their five acres, which sit at 1,500 feet. Pack a picnic and enjoy the amazing views from the Sharp Mountain Vineyards tasting room. On a clear day, you can see all the way to Atlanta. The tasting room at Sharp Mountain Vineyards is open weekends from March through December and on Saturdays only during January and February. It is located west of Helen off of U.S. 515 North. +

Crane Creek Vineyards, 916 Crane Creek Road, Young Harris, GA.



Crane Creek Vineyards, which lies in the shadow of Brasstown Bald, is more than just a winery offering up some of Georgia's best wines. Crane Creek is also a full-service event center and a destination for special events, programs and classes. The tasting room is housed in an old farmhouse and features beautiful decks with views of the surrounding vineyards, perfect for sipping the different Crane Creek wines while enjoying a picnic. The tasting room also offers a large selection of snacks and food to create your picnic when you arrive.

The warm summer days and cool mountain nights work to create a microclimate perfectly suited to growing excellent grapes. Crane Creek produces crisp white wines with a refreshing minerality. They also produce four red wines.

The Hellbender and Mountain Claret are perfect to go in your cellar as they improve with aging. The Mountain Harvest Red and Brasstown Mountain Clarets are ready to enjoy now.

Crane Creek Vineyards is located north of Helen off of Georgia 515. Turn left on Georgia 66 once you reach Young Harris and continue to Crane Creek Road. The tasting room is open Tuesday through Sunday throughout the year, though hours vary. The vineyard also regularly hosts special events so check the website to see what's coming up. +

Cavender Creek Vineyards, 3610 Cavender Creek Road, Dahlonega, GA.

Cavender Creek Vineyards is relatively new to the Georgia wine community. The family farm vineyard planted its first vines of Cabernet Sauvignon and the American Nortgon grape in 2007 with the first harvest two years later. In 2008, Cavender Creek planted the small, white Petit Manseng grape.

Today, Cavender Creek offers a wide variety of reds and whites produced with a fine attention to detail and the caring and pampering only a family-owned operation can provide.

The tasting room, in the loft of a barn house, overlooks the vineyards 15 acres of rolling hills and farmland. Don't be surprised to see a few donkeys, sheep and other farm animals grazing as you sip your wines.

The Cavender Creek tasting room is open to the public Fridays and Saturdays year round. From Helen, take Georgia 115 west and turn right on Town Creek Road. Turn left on Town Creek Church Road until it dead-ends at Cavender Creek. +



Frogtown Cellars, 700 idgepoint Drive, Dahlonega, GA.

Frogtown Cellars, with a tasting room in Dahlonega, takes full advantage of the unique north Georgia terrain to produce high quality wines made with 100 percent Georgia grapes. The vineyard has more than 23,000 vines planted in this region in 44 acres of vineyards across the Dahlonega Plateau, a site chosen specifically by the founders for its quality grape production and outstanding mountain views.

At the tasting room in Dahlonega, you can enjoy three different tastings: a dry red, dry white or an off dry and sweet wine tasting. Additionally, the tasting room provides a Panini bar on weekends and regularly hosts special events and dinners where you can get to know Frogtown Cellars in a more intimate setting.

The Frogtown Cellars Dahlonega tasting room is located west of Helen. Take Georgia 115 west and turn right on Town Creek Road. Turn left on Town Creek Church Road and turn left on Damascus Church Road. +



Montaluce, 501 Hightower Church Road, Dahlonega, GA.



Montaluce Winery and Estates are more than just a vineyard. It's a way of life. The estate recreates a Tuscan setting in the heart of northern Georgia with a 25,000 square foot winery at the heart of the community.

Montaluce produces premium European varietals like Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Sangiovese all on one of the steepest, well-drained hillside in the country and takes advantage of the unique Dahlonega Plateau weather. Visit the tasting room to sip these fine wines, dine in the Italian restaurant Le Vigne, and catch a glimpse of the wine making process. The tasting room is open seven days a week from noon- 5 p.m. and reservations for tastings are recommended. Montaluce is located just outside of downtown Dahlonega. Check the website for specific directions from the Dahlonega town square. +



Sautee Nacoochee Vineyards, 98 Old Nacoochee Way, Sautee-Nacoochee, GA.

The Sautee Nacoochee Vineyards planted its first vines in 2009 with just a few acres of Cabernet Sauvignon grapes. During this time, the three owners have carefully tended their grapes and relied on the soil, climate and topography of the region to do the rest. At the tasting room, you can sit on the large front porch, get to know Cowboy — the tasting room cat — and try one of the seven varietals produced by the vineyard including a Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and the original Georgia white wine, Muscadine. Hours in the tasting room vary so be sure to call ahead to check availability. The Sautee Nacoochee Vineyards tasting room is easy to find, located at the Nacoochee Crossing in Sautee, at the juncture of Georgia Highways 17 and 225. +



Yonah Mountain Treasures, 2047C Helen Highway, Cleveland, GA.

One of the more eclectic shops you'll find in the area is Yonah Mountain Treasures, an art gallery, a museum and country store in one spot. Locals know this is the place to come to find finely crafted and original regional art and a repository of book titles written by local authors. Sit down in the store's "Book Nook" to peruse historic titles about the Civil War, the region's gold rush or Native American history. You can also find cookbooks, children's books and audio titles as well. Yonah Mountain Treasures has also earned a reputation for the store's handmade jigsaw puzzles, a jigsaw in a jar, custom made featuring photos of the area. The store is located just south of Helen on Georgia 75. +





DINING AND SHOPPING

Eat, drink and be merry! Shop 'til you drop! You can do it all in Helen and northern Georgia. Specialty shops, gourmet restaurants and some of the nation's best vineyards call this part of the state home. You'll also find great farmer's markets, local shops and casual dining options as well. Before heading out on your shopping and dining excursion, keep in mind a few tips to make your day of eating, drinking and being merry successful.

1. **Call Ahead:** Avoid the frustration of showing up to a closed restaurant or store by checking hours of operation ahead of time by calling or visiting a store or restaurant's website. Store and restaurant hours often change seasonally or during holidays and special events. You should also check to see if you need reservations at certain restaurants.
2. **Taking it Home:** You will find a wide variety of treasures in the shops of Helen and northern Georgia and you want to make sure you can take your finds home with you. If you drove, make sure you can fit all your purchases in your car comfortably. If you arrived by plane, consider asking the store to ship your purchases or package them for a flight. If the store has an online shop, you can also take note of what you want to buy and then make your purchases after your vacation.
3. **Shop and Eat Locally:** You didn't come all the way to northern Georgia and Helen to shop in chain stores you could visit back home. As you venture forth on a shopping and eating excursion, stick to local mountain businesses and eateries to make your vacation unique.



SPECIALTY STORES

People visit northern Georgia for all kinds of reasons. They come to hike, fish, play golf, relax — just about everything. Many people come to shop in the numerous specialty shops you can find in the northern Georgia mountain towns. These specialty stores throughout this area often carry locally made or locally sourced goods, art and foods. Stop in to the shops and see what surprised you can find.

Mark of the Potter, 9982 Highway 197 North, Clarksville, GA.

Frogtown Cellars, with a tasting room in Dahlonega, takes full advantage of the unique north Georgia terrain to produce high quality wines made with 100 percent Georgia grapes. The vineyard has more than 23,000 vines planted in this region in 44 acres of vineyards across the Dahlonega Plateau, a site chosen specifically by the founders for its quality grape production and outstanding mountain views.

At the tasting room in Dahlonega, you can enjoy three different tastings: a dry red, dry white or an off dry and sweet wine tasting. Additionally, the tasting room provides a Panini bar on weekends and regularly hosts special events and dinners where you can get to know Frogtown Cellars in a more intimate setting.

The Frogtown Cellars Dahlonega tasting room is located west of Helen. Take Georgia 115 west and turn right on Town Creek Road. Turn left on Town Creek Church Road and turn left on Damascus Church Road. 



Old Sautee Store, 2315 Highway 17, Sautee, GA.



The Old Sautee Store first opened in 1872 and served as a genuine general store for the residents of the Sautee and Nacoochee Valleys. It was perfectly situated where the two valleys intersect and directly along the busiest thoroughfare of the day, the old Unicoi Turnpike. For decades, the store sold everything people needed — seed, food, farm supplies. The store even served as the local post office from 1913 to 1962. The Old Sautee Store has been in continuous operation since those early days. The store pays homage to its humble roots by offering old-time candy and specialty goods along with the “general store” offerings shoppers need today. Pick up some delicious farmer cheese, fruit butters or relish for a snack to eat back in the cabins in the Georgia mountains.

Just behind the shop, stop in at Our Market for lunch. The menu at this café includes sandwiches, bakery goods, cheeses and more. You will find the Old Sautee Store just east of Helen on Georgia 17. 

Tim's Wooden Toys, 8635 Main Street, Helen, GA.

The specialty shops in northern Georgia offer many handmade goods and local arts but Tim's Wooden Toys offers something else as well — the chance to watch a craftsman at work.

All the toys at Tim's Wooden Toys, located in downtown Helen, are made on site in the store's workshop. You can watch the toymakers in action as they make traditional push and pull toys, cars, trucks, airplanes, games, toy guns, tool boxes, easels and so much more.

Take home a real handmade treasure that will always remind you of the independent and crafty spirit of Helen's mountain artisans. +



CONVENIENCE STORES & MARKETS

Betty's Country Store, 18 Yonah St., Helen, GA.

Convenient stores are, well, convenient. Go in, grab a cup of coffee and some snacks, and you're on the road again. And while a 7-11 could serve your needs just fine, why not stop into a local convenient store instead, like Betty's Country Store in Helen.

Betty Fain set up shop in 1973, taking over a struggling grocery store and turning it into the place to shop locally for both basic groceries and specialty and handmade items. For the past 30 years, Betty's Country Store has welcomed passersby stopping in for a quick snack and those looking to linger in the courtyard to play a round of checkers. In addition to a wide range of your favorite snacks and treats, you'll also find fresh brewed coffee, barrels of snacks, a well-stocked deli and some of the best-baked goods around. In fact, some people travel for miles just for a piece of Betty's famous carrot cake or some homemade cookies. Fill a basket for a picnic at nearby Unicoi

State Park or for a scenic drive on the Russell-Brasstown Scenic Byway. Betty's Country Store also sells beer, wine and can help anglers by providing fishing licenses and some basic fishing gear. The store is located just off of Helen's Main Street on Yonah Street. +



White County Farmer's Market, White County Courthouse, 59 South Main St., Cleveland, GA.

Get a taste of the agriculture bounty produced in the farms and orchards of White County at the weekly White County Farmer's Market. This market is held each Saturday from 7:30 a.m. until noon, or until the produce sells out.

All the participants at the market must grow and produce any goods they sell at the market. Choose from fresh vegetables, fresh fruits, herbs, spices, nursery items and more while meeting the very people who grew and tended the crops.

There's no better way to get a feel for the flavor of the locals then by literally tasting what the local farmer's market has to offer. +



Christkindlmarkt, Marktplatz, Helen, GA.

The town of Helen is fashioned after an authentic alpine village and not just in the architecture. Helen celebrates the traditional alpine festivals as well including holding an annual Christkindlmarkt from Thanksgiving through Christmas each year. These traditional markets originated in Germany with the first record of a market dating back to 1294. The markets open during the traditional Advent season and include many traditional Christmas traditions such as nativity scenes. Visit the booths and stalls at the Helen Christkindlmarkt to sample local food, find locally made art and celebrate the spirit of the Christmas season. +



DINING

Between your hike to Anna Ruby Falls, your shopping expedition in downtown Helen and your visit to the Dahlonega Gold Museum, you're going to get hungry. Thankfully, you have a lot of options among the many restaurants, cafes and diners in Helen and the surrounding mountain towns. From high class dining to a pizza on the go, you can find just about every kind of cuisine in this neck of the woods.

Bigg Daddy's American Tavern and Music Club, 807 Edelweisse Strasse, Helen, GA.

The folks at Bigg Daddy's in downtown Helen live by a simple motto: They live to eat instead of eat to live. To that end, they strive to create a menu with only the finest ingredients. Fish is delivered daily and produce comes from local farms and farmer's markets.

Bigg Daddy's also prides itself on creating a world-class beer and wine list to compliment the menu, including local brews from Georgia.

At Bigg Daddy's, there's more in store for you than just a great menu. The restaurant is also the place to go in northern Georgia for live music. The best local musicians regularly play at Bigg Daddy's so you get to experience both local foods and local culture.

Make a night of it at Bigg Daddy's with great food and great music in one place. +



Café La Piazza, 705 Brucken Strasse, Helen, GA.

For a fine dining experience, look no further than the award winning restaurant, Café La Piazza, located in downtown Helen across from the clock tower. This restaurant received the Five Star Award of Excellence from the Gourmet and Wine Society of Northeast Georgia for serving up the most authentic — and delicious — Italian and Mediterranean food in the area.

Café La Piazza blends fresh local ingredients found at nearby farms with specialty items imported directly from Italy. Choose from Italian classic dishes like Caesar salad and veal scallopini served alongside fresh-made pastas and sauces.

The restaurant also features a full bar and specialty cocktails. Café La Piazza is the perfect place for a special occasion, intimate date or family celebration. +



Hofer's of Helen, 8758 North Main Street, Helen, GA.



The town of Helen re-created itself in the 1950s into an authentic Bavarian village — the Alps in the Appalachians. And so a visit to this alpine burg must include a stop at an authentic German restaurant, like Hofer's of Helen. This establishment was opened by Horst and Gerda Hofer of Schwabach, Germany in 1973. The bakery still relies on old world techniques to make their fine breads and pastries including using a stone hearth oven to bake all their breads. Today, Hofer's offers a wide range of baked goods, German breads and rolls, and Bavarian pretzels. Hofer's also has a café and Biergarten with a menu that includes German favorites like spatzle and schnitzel. Stop in at Hofer's of Helen to load up for a picnic or to stay for awhile enjoying the food and scenery. +

Scoop De Scoop Ice Cream Parlor, 7914 South Main Street, Helen, GA.

Ready for a treat? Then head over to Scoop De Scoop Ice Cream Parlor located at the Alpine Mini Golf complex. This 1950s style ice cream parlor offers several flavors of hand-scooped ice cream and a wide variety of shakes, floats and other frozen treats. Enjoy your ice cream among the gardens, gazebos and scenery of the 18-hole Alpine Mini Golf Course. Make sure to save enough time to get a few rounds on the course in yourself. During the summers, the Alpine Mini Golf Course and the Scoop De Scoop Ice Cream Parlor stay open until 10 p.m. so you can beat the heat in the cooler evenings with an ice cream cone. +



Grapes and Beans, 42 East Savannah Street, Clayton, GA.



For a healthy, sustainable and locally-sourced meal, head east of Helen to the town of Clayton and an afternoon sipping wine, talking with locals and trying a broad range of tasty sandwiches, salads and entrees on the deck of Grapes and Beans.

Grapes and Beans is a quaint restaurant, wine and coffee shop serving a menu that focuses on fresh, local and organic ingredients. Vegetarians and meat-eaters will all find something to enjoy. You can also choose to eat-in or carry-out your food making Grapes and Beans the perfect spot to pick up a picnic to go for a hike at nearby Tallulah Gorge State Park.

To get to Grapes and Beans, follow Georgia 76 east to Clayton. The restaurant is located on Georgia 76, which becomes Savannah Street in Clayton. +

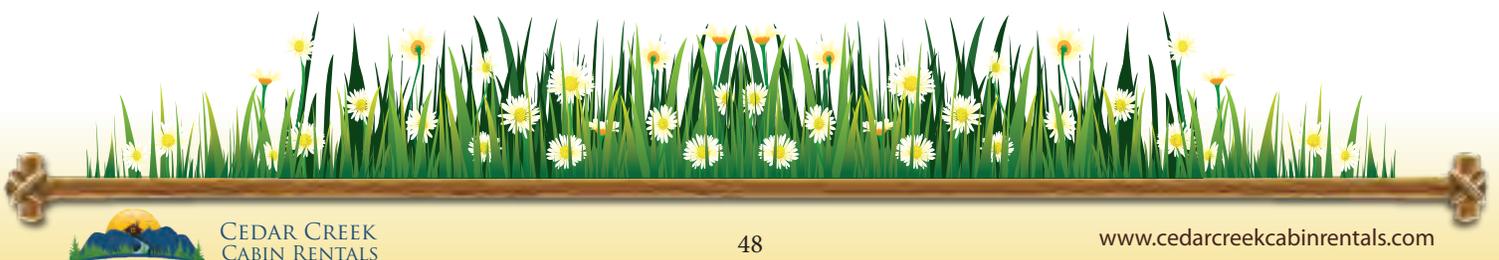
Betty's Country Store, 18 Yonah St., Helen, GA.

For a quick bite and local "fast" food, head over to Betty's Country Store in Helen. This shop offers a full range of standard grocery items along with a high quality deli and home-baked goods.

Betty Fain set up shop in 1973, taking over a struggling grocery store and turning it into the place to shop locally for both basic groceries and specialty and handmade items. For the past 30 years, Betty's Country Store has welcomed passersby stopping in for a quick snack and those looking to linger in the courtyard to play a round of checkers.

In addition to a wide range of your favorite snacks and treats, you'll also find fresh brewed coffee, barrels of snacks, a well-stocked deli and some of the best-baked goods around. In fact, some people travel for miles just for a piece of Betty's famous carrot cake or some homemade cookies. Fill a basket for a picnic at nearby Unicoi State Park or for a scenic drive on the Russell-Brasstown Scenic Byway.

It may not have a drive through, but Betty's Country Store can get you the food you need for a day of adventure and fun. 





EVENTS

One of the best reasons to visit Helen, GA is to experience the life and culture of these small mountain towns and there is no better way to do this than attending a special event or festival. Each small community has developed its own signature events by season to celebrate those things that make northern Georgia so special. Plan your next excursion to coincide with one of these signature festivals and events and you may find yourself coming back to enjoy yourself year after year. Before setting out on your event adventure, though, follow a few tips to make your experience memorable in a good way.

1. **Check the Schedule:** Some events are held during the same holiday weekend like Christmas markets or specific seasons. Some festivals change by a few days each year, though. And almost all events and festivals tweak their tried and true schedules each year. Be sure to check the event website or call ahead so you attend at the peak of the event rather than during the clean up stages.
2. **Be Prepared:** Being adequately prepared for the event you plan to attend takes some thinking. Read up on the event and know if you can bring your own picnic or need to leave the cooler at home, if there are any entrance fees or if you need to bring cash. You will have a better experience when you're not frustrated by event restrictions you didn't anticipate.
3. **Explore:** Special events are just the start of your mountain adventure. Explore the town and natural areas around you to get a broader flavor of the north Georgia region and find new reasons to come back to the area.



SPRING: APRIL — JUNE

Bear on the Square Mountain Festival, Dahlonega, GA.

This festival in Dahlonega held each April celebrates the best of mountain life. The Bear on the Square Mountain Festival is a weekend of music and art centered on the historic Dahlonega public square. All day and into the night, you'll be treated to old-time and bluegrass music of the south Appalachian region.

Additionally, you can enjoy a juried artist marketplace featuring traditional mountain crafts, kid activities, a Saturday night dance and a Sunday morning gospel jam. Be sure to check the website for a detailed calendar of performances, classes and workshops and the date and time for the live country auction. +



Helen to the Atlantic Balloon Race and Festival, Helen, GA.

After Memorial Day each year, the skies in Helen fill with brightly colored hot air balloons kicking off the annual Helen to the Atlantic Balloon Race and Festival. This is the oldest balloon event and only long distance hot air balloon race in the United States.

Racing balloons leave Georgia and make their way east to Interstate 95, anywhere between Maine and Miami. The first balloon to cross I-95, or the balloon furthest ahead by sunset on the final racing day, wins the race.

Back in Helen, you can enjoy a wide variety of other balloon related events including tethered balloon rides and champagne flights over the mountains. Check the event website for exact details and dates. +



Northeast Georgia Spring Arts Tour.

Twice a year, in June and again in November, northern Georgia celebrates its artistic side. Numerous artists and craftsmen call this area home where they practice their arts and explore folk arts in small, artist-owned studios.

Twice a year, the galleries, studios and shops invite visitors in for special events and shows during this self-guided tour festival. You'll discover original masterpieces all made by regional artists as you take your time winding along a self-made route.

Be sure to visit the Arts Tour website to make your personalized tour map and learn about the galleries and shops participating in the tour. +



Georgia Fine Wine Festival at Blackstock Vineyards, 5400 Town Creek Road, Dahlonega, GA.

In early June, Blackstock Vineyards celebrates Georgia's growing wine industry. The festival features more than 30 dishes from local restaurants and 60 wines from the area's vineyards. During the festival, you can also enjoy live music, arts and crafts and a petting zoo. The festival helps promote the state of Georgia's agritourism, which invites you to experience Georgia's agricultural gems, particularly the wine industry. Check the Blackstock Vineyards and Winery website for exact dates, times and costs. +



SUMMER: JULY-SEPTEMBER

Annual Fireworks, 8016 S. Main Street, Helen, GA.

What better way to celebrate our nation's independence than with a good, old-fashioned fireworks display? Helen invites you to join the mountain community for a fun-filled evening. The fireworks start at dusk behind the Alpine Village Shoppes at the south end of Helen. +



Folk Life Festival at Unicoi State Park, 1788 Highway 356, Helen, GA.



Ever wish you could go back to the "good old days?" During the Folk Life Festival at Unicoi State Park each July, you can! This festival features old time music, crafts and activities to reconnect you with bygone mountain traditions. Make sure to take in the demonstrations of traditional life skills like spinning, butter churning, candle dipping, black powder demonstrations and more. Be sure to check the schedule for the many performances and opportunities to cut a rug like at the traditional hoe down or a square dance. +

Oktoberfest, Helen Festhalle, 1074 Edelweiss Strasse, Helen, GA.

If you go to one event in northern Georgia during the year, go to Oktoberfest in Helen. This traditional September celebration kicks off each September in the alpine village of Helen and continues through the end of October, making it the longest Oktoberfest celebration in the world. The Helen festival includes food, dancing, music and beer. Local musicians play live in the Oktoberfest hall. Several events including a parade and a Miss Oktoberfest contest round out the festivities. Perhaps the best part about Oktoberfest is the feeling of simply being there. The Germans call this "Gemutlichkeit." There isn't a direct English translation but it's the feeling of coziness, belonging, good cheer and communion with your fellow man (or woman). It's the feeling you'll get from being in the Festhalle, a room filled with long tables perfect for meeting up with new friends and old and sharing in the Gemutlichkeit of the Helen Oktoberfest. +



FALL: OCTOBER — DECEMBER

Gold Rush Days, Dahlonega, GA.

Relive the glory of the first gold rush in United States history with the Gold Rush Days in Dahlonega each October. This festival falls at the peak of the fall foliage season as well, making it the perfect festival to explore the north Georgia mountain communities.

The two-day event includes a parade, children's events, gold panning, a wheelbarrow race, a king and queen coronation, pig calling and much more old time Southern fun. Enjoy live music in the town square and more than 300 art and craft vendors.

Plan for a crowd as more than 200,000 people visit Dahlonega over this weekend. Most events occur in or around the historic Dahlonega town square. +



Georgia Mountain Fall Festival, Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds, Hiawassee, GA.

In mid-October, the place to be is the Georgia Mountain Fall Festival held at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds in Hiawassee. This 10-day event held each October takes advantage of the mild weather and beautiful fall scenery to celebrate the best of the mountain communities. Visit the juried arts and crafts show to see demonstrations of traditional mountain crafts. Listen to great local music or take in the annual fiddler's convention. And of course, there are a wide variety of activities, demonstrations and fun to be had for everyone during this festival. Hiawassee is north of Helen off of Georgia 76. +



Northeast Georgia Fall Arts Tour.

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Twice a year, the galleries, studios and shops invite visitors in for special events and shows during this self-guided tour festival. You'll discover original masterpieces all made by regional artists as you take your time winding along a self-made route.

Be sure to visit the Arts Tour website to make your personalized tour map and learn about the galleries and shops participating in the tour. +



Old Fashioned Christmas, Dahlonega, GA.

It's Christmas for the whole month of December in Dahlonega. The Old Fashioned Christmas celebration in Dahlonega kicks off with the lighting of the square after Thanksgiving and a parade bringing Santa into town on the first Saturday each December.

The rest of the month, you can find any number of activities and events like caroling, wine tasting and live theater events in and around Dahlonega, including the traditional Chriskindlmarkt in near-by Helen. +



WINTER: JANUARY — MARCH

Dahlonega Trail Fest, Springer Mountain, Dahlonega, GA.

The Dahlonega Trail Fest held each March celebrates two events — the vernal equinox and the kickoff of the hiking season. Springer Mountain in Dahlonega is the southern terminus for the historic Appalachian Trail.

The Dahlonega Trail Fest celebrates the role it plays in the longest trail in the United States. The event includes shuttles to and from Springer Mountain and Amicalola Falls, camping for hikers, camping and hiking equipment vendors, and live entertainment.

Celebrate the historic role the Appalachian Trail has played in this part of the state and ring in the new spring at the Dahlonega Trail Fest. 



Spring Wine Highway Weekend

This event held each March continues to grow in popularity as the superb wines from Georgia gain in recognition. Wineries open their doors for special events late in March inviting old friends and newcomers alike to come in and discover what's new in Georgia wine country.

You can purchase a wine "passport" at any of the wineries along the Georgia Wine Highway to begin your excursions. For more information about participating wineries and special events during the weekend, be sure to visit the website. 



WANT TO STAY IN HELEN GA? WE STAND BY TO HELP!
CALL NOW 770-952-4130