



HOME OF THE BRAVE

BY BRET LOVE

Navigating wild rapids, traversing lush canopies and exploring labyrinthine caves may sound like escapades out of an Indiana Jones movie, not a trip to the South's most bustling metropolis. But those on the hunt for adventurous outdoor pursuits need only drive about an hour outside the city to find them. No need to don a fedora and leather jacket; sunscreen and bug spray will do—and don't worry, chances are you won't run into any snakes.

HOLD ON TIGHT! Traversing the Sky Hike ropes course at Stone Mountain Park is no easy feat.

ICONS BY MIKE DOLAN / AGENCYRUSH.COM

AUGUST 2010 GO MAGAZINE

ADVENTURE
KEY

FAMILY-FRIENDLY

FREE (PARKING FEES
MAY BE REQUIRED)GOOD WILDLIFE
WATCHING

SECLUDED



CROWDED



WET 'N' WILD



PHOTO OPS

EXTREME
ADRENALINE RUSH

MODERATE



TAKING IT EASY

ZIPLINING IN
NORTH GEORGIA

Picture yourself high up in a lush forest canopy, soaring 200 feet in the air among the treetops and tiptoeing across a 600-foot-long sky bridge over a gorge. Now relax, because you're strapped onto a steel cable. Historic Banning Mills' pulse-pounding course—which includes one of the longest zip lines in the country at 2,400 feet long—provides spectacular views and will leave you breathless and **begging for more**. 49 miles from Downtown; 205 Horseshoe Dam Rd, Whitesburg; 770-834-9149; historicbanningmills.com



HIKING PANTHER CREEK FALLS



North Georgia is renowned for its amazing waterfalls, but this lesser-known recreation area located in the Tallulah Basin features one of the best, accessible via a picturesque 6-mile trail through a forest filled with 100-foot-tall trees, flowering shrubs and moss-covered cliffs. Panther Creek drops nearly 1,000 feet from Stony Mountain on its way to the Tugaloo River, with a series of killer cascades leading to two impressive waterfalls. The hike is long and somewhat challenging, particularly after a rain, but the dramatic view at the bottom is well worth the effort. 94 miles from Downtown; Chattahoochee National Forest, US 441 north of Turnerville; 706-754-6221; fs.fed.us

SHOOTING THE HOOCH



Made famous by country singer Alan Jackson, the Chattahoochee River stretches from northeast Georgia down through metro suburbs such as Roswell; "shooting the 'hooch" on a raft, tube, canoe or kayak has been a local tradition for decades. Companies such as Chattahoochee Outfitters offer trips ranging from three to 6.5 miles, with shuttle service to return rafters to their cars after the trek is over. It's an excellent way to laze away a summer afternoon, with picturesque scenery perfect for waterproof cameras. 27.5 miles from Downtown; 203 Azalea Park, Roswell; 770-650-1008; shootthehooch.com



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**FALL 2010
CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

SEPTEMBER 2010
Labor Day Parade & Festival
September 6

Fall Concerts on the Plaza
September 11, 18, & 25

OCTOBER 2010
14th Annual Chili Cook-off
October 22

West Georgia Quad & Main Street Market
October 23

DECEMBER 2010
Christmas Parade & Tree Lighting
December 3

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Douglasville Welcome Center/Broad Street Gifts
6694 Broad Street
Douglasville, Georgia 30134
770.947.5920 or 1.800.661.0013

www.visitdouglasville.com

SPELUNKING IN NORTHWEST GEORGIA



TAG—the area in the Cumberland Plateau where northwest Georgia meets Alabama and Tennessee—has long lured spelunkers eager to explore its winding underground passages. Pigeon Mountain is popular thanks to a vast network of limestone caves, as is Pettijohn's Cave, with six miles of mapped passageways. The deepest drops—the 440-foot-deep "Incredible" pit and the 586-foot-deep "Fantastic" pit—are in Ellison's Cave. Note: There aren't any local tour companies, so explore at your own risk.

79 miles from Downtown;
Crockford Pigeon Mountain
Wildlife Management Area, 2592
Floyd Springs Rd, Armuchee;
706-295-6041

ROCK CLIMBING IN TALLULAH GORGE STATE PARK



Considered one of Georgia's "Seven Natural Wonders," Tallulah Gorge is around two miles long and features quartzite cliffs up to 1,000 feet high. Rock climbers are attracted to challenging routes with colorful names such as Digital Delight, Flying Frog and Punk Wave, all of which are rated 5.8 to 5.10 (with 5.15 being the most difficult). The park only allows 20 climbing permits per day (available at the park's Interpretive Center), and it's best to go with experienced guides; Granite Arches Climbing Services (granitearches.com) offers instruction while helping to ensure your safety. 96 miles from Downtown; 338 Jane Hurt Yarn Dr, Tallulah Falls; 706-754-7970; gastateparks.org/tallulah

BIKING THE SILVER COMET TRAIL



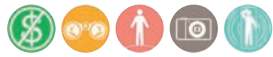
Formerly the route of the Silver Comet passenger train, this paved recreational trail extends 61.5 miles from the northwest Atlanta suburb of Smyrna all the way to Anniston, AL. The city's first rails-to-trails project, the Silver Comet is renowned for its spectacular scenic vistas as it traverses numerous trestles and bridges and offers direct access to Heritage Park, which features more than 14 acres of wetlands and the ruins of Concord Woolen Mills. Don't have a bike with you? No problem; just rent one from the Silver Comet Depot. 16.5 miles from Downtown; 4342 Floyd Rd, Mableton; 770-819-3279; silvercometga.com




DIVE RIGHT IN A caver explores Ellison's Cave

ANTHONY BAKER / ALAMY



FLY FISHING THE CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER



Atlanta anglers seeking a break from the 9 to 5 often head north to the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area, where cold waters released from the depths of Lake Lanier at Buford Dam provide an ideal habitat for trout—not to mention beaver, raccoons and white tail deer. Experienced fly fishing guides from River Through Atlanta can help you find hush-hush hotspots near Bowman's Island and Settles Bridge, where you can immerse yourself in Mother Nature's pastoral beauty while trying to land the big one. 42 miles from Downtown; Buford Dam, Powerhouse Rd, Buford; 770-650-8630; riverthroughatlanta.com





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WHITEWATER RAFTING ON THE CHATTOOGA RIVER



Designated by Congress as one of America's "Wild and Scenic" rivers in 1974, the Chattooga River (where much of *Deliverance* was filmed) offers challenges for rafters of all skill levels. Extreme adventurers will go wild for Section IV, where Class IV and V rushing whitewater pushes you down the river at a breakneck pace, climaxing with an invigorating plunge down the legendary Five Falls and Soc-em-Dog. (If you're with the family, try the beginner-friendly float trip in Section III with a Class IV ending at Bull's Sluice.) Hiring an outfitter like Southeastern Expeditions will greatly improve your chance of survival.

112 miles from Downtown;
7350 Hwy 76 East, Clayton;
800-868-7238; southeastern
expeditions.com

TRAVERSING SKY HIKE'S ROPE COURSE



From the ground, this popular attraction at Stone Mountain Park doesn't seem all that intimidating. But climb the stairs to the third level of this ¼-mile ropes course—where you cross suspended wooden bridges, leap from one thin wooden slat to the next and balance on wiggling tightropes 40 feet above the ground—and you may want to reevaluate. Fortunately, there are terrestrial activities for those with a healthy fear of heights.

20 miles from Downtown, Hwy 78 East, Exit 8; 770-498-5690; stonemountainpark.com

ROLLERBLADING AT PIEDMONT PARK



Don't want to travel outside the city for a day of outdoor fun? Then head to 189-acre Piedmont Park, which is to Atlanta what Central Park is to NYC. A Midtown landmark for 115 years, the park has become a haven for rollerbladers, who glide along its main roadway and the 10th Street Meadow Path while simultaneously enjoying some of the city's best people-watching opportunities. If you don't have your own gear, rent from Skate Escape (skateescape.com), located right across from the park at the 12th Street entrance.

5 miles from Downtown; 430 Lakeshore Dr NE; 404-875-7275; piedmontpark.org ✈

