

The Chattanooga Guides Series

The Chattanooga Outdoors Database: 47 Adventures

Read time: 8 minutes

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Seasonality: Year-round; peak season March–October for water activities

#outdoor-adventures

Last updated: 01/15/2025

Neighborhoods: Downtown, North Shore, Signal Mountain, Lookout Mountain, Tennessee River Gorge

Best for: Adventure seekers, Outdoor enthusiasts, Families, Nature lovers

The great outdoors are only as great as your planning. Sure you *might* not need the trail map, but it couldn't hurt to have one, your geographic intuition has been atrophying since MapQuest.

Fortunately at the same time digital maps have been getting better, there are also more online platforms for helping you plan an adventure that fits your appetite, calendar, and physical fitness level.

Outdoor adventure types include but aren't limited to: caves, hikes, bikes, swims, kayaks, climbs, fishing, and hang gliding.

If your visiting Chattanooga for the first time you won't be able to fit everything you want to do in a weekends time, but

hopefully you're inspired to return and cross a few more adventure goals off your list.

Activities:

Biking

Climbing

Hiking

Paddling

Places:

Chickamauga Battlefield

Cloudland Canyon State Park

Enterprise Nature Park

Local Park

Lookout Mountain

Nature Preserves

Raccoon Mountain

Stringers Ridge

More Filters:

Kid Friendly

Waterfall

Farm

Cave

Other

1. Hike the West Rim Loop .

A 5 mile loop trail that stays on top of the canyon as you follow the canyon rim. The terrain is dirt, rock, and has some tree roots. Elevation changes on the trail are mild, about 700ft of elevation gain in total. The park is open 7am–10pm and requires a \$5 daily parking fee.

#hiking

#cloudland

#3-to-5-miles

2. Hike the Cherokee and Hemlock Falls Trail .

A shorter 1.2 mile out-and-back hike where you descend into the canyon and explore two of the park's waterfalls. Not advisable to bring dogs as the metal grate of the descending stairway can be painful and challenging for them. In all about 450ft of elevation gain. The park is open 7am-10pm and requires a \$5 daily parking fee.

#hiking

#waterfalls

#cloudland

#1-to-2-miles

3. Hike the Sitton's Gulch Trail .

A well shaded 5 mile out-and-back hike that descends into the gorge with ~1000ft of elevation gain. Known for beautiful creek and waterfall views. The park is open 7am-10pm and requires a \$5 daily parking fee.

#hiking

#waterfalls

#cloudland

#3-to-5-miles

4. Hike the Overlook Trail .

A short and easy out and back trail with expansive views of the canyon, around 1 mile total distance out and back. Ideal for families or a quick visit

#hiking

#cloudland

#1-to-2-miles

#kid-friendly

5. Hang Glide at Lookout Mountain Flight Park .

Get your pen out to cross a long standing item from your bucket list. Tandem hang gliding around Lookout Mountain. After being towed up by a small plane (an experience on its own), you'll then typical glide anywhere from 1500-3000ft above the valley depending on the days thermal conditions.

Their Website

#hang-gliding

#lookout-mtn

#other

6. Paddle to view a Bat Cave .

Take a guided or self directed kayak trip to see ~100,000 bats exit their cave for a nightly insect hunt along the Tennessee River. If you choose the tour its about a 3 mile paddle altogether.

Guided Tour Info

#paddling

#caves

#wildlife

#kid-friendly

7. Paddle to view the Sand Hill Crane Migration .

During their winter migration thousands of once endangered Sandhill Cranes take an extended stay at the Hiwassee Island. You can plan a trip out there yourself or take a beginner friendly guided kayak trip. The cranes are typically there from November – February.

Guided Tour Info

#wildlife

#paddling

#kid-friendly

8. Explore Audubon Acres Nature Preserve .

In the heart of Chattanooga sits 130 preserved acres and 5 miles of easy walking trails. This land protects flora, fauna and also documented Cherokee history. Bring your boots, it can get muddy along the Chickamauga Creek which flows through the preserve. There is a \$5 for adults and \$3 for children entry fee.

Their Website

#preserve

#wildlife

#kid-friendly

9. Explore Reflection Riding Arboretum & Nature Center .

300 acres and 10 miles of trails to explore in this Lookout Mountain preserve. Guided tours get you close to endangered red wolves and birds of prey. The welcome center is open 9am-4pm Tuesday-Saturday. Donations are accepted and help keep the preserve operational.

Their Website

#kid-friendly

#preserve

#wildlife

#lookout-mtn

10. Visit Rosie Mae's Alpaca Farm .

Visit a family owned Alpaca Farm in Wildwood, Georgia. They have 9 alpaca's on the farm and they also run a coffee shop and boutique onsite. A great option for children and animal lovers.

Their Website Private Tour

#wildlife

#farm

#kid-friendly

11. Visit Highland Cattle at Blessing Creek .

Blessing Creek Farms opens their doors for visitors to interact with their Highland Cattle and other farm animals. Located in Lafayette, Georgia. Tours are available by appointment only.

Their Website

#wildlife

#farm

#kid-friendly

12. Explore Standifer Gap Marsh .

One of the best harsh habitats in the Chattanooga area. This wildlife refuge is an wonderful place to spot birds, reptiles,

butterflies and small mammals. It's a great place for an hour or two's walk for naturalists in your family.

#wildlife

#preserve

#kid-friendly

13. Wild Cave Tour of Raccoon Mountain .

Get down and dirty on a guided crawl through the ageless caverns of Raccoon Mountain. Tours are either 2 or 3.5 hours depending on your selected option. Minimum requirements - age: 8, height: 56 inches, max weight: 275lbs.

Tour Details

#caves

14. Walking Tour of Raccoon Mountain Caves .

Significantly less messy than the Wild Cave Tour, this 45-55 minute guided walking tour takes you through a quarter mile of the system as you take in the novel sights, history, and lighted pathways. Children must be 3 years of age.

Tour Details

#caves

#kid-friendly

15. Stargaze with Barnard Astronomical

Society .

Passing 100 years of operation in 2023, the BAS is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing education and love for astronomy in Chattanooga. Check the linked website for upcoming events, like their free 'star parties'.

Upcoming Events

#astronomy

#kid-friendly

#other

16. Explore Ruby Falls Underground Waterfall .

A famed Chattanooga adventure. Take a guided walking tour of the 145 foot underground waterfall and learn all about stalactites, stalagmites and the explorers who made it all possible.

Their Website

#caves

#lookout-mtn

#kid-friendly

17. Bike or hike the River to Clouds Route .

An exciting but technical 34 mile interconnected trail system that starts at Cloudland Canyon State Park and Lookout Mountain into Chattanooga. Visit their website for more technical details.

More Information

[#biking](#)[#hiking](#)[#cloudland](#)[#lookout-mtn](#)

18. Bike or hike the Guild Hardy Trail .

Starting near the base of Lookout Mountain on Ochs Highway you can take this multi use trail as far as you want up (it'll take you to the top) and around the mountain. In total it's an 11 mile loop with ~1700 ft of elevation gain.

[All Trails](#)

[#biking](#)[#hiking](#)[#lookout-mtn](#)[#10-plus-miles](#)

19. Hike the Glen Falls Trail .

An easier out and back one mile hike that will take you to a scenic waterfall. If you want to cool off you can take a swim at the base of it. Kid and dog friendly but like all of Chattanooga it's rocky terrain so proper footwear is recommended.

[All Trails](#)

[#hiking](#)[#lookout-mtn](#)[#swim](#)[#1-to-2-miles](#)

20. Walk the Virginia Ave Greenway .

Tucked into the St Elmo neighborhood, this 1.4 mile (one way) greenway offers scenic views of both Lookout Mountain and the charming houses of the historic district. It is a popular paved greenway with one-way vehicle traffic, be mindful with

children and dogs. Access the greenway by parking near The Woodshop at the intersection of 55th Street and Virginia Ave.

#greenway

21. Horseback ride at Scenic City Equestrian Center .

Take a 60-90 minute trail ride on Scenic City Equestrian's 86 acre property. More details: \$60 per rider, minimum 10 years old, maximum rider weight is 250 lbs, close toed shoes and long pants required, must book appointment at least a week ahead of time.

More Information

#horseback-riding

22. Horseback ride at Hidden Hills Farm .

Ride for 60 minutes on 200 acres of farmland, no experience required, must book in advance. More details: \$55 per rider, minimum 10 years old, maximum rider weight is 230 lbs, close toed shoes and long pants required, must book appointment at least a week ahead of time.

More Information

#horseback-riding

23. Family Farm Visit at Hidden Hills Farm

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Bring your family out to meet goats, sheep, donkeys, ponies and chickens and watch the daily farm activities. More details: \$50 for a group of up to 6 people. \$5 per additional person, 15 people max. Pony rides available for \$10.

More Information

#farm

#kid-friendly

24. Paddle the Tennessee River Blueway .

This is a 45 mile mostly flatwater + mild currents paddling route. Paddle the whole route starting near the Chickamauga Dam and follow the river north to Nickajack Dam. This route can be shortened using any number of access points. You can also make it a multi day experience by camping at one of the primitive sites along the way like on Maclellan Island or at Prentice Cooper State Forest.

More Information

#paddling

25. Paddle the Chickamauga Creek .

A slow paddle southeast of downtown Chattanooga. This route meanders through woods, fields and towns. The route

extends roughly 30 miles.

More Information

#paddling

26. Paddle the Hiwassee River .

A beginner/intermediate paddling route depending on current conditions. This is a 55 mile route with class 1 or 2 whitewater in some sections. It runs from Appalachia Dam in North Carolina to Blythe's Ferry on the Tennessee River. Guide options are available.

More Information

#paddling

27. South Chickamauga Creek Greenway .

This is a 13 mile part paved, part gravel multi-use trail along the South Chickamauga Creek. There are a variety of access points like Camp Jordan, Brainerd Levee and Sterchi Farm to list a few.

More Information On the Map

#greenway

#kid-friendly

28. Tennessee Riverwalk .

A 16 mile paved walkway along the Tennessee Riverfront. This is a multi-use trail that ties into multiple sections of downtown Chattanooga. Access points at Wheland Foundry, Ross's Landing and Chestnut Street, among others.

More Information

#greenway

#kid-friendly

29. Greenway Farms Park .

This is a 180 acre recreational park situated along the North Chickamauga Creek. It's popular for a variety of recreation like hiking forested trails, fishing the creek, and their dog park.

More Information

#park

30. Sculpture Fields .

Walk amongst 50 large sculptures through 1.5 miles of winding trails around the 33 acre park in Montauge Park. Take in the artwork, walk your dog, and after have a lunch at nearby Chattanooga restaurants.

More Information

#park

31. Hike Poe Path Run to Hidden Lake .

Hike 3 miles through Enterprise Nature Park. This is one of the easier and more widely recommended hikes in the 2800 acre park. It's shaded, well maintained and has a scenic water view. Expect to see others on the trail.

[All Trails](#)

#hiking

#enterprise-nature

32. Hike Poe Path Run + Deer Hollow .

Instead of the 3 mile hike above, try adding in another trail for more forest scenery, less foot traffic. This hike is 5 miles long and considered closer to intermediate in difficulty. You're likely to spot wildlife adding more mileage and a less traversed trail.

[All Trails](#)

#hiking

#enterprise-nature

#3-to-5-miles

33. Hike Hawks Ridge Loop .

A different 3 mile hike in Enterprise Nature Park. This one tends to be less crowded for those looking for more solitude in their nature visit. Its difficulty sits between easy/intermediate depending on who you ask.

[More Information](#)

#hiking

#enterprise-nature

#3-to-5-miles

34. Hike Enterprise Nature Park South Loop .

Explore the entire park using this route. It's 17 miles in length taking you out, around, and through different areas of the park. Roughly 1,500 feet of elevation gain on mostly multi-use trails. Dogs on leash are welcome.

All Trails

#hiking

#enterprise-nature

#10-plus-miles

35. Bike Black Forest MTB trail .

A flowy beginner friendly MTB trail. It's roughly 3.5 miles in total distance. Not overly technical, nor too intense of climbing but a fun ride through the woods. Follow the park signs for whether to ride clockwise or counter clockwise, the direction changes depending on the day of the week.

Tuesday, Thursday, Sunday are clockwise, the remaining days counterclockwise.

More Information

#biking

#mtb

#enterprise-nature

#3-to-5-miles

36. Bike TNT MTB trail .

Another beginner MTB trail, considered a bit more difficult than the Black Forest trail. It's 4.4 miles in total distance with a few more climbs than Black Forest. Combine the two for an 8 mile ride on the day. Follow the park signs for whether to ride clockwise or counter clockwise, the direction changes depending on the day of the week. Tuesday, Thursday, Sunday are clockwise, the remaining days counterclockwise.

More Information

#biking

#mtb

#enterprise-nature

#3-to-5-miles

37. Camp Jordan Loop .

An easy two mile paved loop where you can walk, run or bike. It's outer rim is surrounded by woodlands and inside are sports fields and a disc golf park. This loop connects to the South Chickamauga Greenway via the only bridge in the park seen along the loop, if you want a longer run.

More Information

#greenway

#park

38. Bike or hike Blue Trail .

This 3.5 mile loop is considered moderately difficult due to some of the climbs. Located in the heart of Chattanooga, Stringers Ridge is a wonderfully accessible park for a easy escape into nature.

More Information

#stringers-ridge

#3-to-5-miles

#hiking

#biking

#loop

39. Bike or hike Cherokee and Strut Trail .

Another great outdoors option at Stringers Ridge. This trail is an easier 2.5 mile loop with 272 feet of elevation gain. If you're hiking, expect to see mountain bikers.

More Information

#stringers-ridge

#3-to-5-miles

#hiking

#biking

#loop

40. Hike Big Soddy Creek Gulf .

This is a well maintained picturesque out and back trail that follows the Soddy Creek as you gradually climb through shaded woodland. It's a flexible route, take it as far as you want out and back, with ample opportunities to sit and take a break along the way.

More Information

#soddy-daisy

#hiking

#3-to-5-miles

41. Hike Pot Point Loop .

One of the longer, harder day hikes in Chattanooga. This 11.5 mile loop provides scenic views of the Tennessee River, state forest creeks, and stunning rock walls as you travel difficult terrain and gain 1500 feet of elevation. Plan accordingly.

More Information

#prentice-cooper

#hiking

#10-plus-miles

42. Hike Rainbow Lake and Bee Branch Trail .

An easier 2 mile scenic hike that loops through Signal Mountain. Known for features such as a suspension bridge, lake views, creeks, and dams.

More Information

#signal-mtn

#hiking

#1-to-2-miles

43. Hike Rainbow Lake to Edwards Point .

This hike a moderately difficult 4.8 mile loop. Shares many of the same features as the Rainbow Lake and Bee Branch Trail route but continue on to be rewarded with the spectacular view of the gorge from Edward's Ward.

More Information

#signal-mtn

#hiking

#3-to-5-miles

44. Hike Mullens Cove Loop .

It's labelled a moderate hike but with 1500 ft of elevation gain and 9+ miles in distance make sure you feel comfortable

before embarking. This loop in Prentice Cooper State Forest offers views of the gorge and some water features as you traverse piece of the Cumberland Trail.

More Information

#prentice-cooper

#hiking

#10-plus-miles

45. Lula Lake Classic Loop .

The Lula Lake area is privately owned by the Lula Lake Land Trust. It is not frequently open to visitors so check the availability link for preparing your visit. Once planned, this 4 mile loop will take you to a scenic waterfall and lake, be prepared for crowds near the falls.

Availability Details More Information

#lookout-mtn

#hike

#waterfall

46. Bike Chickamauga Battlefield Road Loop .

A road ride through history. Ride through the well preserved history and nature of the Chickamauga Battlefield park. This is an easy ride with lots of opportunity to stop and take in some of the historic sites. Expect other bikers on the route as well.

More Information

#chickamauga-battlefield

#10-plus-miles

#biking

47. Bike or hike Raccoon Mountain Reservoir Loop .

A 14 mile technical trail loop. It's considered moderately difficult but the distance and 1450ft of elevation gain put it close to a hard route. Handfuls of opportunities for scenic views on this lap around the mountain. The trails were built for MTB but are multi-use so look out for one another.

[More Information](#)

#raccoon-mtn

#10-plus-miles

#biking

#hiking

48. Bike or hike .

[More Information](#)