

Plan a getaway to some of Georgia's most underrated locales

6:00 a.m. Monday, June 20, 2016



When plotting a getaway from the Atlanta area, the usual suspects seem to rise to the top. Escapes to the historic allure of Savannah, the Alpine-style village of Helen and the small city charm of Chattanooga, Tennessee, often top the list.

Instead of opting for the tried and true, we've gathered a handful of underrated options worth typing into your GPS.

Senoia

Approximately an hour south of Atlanta, this once sleepy hamlet has reanimated into a tourist destination. It owes most of its gratitude toward "The Walking Dead," AMC's runaway hit of a TV series, which uses the town as a location. Zombie-loving "Dead" heads visit to see spots immortalized on the tube. The Georgia Mercantile Company on Broad Street offers the Touring Dead, a walking tour of show locations. The stretch of retailers and eateries on Main Street — downtown Woodbury on the show — can keep visitors busy for hours. The Woodbury Shoppe, "The Walking Dead" gift shop and museum, shares space with the Waking Dead Cafe coffee house. Peruse an array of artful and gifty home goods at the nearby Table Talk. Check out collectibles, jewelry and more at Foxxhollow ((CQ)) Antiques. Consider bunking at the Veranda Historic Bed and Breakfast Inn, where several of "The Walking Dead" cast members have rested in peace.



Hiawassee

A less than two-hour trek toward the Northeast Georgia mountains lands you in Hiawassee. It lays claim to Lake Chatuge, a massive body of water cradled between mountain vistas. Rent a boat or jet ski to explore the glistening expanse. Visit the top of Brasstown Bald, Georgia's highest mountain. Keep your fingers crossed for a clear day, and you'll score a 360-degree view of three additional states (Tennessee, North Carolina and South Carolina). Brasstown Valley Resort & Spa offers upscale lodge-like accommodations, not to mention a spa, golfing, horseback riding, guided fishing trips and more. The Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds not only play host to the Georgia Mountain Fair (July 15-23) and other events, but also an array of concerts. Lynyrd Skynyrd (June 17), Little River Band (July 2), Jana Kramer and Tracy Lawrence (August 26) and Nitty Gritty Dirt Band (October 1) are set to take the stage throughout the summer and into the fall.

Rossville

Sure, a Disney or Universal trip will likely thrill the brood. But step back in time at Lake Winnie Amusement Park, an old school attraction that's been entertaining families since 1925. Located just outside of Chattanooga, Tennessee, the park's name refers to Winnepesaukah, a Native American word that translates to "bountiful waters." Lake Winnie's classic Boat Chute sends visitors down a hill into the park's namesake. Don't miss the Cannon Ball wooden roller coaster and the vintage carousel, the latter dating back to 1916. In 2014, Lake Winnie added the Soak Ya! water park with body slides, a manmade river and more. The Twister, a new addition for 2016, tumbles, twists and turns guests in unrelenting and imaginative fashion.

Cartersville

A little more than an hour's drive slightly northwest of the city, Cartersville may be an unlikely tourist destination on paper. Yet a fascinating trio of attractions offers history, science and water sports adventure. Towering dinosaur skeletons, vintage steam and gasoline-powered cars, actual spacecraft, a planetarium, an observatory and oodles more engage all ages at the Tellus Science Museum. Saddle up for a visit to the Booth Western Art Museum. The second largest art museum in the state, the Booth serves as an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution. It houses work by Western American artists of the 20th and 21st centuries, as well as temporary exhibits. Terminus Wake Park offers water sports without the boat. A series of cables high above its lakes have the ability to tow wakeboarders, water skiers, kneeboarders and other water sportsmen, regardless of their skill level. Need gear? The park rents helmets, vests and boards.