

WEEKENDER: Amicalola State Park & Lodge's Zipline Adventure

By Caleb Saffo

When I was first invited to try out [Amicalola State Park & Lodge's](#) zipline canopy tour in Dawsonville, Ga., I can freely admit: *I had reservations*. After all, there are several words that one could use to describe me, but adventurous is not one of them — at least, I'm not adventurous in the way that came to mind when I thought of ziplining.



Outside of roller coasters, the most daring physical feats that I'd undertaken were the result of several questionable decisions I made my freshman year of college. That is what was so impressive about my experience with Amicalola Zipline & Screaming Eagle Aerial Adventure Park, though. It dispelled all my preconceived notions about ziplining, and the type of person who would enjoy the activity.

The tour has 16 total lines, which are divided up into two levels. Level 1, which could be described as the beginner's level and costs \$59 per person, has nine ziplines that range from 100 to 1,000 feet in length and reach heights of 25 to 80 feet in the air. This package is well-suited for children, families, and first-time zipliners.



That is not to say that the course does not also have something for the experienced thrill-seeker. The Level 2 package, which includes Level 1 and the addition of seven more ziplines, features lines that stretch as far as 2,000 feet in length and carry you as high as 200 feet in the air. It costs \$99 per person, and provides a breathtaking view of the park's mountain ranges, which are as lush a landscape as you'll experience in the state of Georgia.



Now, going into the course, having fun was firmly entrenched as my *second*-most pressing concern. My first, of course, was safety. Fortunately, the course tour guides (who make charmingly corny puns throughout the tour) and Amicalola's safety guidelines set my mind at ease — after I made it through the nerves of the first jump, of course.



The park employs a line system where each guest is secured on the line at the start of the tour and stays attached to the line until the completion of the course. This approach cuts out much of the potential for error and potential injury, as many ziplining accidents occur due to incorrect detachment or reattachment of the zipliner to the line. This, paired with concise and easy-to-follow instructions from the guides, allowed me to focus on other things, like the view of the landscape as I raced through the 2,000 feet long line that the guides have affectionately named “Ralph.”



The ziplines alone would provide for an excellent destination, but the lodge makes the state park a weekend getaway. The 57-room lodge recently underwent renovations, and includes a gift shop and restaurant with a three-meal buffet. The crown jewel of the aforementioned renovations is a set of patios that now accompany the lowest level of rooms. The patios offer a stunning view of the mountains, perfect for watching the sun

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set over the range. These amenities and more upgrade Amicalola State Park from a fun one-day stop to a vacation spot.



I came to the state park cautious about ziplining, and left wanting to try out Ralph again — the emphasis on safety *and* enjoying the lines converted me. But even if you just want to dip your toes in the ziplining waters, or just watch the view of the landscape from afar on your patio, the park is still a suitable destination — Amicalola Falls has a little something for everyone.