



A City Girl's Guide to Helen, Georgia

By Caroline on December 23, 2016 in Georgia, travel



Even the most adamant of city girls needs to get outside every now and again. Luckily for me, living in Atlanta means that I'm only a short drive away from nature. A few months back, I went to Helen, a North Georgia town known for its German-inspired kitsch and Oktoberfest celebrations. I'd come on a skip day from high school, but never really experienced it until now.



My friends at Visit Helen put me up at a cabin at Unicoi State Park & Lodge. I'd previously stayed in their hotel-style rooms at the lodge, but I loved my former wine barrel cabin. Talk about tiny house goals! It was just the right amount of space, with a lofted bed, full kitchen, and this balcony overlooking the lake. There was a television but no WiFi, making it the perfect place to disconnect. I just couldn't let those episodes of *Forensic Files* make me paranoid...



So I packed my favorite yoga pants for a weekend of outdoor adventures. I started with a zipline adventure at the state park, called the Screaming Eagle, as I had recently tested out the new one at nearby Amicalola Falls State Park. It was great to see the area from above as the course featured both long zips and ropes courses. They have multiple courses for all ages to enjoy.



I even went a few beginner hikes. I made sure to pick the ones that I could physically manage and also ones where I probably wouldn't get too lost. The Lake Loop Road from my cabin showcased the best views of the park and ended up just where I started. Anna Ruby Falls was a steep walk, but thankfully a short one to views of the waterfalls, one of many you can find nearby.



Apart from the outdoor adventures, Helen is a great place to eat. I've been to Germany, so I am hesitant about finding "German food" in a small town, but I was blessedly impressed. At Bodensee, I stuffed my face with buttery spaetzle, Hungarian-style goulash, and authentic beer straight from the motherland. The pastries and pastrami sandwiches at Hofer's were also favorites of mine.



During the days where I wasn't adventuring, I explored the small towns near Helen like the arts and crafts galleries of Sautee Nacoochee and the offbeat attractions of Cleveland. But what many people come to this part of the state for is the wine. I know that most people don't think of Georgia as a wine region, but I personally can attest to this fact. Here you'll find dozens of vineyards selling different styles. Yonah Mountain Vineyards was my favorite, with views of its namesake mountain and a light-filled tasting room for sampling their delicious whites.



A long weekend was the perfect amount of time for me to spend in the mountains. Now back to the land of data coverage and city skylines.