

## It's leaf watching time in the Georgia mountains

Leaf Watch feature on Georgia DNR website goes live Oct. 1

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Special to the Daily Post Oct 2, 2016



Roadways at Amicalola Falls State Park make for a colorful drive during peak season in October. (Photo: Department of Natural Resources)

The following are the best places in Georgia's state parks to see the leaves change according to the Georgia State Park System.

**Amicalola Falls State Park, Dawsonville:** The Southeast's tallest cascading waterfall. A short, flat path leads to a boardwalk offering the most spectacular views. There's also an easy-to-reach overlook at the top. For a tougher challenge, start from the bottom of the falls and hike up the steep staircase. [GeorgiaStateParks.org/AmicalolaFalls](http://GeorgiaStateParks.org/AmicalolaFalls)

**Black Rock Mountain State Park, Clayton:** At an altitude of 3,640 feet, Black Rock Mountain is Georgia's highest state park. (Brasstown Bald is the state's highest peak.) Roadside overlooks and the summit Visitor Center offer sweeping views of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The 2.2-mile Tennessee Rock Trail is a good choice for a short, moderate hike. An all-day challenge is the 7.2-mile James E. Edmonds Backcountry Trail. [GeorgiaStateParks.org/BlackRockMountain](http://GeorgiaStateParks.org/BlackRockMountain)

**Cloudland Canyon State Park, near Chattanooga:** Easy-to-reach rim has overlooks and challenging trails. A favorite hike is a long, steep staircase to the bottom of the canyon, where there are two

waterfalls. (It's worth the hike back up.) The 5-mile West Rim Loop is moderately difficult and offers great views of the canyon. [GeorgiaStateParks.org/CloudlandCanyon](https://GeorgiaStateParks.org/CloudlandCanyon)

**F.D. Roosevelt State Park, Pine Mountain:** Park has hardwood forests and rolling mountains. The 6.7-mile Wolf Den Loop is a favorite section of the longer Pine Mountain Trail. Drive to Dowdell's Knob to see a life-size bronze sculpture of President Franklin D. Roosevelt and views of the forested valley. Ga. Highway 190 is a pretty driving route. [GeorgiaStateParks.org/FDRoosevelt](https://GeorgiaStateParks.org/FDRoosevelt)

**Fort Mountain State Park, Chatsworth:** Park is best known for a mysterious rock wall along the mountain-top, plus a variety of trails. Easiest walk is a 1.2-mile loop around the park's green lake. A challenging, all-day hike is the 8-mile Gahuti Trail. Mountain bikers have more than 14 miles to explore. Ga. 52 has beautiful mountain scenery and overlooks. [GeorgiaStateParks.org/FortMountain](https://GeorgiaStateParks.org/FortMountain)

**Moccasin Creek State Park, Lake Burton:** Georgia's smallest state park sits on the lake shore. Guests can choose from the 2-mile Hemlock Falls Trail or 1-mile Non-Game Trail with a wildlife observation tower. Highway 197 is a particularly pretty road, passing Mark of the Potter and other popular attractions. [GeorgiaStateParks.org/MoccasinCreek](https://GeorgiaStateParks.org/MoccasinCreek)

**Smithgall Woods State Park, Helen:** Protecting more than 6,000 acres around Dukes Creek, a perfect spot for fly-fishing and fall color. Day visitors can picnic near the creek and overnight guests can hike a private trail to Dukes Creek Falls. A 1.6-mile loop climbs to Laurel Ridge and provides a view of Mt. Yonah once most leaves are off the trees. Smithgall Woods has some of the park system's most sought-after cabins and is near wineries and Helen's Oktoberfest. [GeorgiaStateParks.org/SmithgallWoods](https://GeorgiaStateParks.org/SmithgallWoods)

**Tallulah Gorge State Park, near Clayton:** One of the most spectacular canyons in the Southeast, park has easy and difficult trails. Hike along the rim to several overlooks with waterfall views. With a permit from the park office, trek to the bottom. During November, watch expert kayakers on the biannual "whitewater release." Park's film has heart-racing footage of kayakers and news clips from Karl Wallenda's famous tightrope walk across the gorge. [GeorgiaStateParks.org/TallulahGorge](https://GeorgiaStateParks.org/TallulahGorge)

**Unicoi State Park, Helen:** New ziplines take visitors high above the forest canopy for a unique view of leaves. For a steep hike, take the 4.8-mile Smith Creek Trail to Anna Ruby Falls. Unicoi offers a lodge and restaurant. [GeorgiaStateParks.org/Unicoi](https://GeorgiaStateParks.org/Unicoi)

**Vogel State Park, Blairsville:** The 4-mile Bear Hair Gap Trail makes a nice day trip for experienced hikers, offering great mountain color and a birds-eye view of the park's lake. An easier walk is the Lake Loop to a small waterfall. The twisting roads around Vogel, particularly Wolf Pen Gap Road, offer some of north Georgia's prettiest fall scenery. [GeorgiaStateParks.org/Vogel](https://GeorgiaStateParks.org/Vogel)