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DECEMBER 2017

GROUP TRAVEL

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**Industry Forecast Issue**

- Evolution of the travel catalog
- 2nd annual Group Intentions Survey results

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GREAT FACES. GREAT PLACES.



## Group-friendly lodges in West Virginia, Georgia and Arkansas offer fine amenities in gorgeous locations

By Dave Bodie

Some are the days when staying in a state park meant rustic cabins and campsites. While going rugged is still the preferred choice of many, today's group travelers are experiencing great levels of comfort at state park lodges.

Here we profile three of the best.

### CANAAN VALLEY RESORT AND CONFERENCE CENTER DAVIS, WEST VIRGINIA [CANAANRESORT.COM](http://CANAANRESORT.COM)

Located just a few hours from Pittsburgh and less than four hours from anywhere in the Baltimore/Washington/Richmond corridor, Canaan Valley Resort is certainly convenient. However, it's the combination of

scenic beauty, abundant activities and sterling accommodations that are the real draw.

The spring, summer and fall months provide all the outdoor experiences you would expect. There are an outdoor pool, golf course, sporting clays, scenic chairlift, hiking, biking, climbing wall and geocaching. In the winter months, enjoy skiing and snowboarding, tubing, ice skating, and



cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

The Lodge features 160 luxurious guest rooms and suites. Each includes complimentary, high-speed internet; 57-inch flat-screen television; refrigerator; microwave; coffee pot; bathrooms with granite countertops; hair dryer; and iron and ironing board. One-bedroom suites feature separate living and sleeping rooms, fireplace and balcony.

Although the great outdoors awaits you, there are options not far from your room. Refresh your mind and body at The Spa at Canaan. Nearby, The Beech Club Pool & Fitness features an indoor heated pool, whirlpool spa, and sauna and fitness room.

The Hickory Dining Room, with a fireplace in the center of the room and a glass-wall side featuring panoramic views of the valley, serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. Its staff can develop a group menu and accommodate any food-allergy precautions. The nearby Laurel Lounge offers a full bar with appetizers and live entertainment. Seasons Cafe provides lighter fare with a full menu of healthy options. Skiers satisfy their cravings at two popular ski area-dining options. The Bear Paw Food Court provides cafeteria-style favorites from burgers and hot dogs to soups and sandwiches. The Quenchers Pub fills the bill with sandwiches, snacks and a full-service bar.

Off the property, there's plenty more outdoor adventure waiting for groups. Senneca Stackwater Falls is one of West Virginia's most photographed sites. Seneca Caverns and Seneca Rocks invite visitors to explore above and below the earth's surface. Unique plant life, scenic overlooks and hiking trails are found at Dolly Sods Wilderness Area. Bring a picnic lunch.

More options can be found in Elkins at the Gandy Dancer Dinner Theater, American Music Theater and museums. There's no better way to discover the beauty of West Virginia than the nearby Cass Scenic Railroad, Darbin & Greenbrier Railroad or Potomac Eagle Scenic Railroad. ([randolphcountynyv.com](http://randolphcountynyv.com))

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**UNICOI STATE PARK AND LODGE  
HELEN, GEORGIA  
[UNICOIDLODGE.COM](http://UNICOIDLODGE.COM)**

Situated near the charming, Bavarian-style village of Helen in the North Georgia mountains, Unicoi State Park and Lodge is perfect for reunions, weddings and groups of all types. Only 1½ hours from Atlanta and you'll be surrounded by the expansiveness and beauty of this Georgia state park.



The lodge at Unicoi State Park, nestled in the mountains of North Georgia, has 160 amenity-laden guest rooms. Nearby is the beautiful town of Helen, and Atlanta is an hour-and-a-half away.

Regardless of the level of adventure experience you're seeking, there's sure to be something that fits your group's interests. The Archery & Air Gun Range is a target-shooting facility and ADA-accessible. The GPS Scavenger Hunt sharpens your navigation and exploration skills. Unicoi Lake is perfect for paddleboarding and kayak fishing. Other recreation options include mountain biking, zip lines and a beginners fly fishing class. In the evening gather around the campfire for s'mores and storytelling.

The array of lodging options includes 100 stylish rooms in the Lodge, each with Wi-Fi and all the expected amenities. The iconic

Barrel cabins and the Deluxe Cabins next to Unicoi Lake are favorites of reunion groups, while 82 campsites and 51 RV sites offer a choice of scenery.

The focal point of the Lodge is the Unicoi Restaurant. Featuring classic Southern and American dishes, the chef takes advantage of locally produced, fresh ingredients. A specialty is mountain trout. The breakfast, lunch and dinner buffets are popular with guests and locals alike. The restaurant's fireplace and tall ceilings with wood rafters create an inviting ambience. For great sandwiches, craft beers and specialty drinks, Smith Creek Tavern is the preferred stop. Pick up a snack at the Unicoi Adventure Gift Shop before venturing out for the day.

Although there are plenty of reasons to never leave Unicoi State Park, you may have the urge to explore the surrounding area's historical sites and cultural events and festivals. A great place to begin is the spectacular double waterfall at Anna Ruby Falls in the adjacent Chattahoochee National Forest. Nearby Helen is Georgia's third most-visited destination. Take through the center of downtown on the Chattahoochee River, or have fun shopping at the area's shops and boutiques. From outstanding wineries to Oktoberfest to a working mill and general store, there's plenty to see in and around Helen. ([helenga.org](http://helenga.org))

**THE LODGE AT  
MOUNT MAGAZINE STATE PARK  
PARIS, ARKANSAS  
[MOUNTMAGAZINESTATEPARK.COM](http://MOUNTMAGAZINESTATEPARK.COM)**

From the highest point in Arkansas, do not be surprised when you draw back your room's drapes and see a cloud float by. Reunions, motorcoach tours, weddings, and meetings and conferences all like Mount Magazine State Park, located 40 miles from Interstate 40 and less than two hours from Little Rock.

The park's Visitor Center is the place to begin your escapade. It features exhibits covering everything from the park's history