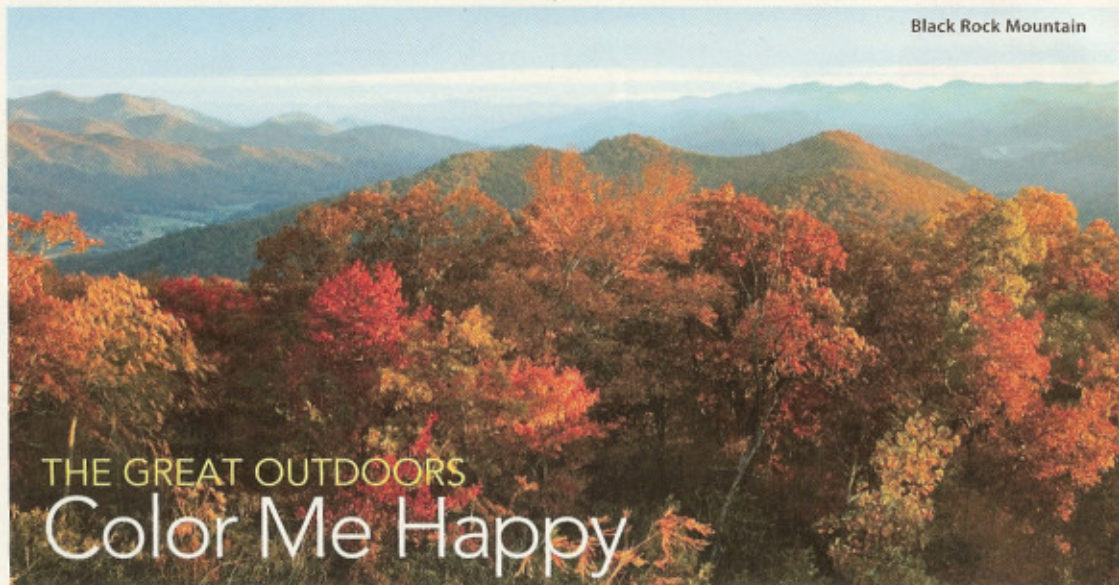


→ WHERE NOW GEORGIA

Black Rock Mountain



THE GREAT OUTDOORS Color Me Happy

Thanks to cooler temperatures and a whole lot of rain (a deluge, you might say), fall in Georgia promises to be more colorful than ever. Peak color in north Georgia usually comes during the last two weeks of October and early November; both the U.S. Forest Service (www.fs.fed.us/conf/fall/fallcolor.htm) and Georgia State Parks (www.gastateparks.com) post weekly updates, offering tips on the best drives, hikes and overlooks to catch the spectacle. Good bets include the Russell-Brasstown National Scenic Byway and Valley Scenic Byway, both of which cut through the Chattahoochee National Forest; and the Southern Highroads Trail, which passes through the Blue Ridge Mountains in the northwest corner of the state. Now make like a tree, and leaf!

Zip-pity do dah!

Discover one of Georgia's best-kept secrets: A zip-line tree-top course. "We have the first true canopy tour in the Northern Hemisphere," said Mike Holder, who co-founded Historic Banning Mills in Whitesburg with his wife, Donna. The course consists of three zip-lines plus eight cable and wood bridges of varying complexity. The "extreme" route crosses over spectacular Snake Creek Gorge, and includes a 2,400-

foot zip-line that starts in one of the world's tallest timber pole towers. The gorge's beauty is best appreciated from the air, even if your stomach flips when you look straight down. 770-834-9149, www.historicbanning-mills.com.—HP



Park it!

Georgia's state park system boasts more than 77,500 acres of natural beauty — there is a park within an hour of every resident. It also boasts what is thought to be the oldest state park in the nation, Indian Springs State Park, in Flowilla, about 60 miles southeast of Atlanta. Acquired from the Creek Indians in 1825, Indian Springs became an official "State Forest Park" in 1927; in 1931, it became a founding unit of Georgia's state park system. Known—and named—for its springs, which the Creek

Indians used to heal the sick, the 528-acre park still offers ample opportunity to sample those spring waters (warning: it has a strong sulfuric taste and smell). Additional activities include swimming, boating, fishing, a 3/4-mile nature trail and a seasonal museum which highlights Creek Indians, the resort era and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), which built several of the structures within the park. Settle in for a week or the weekend at one of 10 cottages or 88 tent, trailer and RV campsites. 678 Lake Clark Rd., 800-864-7275, www.gastateparks.org.