

The Chattanooga Guides Series

Outdoor Adventures in Chattanooga

Read time: 8 minutes

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Seasonality: Year-round; peak season March–October for water activities

#outdoor-adventures

Last updated: 01/15/2025

Neighborhoods: Downtown, North Shore, Signal Mountain, Lookout Mountain, Tennessee River Gorge

Best for: Adventure seekers, Outdoor enthusiasts, Families, Nature lovers

1. Hiking Trails .

Explore Chattanooga's extensive network of hiking trails, from the challenging Signal Point Trail to the family-friendly Riverwalk. Discover scenic overlooks, waterfalls, and diverse ecosystems throughout the region.

hiking

trails

nature

family-friendly

2. Rock Climbing .

Experience world-class rock climbing at destinations like Sunset Rock on Lookout Mountain and T-Wall in the Tennessee River Gorge. Routes range from beginner-friendly to expert-level challenges.

rock-climbing

lookout-mountain

adventure

sport

3. Kayaking & Paddle Sports .

Paddle through the Tennessee River Gorge or explore the calm waters of the Chickamauga Lake. Rentals and guided tours available for all skill levels, with opportunities to spot local wildlife.

kayaking

paddle-sports

water-activities

wildlife

4. Mountain Biking .

Ride through the Raccoon Mountain trails or explore the urban bike paths along the Tennessee River. Chattanooga offers trails for every skill level, from smooth beginner routes to technical singletrack.

mountain-biking

cycling

trails

outdoor-fitness

5. Caving & Underground Exploration .

Discover the underground world at Ruby Falls and explore the extensive cave systems beneath Lookout Mountain. Guided tours available for safe exploration of these natural wonders.

caving

underground

lookout-mountain

guided-tours

6. Whitewater Rafting .

Experience thrilling whitewater rafting on the Ocoee River, site of the 1996 Olympic whitewater events. Professional guides lead trips for all experience levels through Class III and IV rapids.

[whitewater](#)[rafting](#)[water-activities](#)[adventure](#)[guided-tours](#)

7. Zipline Adventures .

Soar through the treetops on zipline courses offering stunning views of the Tennessee River Gorge. Multiple courses available ranging from family-friendly to extreme adventure experiences.

[zipline](#)[adventure](#)[family-friendly](#)[guided-tours](#)

8. Fishing Spots .

Cast your line in the Tennessee River, Chickamauga Lake, or numerous mountain streams. Chattanooga offers excellent fishing for bass, trout, and catfish year-round.

[fishing](#)[water-activities](#)[wildlife](#)[family-friendly](#)

9. Camping & RV Parks .

Set up camp at scenic locations throughout the region. Options range from primitive backcountry sites to full-service RV parks with amenities near downtown Chattanooga.

[camping](#)[rv](#)[nature](#)[family-friendly](#)

10. Bird Watching .

Discover diverse bird species along the Tennessee River and in nearby state parks. Prime locations include the Riverwalk, Reflection Riding Arboretum, and various mountain overlooks.

bird-watching

wildlife

nature

family-friendly

11. Stand-Up Paddleboarding .

Glide across calm waters on a stand-up paddleboard. Popular launch points include the Tennessee River, Chickamauga Lake, and various calm inlets perfect for beginners.

paddle-sports

water-activities

outdoor-fitness

family-friendly

12. Trail Running .

Hit the trails for a run through scenic landscapes. The Riverwalk, Stringer's Ridge, and Signal Mountain offer miles of well-maintained trails perfect for trail runners of all abilities.

trail-running

trails

outdoor-fitness

sport

13. Wildlife Photography .

Capture stunning wildlife and nature photography throughout Chattanooga's diverse ecosystems. Early morning and evening hours offer the best lighting and animal activity.

photography

wildlife

nature

family-friendly

14. Scenic Overlooks .

Visit breathtaking viewpoints like Point Park, Sunset Rock, and Signal Point for panoramic vistas of the Tennessee River Valley and surrounding mountains.

scenic-views

lookout-mountain

nature

family-friendly

15. Geocaching Adventures .

Join the global treasure hunt with geocaching throughout Chattanooga. Discover hidden caches while exploring parks, trails, and urban areas using GPS coordinates.

geocaching

adventure

family-friendly

trails

16. Rock Scrambling .

Navigate challenging rock formations and boulder fields at locations like Sunset Rock and various mountain trails. Requires good balance and appropriate footwear.

rock-scrambling

adventure

lookout-mountain

sport

17. Wildflower Viewing .

Explore seasonal wildflower displays in spring and summer. Prime locations include Cloudland Canyon State Park, Signal Mountain, and various nature preserves.

wildflowers

nature

family-friendly

seasonal

18. Stargazing .

Escape light pollution and enjoy dark skies for stargazing. Signal Mountain and Lookout Mountain offer excellent vantage points for observing the night sky and meteor showers.

stargazing

nature

family-friendly

lookout-mountain

19. Disc Golf Courses .

Play disc golf at multiple courses throughout the area. The sport combines hiking with precision throwing, offering fun outdoor recreation for all skill levels.

disc-golf

sport

family-friendly

trails

20. Waterfall Hikes .

Hike to beautiful waterfalls including Glen Falls, Falling Water Falls, and others. These moderate to challenging hikes reward adventurers with stunning natural water features.

hiking

waterfalls

trails

nature

adventure

21. Cloudland Canyon State Park .

Explore the stunning Cloudland Canyon with its deep gorges, waterfalls, and extensive trail system. This state park offers some of the most dramatic scenery in the region, perfect for hiking, photography, and nature observation.

hiking

nature

scenic-views

family-friendly