





#1

Self-Guided Driving Tour: Mountains & Countryside

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-  Main Visitor Center
-  Downtown Visitor Center
-  Collins Ave. landmark
-  Highway number

GEORGIA'S

Blue Ridge

www.BlueRidgeMountains.com

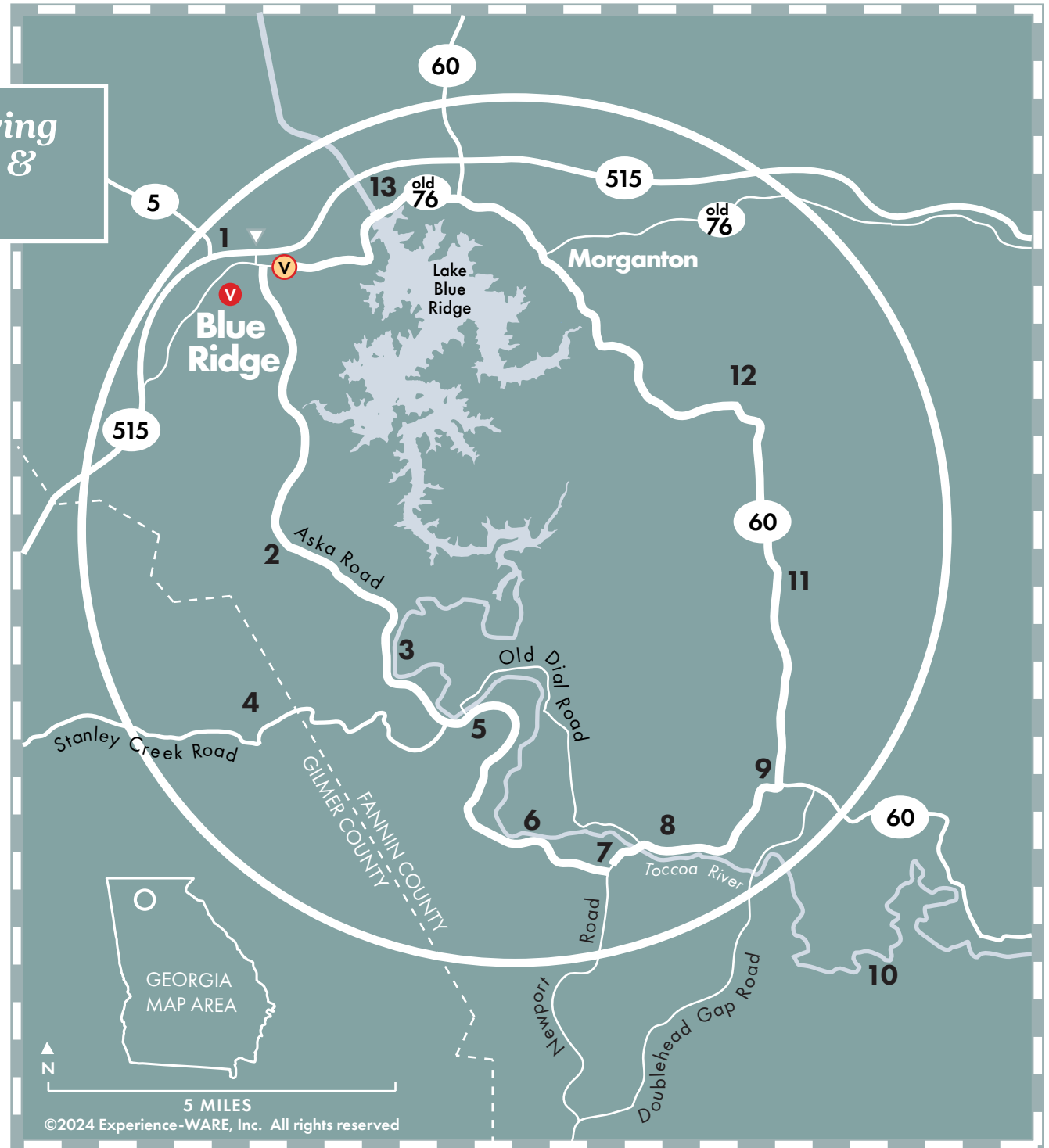
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#1 Self-Guided Driving Tour: Mountains & Countryside

Milepoints in Blue GPS Waypoints in Red

Start your drive at the intersection of Hwy. 515 and Hwy. 5 in Blue Ridge (McDonalds on corner):

.7 miles turn right at Collins Ave. Windy Ridge Conoco.

.8 Turn left at stop sign at Pizza Hut (Old Hwy. 76)

.9 make a quick right on Aska Road. (your mileage may vary a little, depending on your tire size and odometer accuracy. Set your odometer to zero when you turn onto Aska Road)

0.0 Aska Road. Turn right on Aska Road. On the right is Harmony Church, one of many pretty country churches throughout the county. **N 34°52.322' W084°18.465'**

1.0 Weaver Creek Road (also known as Hog Gut Road because of its many twists and turns.) A side trip of 3.8 miles takes you through a narrow mountain farm valley with old churches, farms and one of the old dairies, Campbell Farm.

2.0 Dry Branch/Lake Blue Ridge Recreation Area. For a nice view of Lake Blue Ridge, turn left on Dry Branch and follow less than one mile to a Forest Service recreation area.

3.0 Snake Nation Road. Named by Cherokee Indians prior to the Trail of Tears in 1835-36, Snake Nation winds through a pastoral valley, ending near Camp Morganton.

4.2 Deep Gap Aska Trails. Here you reach the top of Deep Gap, over 2,200 feet, and look toward Springer Mountain, where the world famous Appalachian Trail begins in Fannin County. At .2 miles on the right is a trailhead for the Deep Gap portion of the Aska Trails. Another trailhead is located .4 miles from Deep Gap on Shady Falls Road. Trails range from 1 to 5.5 miles. Open all year.

7.1 Toccoa River Rapids. Here's a great place to get a good look at the Toccoa River, one of Georgia's most pristine trout streams. This is popular spot to view the rapids. The Toccoa is a favorite trout stream for serious fly fishermen. It flows northward into Tennessee, where it becomes the Ocoee River, site of the 1996 Olympic whitewater kayak competition.

N 34°47.451' W084°16.564'

8.0 Stanley Creek Road, Fall Branch Falls. On the right is the entrance to the Rich Mountain Wildlife Management Area. Stanley Creek Road ends in Gilmer County at Cherry Log (Rock Creek Road). For a short hike to Fall Branch Falls, follow Stanley Creek to the trailhead about three miles on the right (.2 miles from where pavement ends). The trailhead is marked with the Benton MacKaye white diamond. Hike in is 1/2 mile up to the base of the falls, following the white diamonds. **N 34°47.017' W084°18.166'**

8.3 Shallowford Bridge. On the left is the historic Shallowford Bridge. You may want to stop and look at this old one-lane bridge, built in 1920 and one of the last remaining of its kind. **N 34°47.029' W084°15.562'**

10.7 Big Creek Road. This road leads to Gilmer County through part of the Rich Mountain Area.

11.3 Toccoa Valley Campground. On the left is Toccoa Valley Campground, a good place to camp or rent a canoe, funyak or tube. This is the beginning of the Dial community, the oldest community in Fannin County since Cherokee days, settled in 1834. **N 34°45.804' W084°14.983'**

12.9 Newport Road. Turn left at the stop sign. **N 34°45.282' W084°13.476'**

13.3 VanZandt House. To your left, in the valley is the original VanZandt house, home of one of the pioneer families of the area. The house, one of three in the area dating back to the 19th century, is the oldest in Fannin County. The log cabin within its walls was built in 1834.

13.6 Dial Road. Turn right at the stop sign. **N 34°45.637' W084°13.027'**

13.7 Cochran-Davenport House. (left) Built in 1885 by George Cochran for his bride, Elizabeth VanZandt, the house was known as the "fancy" house in the valley and boasts Victorian gingerbread detailing, as well as a separate entrance to the formal parlor. All the outbuildings for this small farmstead remain intact, including an interesting spring house on the right. Old Dial Bridge – Cherokee Fish Trap. On the right is the Old Dial Bridge over the Toccoa River. There is a Cherokee Indian fish trap, visible as a distinct "V" in the river on the east side of the bridge. For the next mile, the beautiful Toccoa River will be on the right.

15.0 Chastain House. On the left is a house built by Jason Chastain in 1865, after acquiring the land in the Cherokee Land lottery. The boxwoods in front of the house were planted over 100 years ago by his wife Mary, who brought them here from North Carolina. **N 34°45.661' W084°11.733'**

16.1 GA Highway 60. Dial Road intersects with GA Highway 60, one of the most scenic routes in the Georgia mountains. To the left is the return trip to Morganton (11.5 miles). To the right is the route to Suches and Dahlonega. For a detour to see the Old Skeenah Mill and Swinging Bridge over the Toccoa River, turn right. **N 34°46.270' W084°11.092'**

16.8 Old Skeenah Mill. On the left is the Skeenah Creek Campground. The Old Skeenah Mill was built in 1848 by Willis Woody, who brought his family to the Skeenah Valley (named after the Cherokee word for "black bear") in 1839. The Mill is listed on the National Register. A water-powered sawmill was also located on the creek. The Skeenah Mill was once a popular place for neighbors to gather and chat as they waited for their wheat or corn

to be ground. **N 34°46.196' W084°10.353'**

17.5 The Swinging Bridge (optional side trip). At .7 miles on the right past the Old Skeenah Mill is the dirt road (3 bumpy, ROUGH miles on FS 816, 4WD vehicle recommended) to the Swinging Bridge over the Toccoa River. The bridge is a 260-foot suspension bridge built by the US Forest Service. Park at the berm and hike in to the bridge in about five minutes on the Benton MacKaye/Duncan Ridge National Recreation Trail. As you leave the Swinging Bridge, turn left on Highway 60 for approximately 7.5 miles for a side visit to Serenberry Vineyards, or 11.5 miles to Morganton. **N 34°44.350' W084°10.213'**

20.8 Serenberry Vineyards (optional side trip). On the right is Tipton Trail; drive 2,000 feet to this fourth generation family farm. The 1920s barn now stands as a Tasting Room for the vineyards and farm winery. Open Thursday through Sunday year-round. 706-623-8463.

25.0 Morganton. Turn left on Hwy 60 North. To visit Morganton Point Recreation Area on Lake Blue Ridge, picnic area, swimming beach, bathrooms (\$5 fee area) go 1/10 of a mile and follow the left fork to Lake Drive for 1/2 mile. Otherwise bear right and follow Old Hwy. 76 to the Lake Blue Ridge dam.

27.5 Blue Ridge Lake & Dam Lake Blue Ridge Dam. One of the largest earth dams in North America, built in 1930. Lake Blue Ridge has 100 miles of shoreline, 80% of which is National Forest land. See the info kiosk at the turn-off on the dam. Follow Old Highway 76 back to Aska Road/Blue Ridge.

STAFF PICK

A Word to the Wise ... GPS and cellphones do not work reliably here, please don't rely upon them. Be prepared for wilderness and carry the 10 Essentials (wiki or Google it). See the USFS web site at www.fs.fed.us/conf/. The law of the forest is "leave no trace". See www.LNT.org for info. Please pack in all you will need and pack out all your trash. If you build a fire, never leave it unattended. Use good judgment when hiking, particularly around waterfalls where rocks are often wet, moss covered and slippery. If hiking during hunting season, wear a brightly colored vest. Carry a copy of Trails Illustrated Map #777, available at the Visitor Centers.



Main Visitor Center: 152A Orvin Lance Drive, Blue Ridge, GA 30513
1-800-899-MTNS **Downtown Visitor Center:** 282 W. Main St.

McCaysville Visitor Center: 53 East Market St.

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