

Walk Instructions for AT through Georgia

APPALACHIAN TRAIL THROUGH GEORGIA

Long Distance YRE – 2020/Y2289, rated 2C to 4D

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THE BASICS – HOW TO HIKE THE AT IN GEORGIA:

This event has a minimum of 4K distance and may be done over multiple days for as long as the entire distance of the Appalachian Trail through Georgia. The entire trail in GA is 78.6 miles, plus an additional 8.5 mile approach trail. You must register and pay for IVV credit separately for each section walked.

Since the AT is a long-established national trail with many available guidebooks and maps, there are only a few detailed walk directions provided. **You may walk the trail from any start point, for any length (with the exception of the above mentioned minimum 4K), and it will qualify for the IVV Event Stamp and the new Special Program – The Appalachian Trail (one stamp per state).** You may walk an out-and-back or walk as a “shuttle hike” where, using two vehicles, one left at either end of the hike so you walk the hike end to end.

For specific instructions on how to best walk the AT in GA with reasonable day hikes, *Exploring the APPALACHIAN TRAIL Hikes in the Southern Appalachians – Georgia North Carolina Tennessee* by Doris Gove is highly recommended. It can be purchased on Amazon or at most Georgia bookstores. The book breaks the length of the GA trail into 8 day hikes (the last hike ends in North Carolina). Driving directions are provided to the start and end of each day hike, with both north and south directions. Details on what to expect on each hike is also provided. Due to copyright issues, the book’s information cannot be reproduced.

The day hikes in the book are accomplished by parking a vehicle at either end (i.e. *shuttle hikes*). If you want to walk a shorter route, you may park a vehicle at one end and walk out and back along the trail as far as you desire. Other vehicle parking opportunities may be available at the mid-point along the way in order to shorten the distance for the day. Check maps or additional books for this information.

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THE SUGGESTED 8 AT DAY HIKES PLUS THE APPROACH TRAIL:

The AT may be walked however you like, starting and ending the day whenever you like along the trail (5K minimum for IVV credit). The 8 Day Hikes are the suggestions detailed in the book described on page 2. All hikes are listed from south to north hikes.

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| APPROACH TRAIL – AMICALOLA FALLS TO SPRINGER MOUNTAIN | 8.5 miles |
| Hike #1: Springer Mountain to Hightower Gap | 9 miles, 8.1 on the AT |
| Hike #2: Hightower Gap to Woody Gap | 11.9 miles |
| Hike #3: Woody Gap to Neels Gap | 10.7 miles |
| Hike #4: Neels Gap to Hogpen Gap | 6.4 miles |
| Hike #5: Hogpen Gap to Unicoi Gap | 13.6 miles |
| Hike #6: Unicoi Gap to Tray Gap | 4.4 miles |
| Hike #7: Tray Gap to Dicks Creek Gap | 11.7 miles |
| Hike #8: Dicks Creek Gap to Deep Gap (NC) | 15.6 miles (not suggested as a day hike) |

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Hiking Guidelines:

- 1) The AT is marked frequently with white blazes (white vertical rectangle stripes painted on trees or rocks). While hiking, make sure you see blazes frequently to make sure you are still on course. Two blazes on one tree indicate a turn (slight or hard turn) to the left or right.
- 2) The Appalachian Trail through GA is rugged, often rocky terrain and reaches a height of more than 4400 feet and never dips below 2500 feet. The high point of the trail is at Blood Mountain (4,461 ft.) while the low point is Dicks Creek Gap (2,675 ft.). There may be mud, ice or snow, depending on season and weather. Hiking boots and one or two hiking poles are strongly suggested.
- 3) Hike with a friend. It is not recommended to do this walk alone.
- 4) Check the weather forecast and sunset times before heading out. Many of the days hikes may take 4 to 6 hours or more. Be sure you have plenty of time to safely complete the hike during daylight hours.
- 5) Practice safe wilderness procedures. Carry a portable rain slicker, a map or trail book, food and plenty of water, a small first aid kit, sunscreen, bug spray, and a phone in case of emergency.
- 6) Let a friend or family member know where you are hiking and let them know when you are safely off the trail.
- 7) IN CASE OF EMERGENCIES, DIAL 911. You may also contact the POC, Connie Clark at 469-713-4712, cell phone.**
- 8) These walk directions and maps may only be used in conjunction with a signed AVA America's Walking Club athletic waiver. All other users are prohibited.**

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AFTER COMPLETING THE WALK:

Please remember to log back into the OLSB (my.ava.org) system to *finish/complete* your online registration after finishing the walk.

NOTE: The OSB system does not deduct any walking fee from a Walker's Event Bank until he/she has submitted walk completion info including the date the event was walked, the distance walked, and the selection of applicable Special Programs that the walker is participating in. (Nevertheless, a fee of \$2 for a downloaded PDF is deducted from the Walker's Event Bank when the PDF is downloaded. Later, any PDF fees are credited back to a Walker's Event Bank when he/she submits the walk completion info as a paying for credit Walker.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS:

The Appalachian Trail – one stamp per state for this 14 State Special Program.

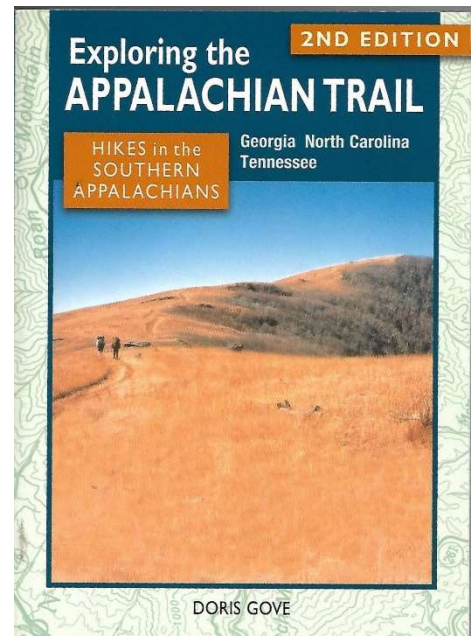
Border Crossing – Hike #8, Georgia/North Carolina ONLY

RESOURCES FOR DETAILED HIKE DIRECTIONS:

- 1) ***Exploring the APPALACHIAN TRAIL – HIKES in the SOUTHERN APPALACHIANS – Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee by Doris Gove.***

This book breaks down the AT hikes in Georgia into reasonable length day hikes and provides directions to each start and end location. This book was the reference used for setting up this program. Recommendations on how to shuttle hike (one vehicle at each end) with 2 or more hikers. There is plenty of information to create your own out and back with the information provided in the book.

- 2) The Appalachian Trail Conservancy - <http://www.appalachiantrail.org/home/explore-the-trail/explore-by-state/georgia> . Lots of information and good advice regarding hiking the AT in Georgia.
- 3) Georgia Appalachian Trail Club - <https://georgia-atclub.org/>.
- 4) The official AT Trail Store online is a great place to order books and maps and support the organization, too. They have a map set that includes all of Georgia. It is not necessary to have these to hike if you have a guidebook like the one above, but they are interesting and probably a good safety net to have them along.



SUPPLEMENT: ABOUT THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL copied from Wikipedia

The **Appalachian National Scenic Trail**, generally known as the **Appalachian Trail** or simply the **A.T.**, is a marked hiking trail in the Eastern United States extending between Springer Mountain in Georgia and Mount Katahdin in Maine. The trail is about 2,200 miles (3,500 km)^[a] long, though the exact length changes over time as parts are modified or rerouted. The [Appalachian Trail Conservancy](#) claims that the Appalachian Trail is the longest hiking-only trail in the world. More than 2 million people are said to do at least one day-hike on the trail each year.

The idea of the Appalachian Trail came about in 1921. The trail itself was completed in 1937 after more than a decade of work, although improvements and changes continue. It is maintained by 31 trail clubs and multiple partnerships, and managed by the National Park Service, United States Forest Service, and the nonprofit Appalachian Trail Conservancy. The majority of the trail is in forest or wild lands, although some portions traverse towns, roads and farms. It passes through 14 states: **Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine.**

Thru-hikers attempt to hike the trail in its entirety in a single season — more than 2,700 people thru-hiked the trail in 2014 — and some hike from one end to the other, then turn around and thru-hike the trail the other way, known as a "yo-yo". Many books, memoirs, websites, and fan organizations are dedicated to these pursuits.

An extension known as the International Appalachian Trail continues northeast, crossing Maine and cutting through Canada to Newfoundland, with sections continuing in Greenland, through Europe, and into Morocco. Other separate extensions continue the southern end of the Appalachian range in Alabama and continue south into Florida, creating what is known as the Eastern Continental Trail.

The Appalachian Trail, the Continental Divide Trail, and the Pacific Crest Trail form what is known as the Triple Crown of Hiking in the United States.

Walk Instructions for AT through Georgia

Hike #1 – Springer Mountain to Hightower Gap

Directions to Springer Mountain Parking Lot from Atlanta, GA

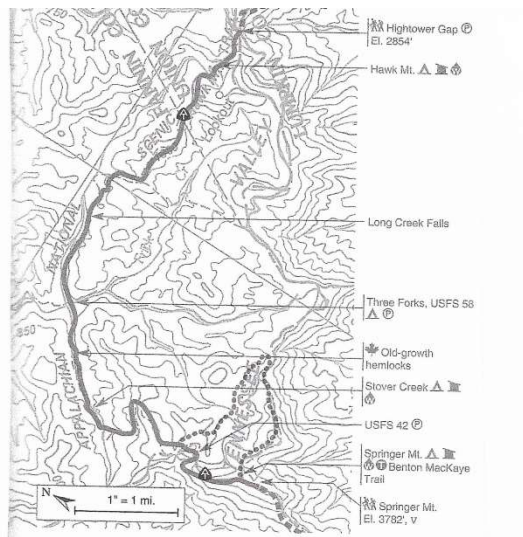
1. Travel north on Interstate 75/85.
2. Travel in the left 3 lanes to continue on I-85 at the split.
3. Exit I-85 to GA-400 N (signs for GA-400 N/Buckhead/Cumming).
4. Continue on GA-400 to the end and then continue on US-19 N.
5. Turn left at Browns Bridge Rd/GA-369 W
6. Turn right at Dahlonega Hwy/GA-9 N
7. Continue to follow GA-9 N for 11.9 miles
8. Continue onto Shoal Creek Rd for 2.6 miles
9. Continue onto GA-136 W for 3.2 miles
10. Turn right at Bailey Water Rd/CO RD 225/ State Route 342 for 3.6 miles
11. Turn right at GA-52 E for 2.9 miles
12. Slight left at Nimblewill Church Rd for 1.2 miles
13. Turn right to stay on Nimblewill Church Rd for 0.1 mile
14. Take the 1st left onto Forest Service 28-1/FS 28-1 Rd for 0.7 miles
15. Turn right to stay on FS 28-1 RD for 1.6 miles
16. Continue onto Winding Stair Gap Rd for 4.9 miles
17. Turn left; go 56 feet
18. Turn left toward Forest Service RD for 0.4 mile
19. For Continue straight onto Forest Service RD for 2.2 miles
20. Springer Mountain Parking Lot will be on the right.

If using your GPS, download directions since connections are sketchy as you get closer to Springer Mountain.

Directions for Springer Mountain:

This is a one-way route. You will either need to do a hike out and back, drive another vehicle to Hightower Gap, or turn around anywhere on the trail and return to the Springer Mountain Parking Lot.

- 1) To hike to the actual Southern Terminus of the Appalachian Trail, cross the road and follow the trail (WHITE BLAZES) to the Plaque at Springer Mountain. After your photo op, retrace your steps, making sure you are following the WHITE BLAZES back to the parking lot.
- 2) At the back of the parking lot, look for the WHITE BLAZES to continue on the AT.
(Many folks use the woods around the parking lot to relieve themselves. There are NO restrooms at the Start. There are bathroom facilities at some of the shelters on the trail).



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Hike #4 Neels Gap to Hogpen Gap 6.4 Miles

Information about this section:

Probably the most interesting point on this section of the Appalachian Trail is the Walasi-Yi Center's breezeway that contains the familiar white blaze. It is the only building that is actually on the trail. Here novice trail hikers frequently stop and repack, unloading items they now feel are useless weight.

Mountain Crossings at Walasi-Yi was built by the [Civilian Conservation Corps](#) in 1936 (completed 1937) and originally used as an inn and restaurant for the few brave souls who ventured this far into the wilderness. Today the center is a hiker's paradise, so you may want to spend a few minutes browsing, even if you don't buy anything. (An opportunity to get your AT Stamp inside). This may be the oldest part of the Appalachian Trail. 100 years before the trail was conceived by Benton MacKaye, The [Cherokee](#) had a path that ran in the approximate area of the Appalachian Trail. Many settlers wrote of Frogtown Gap, the original name of Neel's Gap, and the fact that it was a major intersection of Cherokee trading paths. The remains of the original Cherokee town are below the Walasi-yi Center.

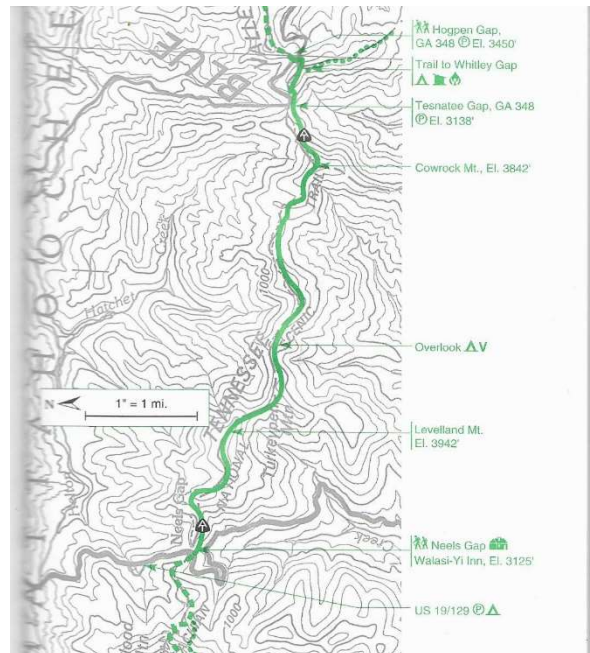
The first portion of the Trail after the center climbs 800 feet in a mile and a half to a beautiful vista of Hogpen Mountain from Levelland Mountain. After another mile and a half is a marked campsite. The ascent to Wolf Laurel Top marks the halfway point of this short section of the Trail where the most scenic views are off trail at the picnic site. From this point the trail descends to Tesnatee Gap where the Trail briefly emerges and follows the Richard B. Russell Scenic Highway for a short distance, returning quickly to a more natural setting. Not far from this intrusion is the [Logan Turnpike Trail](#) intersection. After this the Appalachian Trail ascends Wildcat Mountain. The sharp (100 feet per .1 mile) climb is the most difficult part of this portion of the AT. There are some good views near the top of Wildcat and a shelter is a short hike from the path. From here the trail descends through several easy switchbacks into Hogpen Gap.

This is the shortest portion of the AT in North Georgia.

There is a day hike parking area past the Walasi-Yi Center. Do not park in the Center parking area.

Directions from Atlanta: Travel I-85 North to Exit 87 for GA-400 N toward Buckhead/Cumming. Continue for 54 miles when you will continue straight onto GA-115, then continue straight onto Long Branch Rd. In 3 ½ miles, turn LEFT onto Cavender Creek Rd. In 1.1 mile, turn RIGHT onto Town Creek Church Rd. In 2.1 miles, turn LEFT onto Frogtown Rd. In 1.5 miles take a slight LEFT. In 1.7 miles turn LEFT onto Damascus Church Rd. In 1.2 mile, turn RIGHT onto US-19 N. In 2.2 miles turn LEFT onto US-129 N/US-19N. In 4.1 miles, keep RIGHT to stay on US-129/US-19N. In 3.6 miles you will pass Walasi-Yi parking lot. Continue a little further down the road and park in the day parking lot on your LEFT. Walk back up the hill to Walasi-Yi and the AT.

The start of Neels Gap is at the small building to the left of the Center. You will see a white blaze on the building.



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Hike #6: Unicoi Gap to Tray Gap- 4C

Directions to Unicoi Gap from Atlanta:

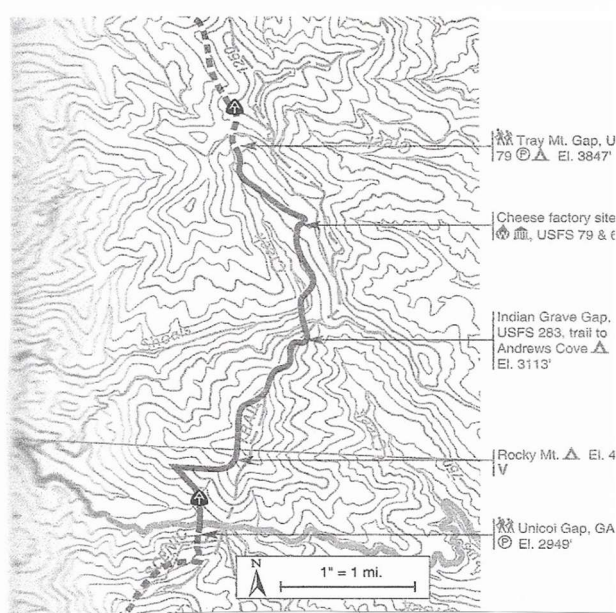
- 1) Go north on I-85 to I-985 N.
- 2) Continue onto US-23 N at I-985 end.
- 3) Turn left onto GA-52 W.
- 4) Turn right onto GA-283 S / Holly Springs Rd.
- 5) Turn right onto US-129 N.
- 6) Continue straight onto Appalachian Pkwy/Cleveland Bypass.
- 7) Continue straight to stay on Appalachian Pkwy/Cleveland Bypass.
- 8) Turn left onto US-129 N.
- 9) Turn right onto Albert Reid Rd.
- 10) Turn left onto John Head Rd.
- 11) Turn right onto GA-75 Alt S
- 12) Turn left onto GA-17N/GA-75 N
- 13) Unicoi Gap parking lot will be on the right.

Trailhead to toward the right end of the parking lot. Trail is marked with WHITE BLAZES.

You will be heading North on the AT.

Continue to Tray Gap (4.4 miles) and return to parking lot.

You may wish to travel south on the AT. Cross GA-75 to the trail and travel towards Hogpen Gap. The southbound trail from here is very difficult.



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Hike #8: Dicks Creek Gap to Deep Gap (NC)

Directions to Dick's Creek Gap Parking:

From downtown Atlanta, head north on I-75 I-85 to I-85 split. Continue on I-85 N. Take I-985 N/Lanier Pkwy and US-23 N to US-76 W. Continue onto US-23 N. for 28.9 miles. Keep left to continue on GA-15 N/US-23 N/US-441 N, follow signs for Clarkesville/Clayton. In 19.2 miles, turn left onto Hollifield Con. Turn right onto S Main St/Old 441 S. Turn left onto Bridge Creek Rd. Turn right onto Davis Gap Rd. Turn left onto US-76 W for 11.2 miles to Parking Lot.

From Hiawasse, drive 11 miles east on US 76 to Dicks Creek Gap.

From Clayton, drive 18 miles west on US 76.

****If using GPS, search for Dicks Creek Cap Parking. Be sure to save or print the directions since Satellite/hone connections are often lost in this area of Georgia. ****

Trail distance from Dicks Creek Gap to Deep Gap: 15.6 miles (not recommended as a day hike).

To begin the hike, look for the white blazes beyond the picnic tables of Dicks Creek Gap. You will continue to follow the white blazes until reaching Deep Gap. At approximately 8.6 miles, there will be a piece of pipe nailed to an oak tree that marks the border between Georgia and North Carolina.

There are two shelters – Plumorchard Gap 0.2 miles from the AT on a blue-blazed trail at approximately 4.3 miles from the start, and Muskrat Creek Shelter, at approximately 11.6 miles from the start. Deep Gap on USFS71, has parking and camping.

ALL water along the trail must be filtered.

There are several blue-blazed trails off this section. Be sure to follow the White Blazes to remain on the AT.

NOTES:

This hike on Georgia's northernmost stretch of the AT trail explores mile after mile of beautiful, fern-and-moss-filled forests. Numerous campsites dot the trail's sides, making it a great overnight backpacking trip. And highlights on this adventure include the Plum Orchard AT shelter, and crossing the North Carolina state line to visit to a gnarled, old oak tree at Bly Gap.

A good detail of the route to as far as Bly Gap if you chose to read:

<https://www.atlantatrails.com/hiking-trails/appalachian-trail-dicks-creek-gap-bly-gap/>

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