

Waterfall Wonder In Southeast Tennessee

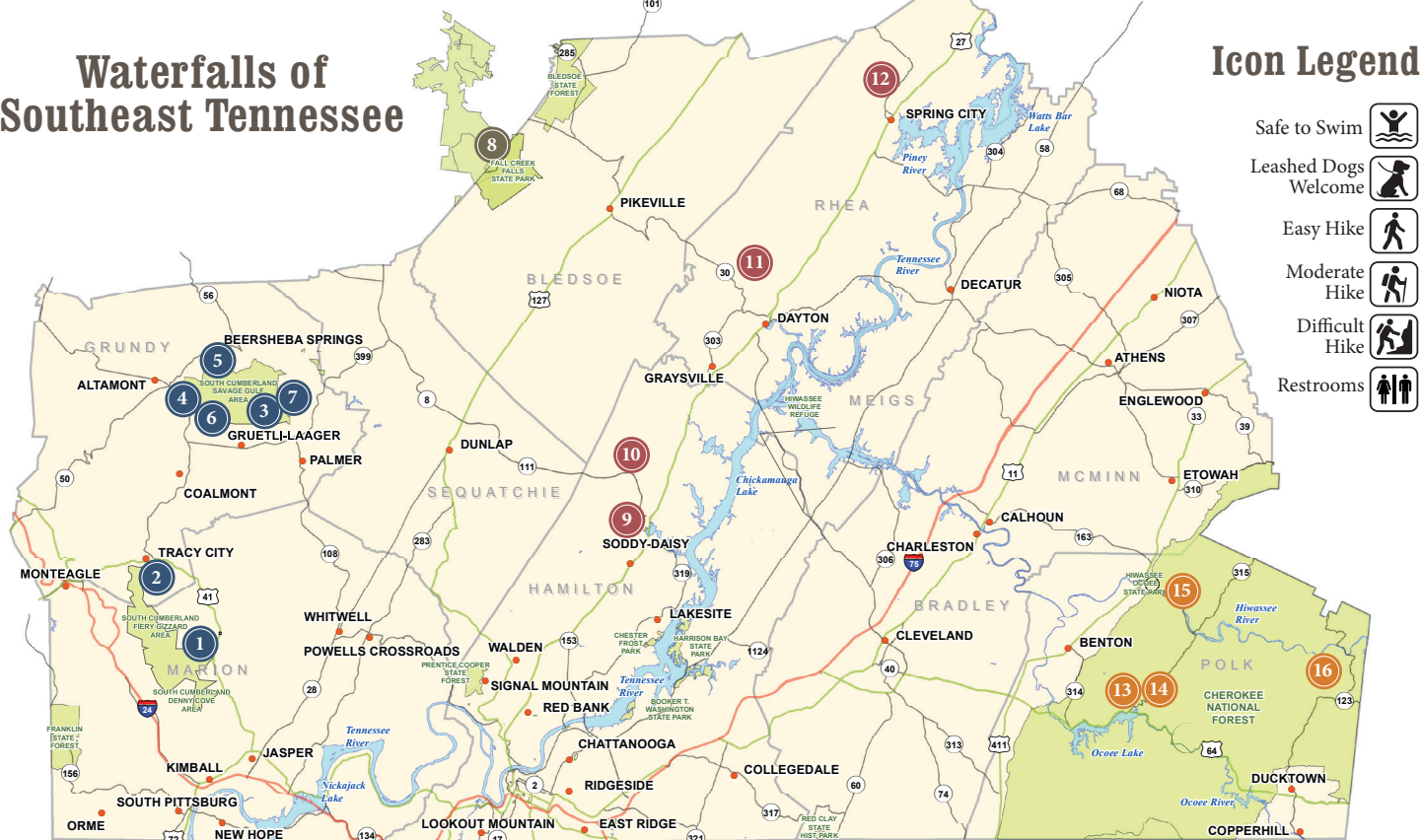


Travel SOUTHEAST
TENNESSEE



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Waterfalls of Southeast Tennessee



South Cumberland State Park & Savage Gulf State Park

1. Foster Falls
2. Sycamore Falls and Bluehole Falls
3. Suter Falls and Horsepound Falls
4. Greeter Falls and Boardtree Falls
5. Laurel Falls
6. Ranger Creek Falls
7. Savage Falls
8. Fall Creek Falls State Park
Fall Creek Falls

Cumberland Trail

9. Big Soddy Creek Gulf Waterfall
10. Imodium & Richey Ridge Falls
11. Laurel Falls and Snow Falls
12. Upper & Lower Piney Falls

Cherokee National Forest

13. Benton Falls
14. Rock Creek/Chestnut Falls
15. Gee Creek Falls
16. Coker Creek Falls

Experience the falling waters that have shaped and sculpted Southeast Tennessee's scenic terrain. There is no better way to explore the scenic landscape and lush forests than relaxing on a warm boulder in the mist from a majestic fall or hiking along a cascading creek.

Waterfall Wonder features some of the most impressive and accessible waterfalls on public lands in Southeast Tennessee, from plummeting veils of water plunging over cliffs to gentle cascades tumbling over rocky streams. This guide spans the 10 counties of Southeast Tennessee, from South Cumberland State Park, north to Fall Creek falls, along sections of the Cumberland Trail in Dayton, and through Chattanooga to the Cherokee National Forest.

Waterfall Safety

Please be cautious when visiting area waterfalls:

- Wear stable shoes and avoid slippery rocks or crossing in dangerous places.
- Keep children a safe distance from dangerous ledges and do not lean over ledges to view waterfalls.
- Never jump off waterfalls or dive into pools of water because of dangerous unseen objects below the surface, including logs and boulders.
- Black bears reside in the wooded areas of Southeast Tennessee, especially the Cherokee National Forest. Before you set out, learn what to do if you unexpectedly encounter a bear. For more information, visit: www.fs.usda.gov/detail/cherokee/recreation
- Keep in mind that most waterfalls are located in remote locations without cell phone coverage. Tell someone where you are going. Make sure you have clear directions before you go. You cannot always rely on GPS.
- Some trails require creek crossings. Do not attempt to cross in high water situations.

Waterfalls within South Cumberland State Park & Savage Gulf State Park

South Cumberland State Park is comprised of over 31,000 acres in nine separate sections of the park. Part of the Cumberland Plateau, the area features spectacular waterfalls, safe swimming areas, hiking trails, rock climbing, and backcountry camping. For more great tips to plan your adventure, visit:

FriendsOfSouthCumberland.org/plan-your-visit

Savage Gulf State Park, featuring one of Tennessee's most scenic wilderness areas, includes the nearly 19,000-acre Savage Gulf State Natural Area. The park offers approximately 60 miles of hiking to remarkable vistas, waterfalls, and historical locations such as the Stagecoach Road. The Great Stone Door is an impressive cliff line overlooking the Savage Gulf. It gets its name from a crack in the cliff that runs from the top to the bottom, resembling a door left slightly ajar.

tnstateparks.com/parks/savage-gulf

South Cumberland State Park Visitor Center

11745 US-41, Monteagle, TN

931-924-2980

Open Mon. through Sun. 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. CST

tnstateparks.com/parks/about/south-cumberland

Savage Gulf State Park North

1183 Stone Door Rd.

Beersheeba Springs, TN

931-692-3887

tnstateparks.com/parks/savage-gulf



Photo credit: Bob Butters

1 Foster Falls

Fiery Gizzard South Trailhead, Sequatchie, TN (Marion Co.)

Foster Falls is a spectacular 60-foot waterfall plunging into a deep pool. It is a short and easy walk along a handicapped-accessible trail to the overlook at Foster Falls. From there, a more difficult trail leads to a suspension bridge at the base of the falls (1 mile round trip). The Foster Falls campground has 25 primitive campsites and Father Adamz Campground off the Climber's Loop Trail offers eight sites and one large group site (max. 30).

reserve.tnstateparks.com/south-cumberland/campsites

Directions:

From Chattanooga, take I-24 W to TN-28 N in Jasper (exit 155). Follow signs for US-41 N/TN-150 toward Tracy City. Follow TN-150 to the top of the plateau and proceed 3 miles to Foster Falls Road on the left, which leads to the Fiery Gizzard South trailhead, and to Foster Falls.



GPS Waypoint:
35.18177, -85.676



SoutheastTennessee.com

2 Sycamore, Hanes Hole *and* Blue Hole Falls

Fiery Gizzard North Trailhead, Tracy City, TN (Grundy Co.)

This moderate 2.6 mile round-trip hike starts at the Grundy Forest Day Loop (South Cumberland State Park). 9-foot Blue Hole Falls is the perfect area to cool off in the summer after a long hike on the Fiery Gizzard Trail. Blue Hole Falls is a short and easy hike from the parking lot. Continue to 10-foot Hanes Hole Falls or take the 0.6 mile spur trail (Fiery Gizzard) to arrive at 12-foot Sycamore Falls. It's an easy to slightly moderate hike but is very rewarding. Be sure to stop by and visit the old CCC campsite and take a dip in the swimming holes at Sycamore and Blue Hole Falls. Campsite reservations: reserve.tnstateparks.com/south-cumberland/campsites

Directions:

From Chattanooga, take I-24 W to exit 135 in Monteagle and continue right. Turn right to follow US-41 S toward Tracy City. Turn right on 3rd Street and follow the signs to the Fiery Gizzard North trailhead, in the Grundy Forest State Natural Area.



GPS Waypoints:
35.2463, -85.75493
35.2504, -85.7506



3 Suter Falls *and* Horsepound Falls

Savage Gulf South Trailhead, Gruetli-Laager and Palmer, TN (Grundy Co.)

From the parking area, take a short access trail and turn left on the Collins Gulf Trail for a moderate to challenging 2 mile round trip with elevation change and rocky obstacles to reach Suter Falls. From Suter Falls, continue on the Collins Gulf Trail for an additional 3.6 mile (round trip from Suter Falls) into the gorge to arrive at 25-foot Horsepound Falls. Located not far from the Falls is the Fall Creek Sink where Fall Creek comes down the side of the plateau and disappears into a large underground sinkhole. Be sure to stop by Collins Gulf overlook to take in the view before heading down. The Savage Gulf State Park has over 62 backcountry campsites and 8 group campsites. Campsite reservations are required and can be made at:

reserve.tnstateparks.com/savage-gulf/campsites or nearby at: reserve.tnstateparks.com/south-cumberland/campsites

Directions:

From Chattanooga, take I-24 W to exit 155 (Jasper). Take TN-28 N to Whitwell. Turn left on TN 108-N for 17 miles to Gruetli-Laager, then look for 55th Avenue, on the right. The Savage Gulf South trailhead is at the end of 55th Ave, in the Savage Gulf State Natural Area.



GPS Waypoints:
35.4109, -85.5974
35.429, -85.6022



4 Greeter Falls and Boardtree Falls

Savage Gulf West Trailhead, Altamont, TN (Grundy Co.)

Greeter Falls is accessed from the Savage Gulf West parking lot and is located on the Greeter Falls Loop. The 2.25 mile round trip hike to the falls starts as an easy hike through mountain laurel and evergreens but turns into a moderate hike at the end of the new staircase addition. There are several steep ledges along the way to the iconic spiral staircase that leads down to the base of the falls. Swimming is allowed at the base of Greeter Falls. On your way back up be sure to head left to visit upper Greeter Falls as well. Boardtree Falls is accessible on the Greeter Falls loop, and for a slightly easier way to reach Board Tree Falls, come into the loop by heading East at the split of the trail instead of heading South toward Greeter Falls. Campsite reservations:

reserve.tnstateparks.com/savage-gulf/campsites or nearby at:
reserve.tnstateparks.com/south-cumberland/campsites

Directions:

From Chattanooga, take I-24 W to exit 135 in Monteagle and continue right. Turn right to follow US-41 S approx. 5.5 miles toward Tracy City. Turn left on TN-56 N and travel 16 miles. After passing through Altamont, look for the Savage Gulf West trailhead sign, and turn right. Road ends at the Savage Gulf West trailhead parking lot, in the Savage Gulf State Natural Area.



GPS Waypoints:
35.4343, -85.69624
35.436, -85.6936



Photo credit: Bob Butters

5 Laurel Falls

Savage Gulf North Trailhead, Beersheba Springs, TN (Grundy Co.)

If you're looking for an accessible and enjoyable hike, check out Laurel Falls, situated at the Savage Gulf North entrance on the Laurel Falls Loop Trail. It offers a simple 0.3-mile hike from the Stone Door Ranger Station with moderate elevation changes to the overlook of Laurel Falls, which drops 25-feet off a bluff into a pool of blue water. Look for the remaining foundation stones from a mill that once operated along the creek. Don't miss the opportunity to take the 1-mile hike to witness the breathtaking Stone Door while you're there. Camping reservations:

reserve.tnstateparks.com/savage-gulf/campsites or nearby at:
reserve.tnstateparks.com/south-cumberland/campsites

Directions:

From Chattanooga, take I-24 W to exit 135 in Monteagle and continue right. Turn right to follow US-41 S approx. 5.5 miles toward Tracy City. Turn left on TN-56 N toward Coalmont. Turn right on Stone Door Rd. in Beersheba Springs and travel 1.5 miles to the Savage Gulf North trailhead, at the Stone Door Ranger Station, on the left..



GPS Waypoint:
35.4468, -85.6536

6 Ranger Creek Falls

Savage Gulf North Trailhead, Beersheba Springs, TN
(Grundy Co.)

From the Stone Door Ranger's Station, it's a rugged 6.6 mile round-trip hike into the Big Creek Gorge to see Ranger Creek Falls, the widest waterfall in South Cumberland State Park which drops 30 feet. Take the Stone Door Trail to the Big Creek Gulf Trail. At the intersection of Stone Door Trail and Big Creek Gulf Trail, check out the Great Stone Door Bluffs and walk down through the Great Stone Door Staircase. At the bottom of the Staircase, follow the trail two miles to Ranger Creek Falls Trail, which leads to the waterfall. The Stone Door Campground offers 12 backcountry campsites and three group sites. All campsites are located a short walk from the parking lot. Campsite reservations are required and can be made at: reserve.tnstateparks.com/savage-gulf/campsites

Directions:

From Chattanooga, take I-24 W to exit 135 in Monteagle and continue right. Turn right to follow US-41 S approx. 5.5 miles toward Tracy City. Turn left on TN-56 N toward Coalmont. Turn right on Stone Door Rd. in Beersheba Springs and travel 1.5 miles to the Savage Gulf North trailhead, at the Stone Door Ranger Station, on the left.



GPS Waypoint:
35.422839, -85.660192

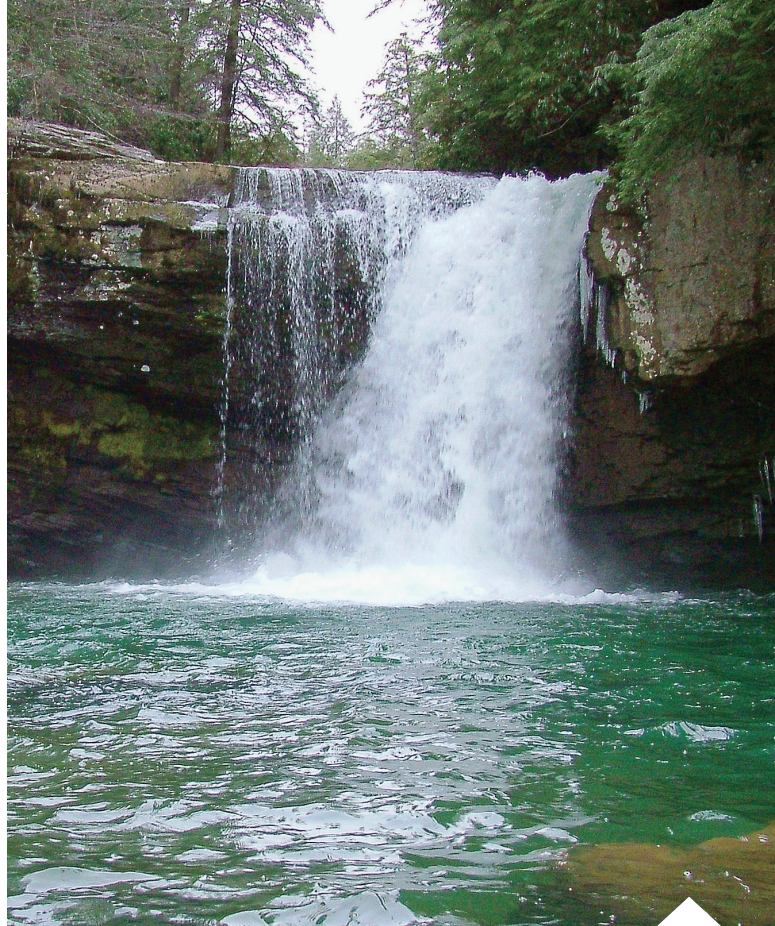


Photo credit: Rick Dreves

7 Savage Falls

Savage Gulf East Trailhead, Palmer, TN (Grundy Co.)

From the Savage Gulf Ranger Station, it's a 3.4 mile round-trip hike to Savage Falls. Along the way, enjoy two swinging bridges across Boyd Branch and Savage Creek. Take the Savage Day Loop Trail, turn left at the Loop Junction, and turn left on the South Rim Trail, which leads to Savage Falls. Enjoy a safe swim area at the base of the falls. Savage Station Campground offers 8 backcountry camp sites, just a short walk from the parking area. Camping reservations: reserve.tnstateparks.com/savage-gulf/campsites

Directions:

From Chattanooga, take US-27 N to TN-111 N. After 47 miles, turn left on TN-399 to the Savage Gulf East Trailhead, on your right, in the Savage Gulf State Natural Area.



GPS Waypoint:
35.4411, -85.5537



Waterfalls at Fall Creek Falls State Park

Fall Creek Falls State Park is Tennessee's largest and most-visited state park, encompassing more than 29,000 acres atop the Cumberland Plateau. The park is located 18 miles west of Pikeville and 11 miles east of Spencer. In addition to Fall Creek Falls, the tallest waterfall in the eastern United States, the park features more than 34 miles of trails and multiple waterfalls, new lodge/restaurant, cabins and campsites, a golf course, pool, and a nature center.

Fall Creek Falls State Park

2009 Village Camp Rd.

Spencer, TN

423-881-5298

tnstateparks.com/parks/fall-creek-falls



Photo credit: Cara Alexander

8

Fall Creek Falls

Fall Creek Falls State Park
Pikeville, TN (Bledsoe Co.)

A visit to Fall Creek Falls State Park would not be complete without taking in the beauty of the park's namesake. This waterfall is considered one of the most stunning in the southeastern United States and is also one of the tallest east of the Mississippi River, standing at an impressive 256 feet in height. The overlook to Fall Creek Falls is a short walk from the parking lot accessed from the Scenic Drive Loop. If you are feeling adventurous, take the .8-mile round-trip hike down to the bottom of the falls. It's moderately challenging with slippery rocks and elevation change, but well worth the trip. Camping reservations:

reserve.tnstateparks.com/fall-creek-falls/campsites

Directions:

From Chattanooga, take US-27 N to TN-111 N. Travel 50 miles and turn right on TN-284 E to the entrance of Fall Creek Falls State Park.



GPS Waypoint:
35.66583, -85.35583



Waterfalls of The Cumberland Trail

The Cumberland Trail traverses 190 miles of the Cumberland Plateau, spanning 11 counties in East Tennessee. This developing trail system, which currently features 15 segments, offers hikers access to remote areas with spectacular overlooks, waterfalls, and wilderness experiences that are trademarks of the southeastern United States.

Cumberland Trail State Park

220 Park Rd.

Caryville, TN

423-566-2229

cumberlandtrail.org



9 Big Soddy Creek Gulf Waterfall

Connects to the Cumberland Trail
Soddy-Daisy, TN (Hamilton Co.)

It's an easy 2 mile round-trip hike along an old mining road to this wet-weather waterfall that tumbles 30 feet over a rock wall into Big Soddy Creek. This family-friendly trail follows alongside the cascading river and includes stops for wading and skipping rocks. The waterfall is not visible during dry periods.

Directions:

From Chattanooga, take US-27 N to Hwy. 111 N. Take Back Valley Rd. exit and turn left on Back Valley Rd. Pass under highway and follow signs to parking area on the right.



GPS Waypoint
35.3066, -85.1795

10 Richey Ridge Falls *and* Imodium Falls

The Cumberland Trail: Possum Gorge Segment
Soddy-Daisy, TN (Hamilton Co.)

It's a short and easy walk from the parking area to view Richey Ridge Falls, an 18-foot wet weather cascade along the Cumberland Trail. From Richey Ridge, continue for a more challenging 9 mile round-trip hike to Imodium Falls (aka Little Possum Creek Falls). It gained the name Imodium Falls from whitewater boaters who felt they might need this remedy if they ventured this drop!

Directions:

From Chattanooga, follow US-27 N through Soddy-Daisy. Follow TN-111 N and proceed 5 miles to the Jones Gap Rd. exit and turn right. Immediately turn right on Heiss Mountain Rd., and travel 0.5 mile. Look for the trailhead with Cumberland Trail signage. Parking is available along the side of the road.



GPS Waypoints: 35.3469, -85.1755
35.3674, -85.1753



11 Laurel Falls *and* Snow Falls

The Cumberland Trail: Laurel-Snow State Natural Area
Dayton, TN (Rhea Co.)

The Laurel-Snow section of the Cumberland Trail is an area of gorges cut into Walden's Ridge, part of the Cumberland Plateau. From the trailhead, it is 1.7 miles to the split where the Laurel Falls spur trail forks to the right and the Snow Falls spur trail forks to the left. Take the steep Laurel Falls spur trail 0.7 miles to the base of the 80-foot falls and continue on to the top of the falls and to two overlooks for a 6.6 mile round-trip hike from the trailhead. The hike to 35-foot Snow Falls, which is located at the end of the Snow Falls spur trail, is a moderate 9.6 mile hike (round-trip) from the trailhead.

Directions:

From Chattanooga, take US-27 N toward Dayton. Turn left on Walnut Grove Rd. Continue 0.7 mile and turn left on Back Valley Rd. In 0.7 mile, turn right on gravel road for LaurelSnow State Natural Area. Proceed 1 mile to the parking lot on Richland Creek Rd.



GPS Waypoints: 35.5472, -85.02396
35.54667, -85.03861

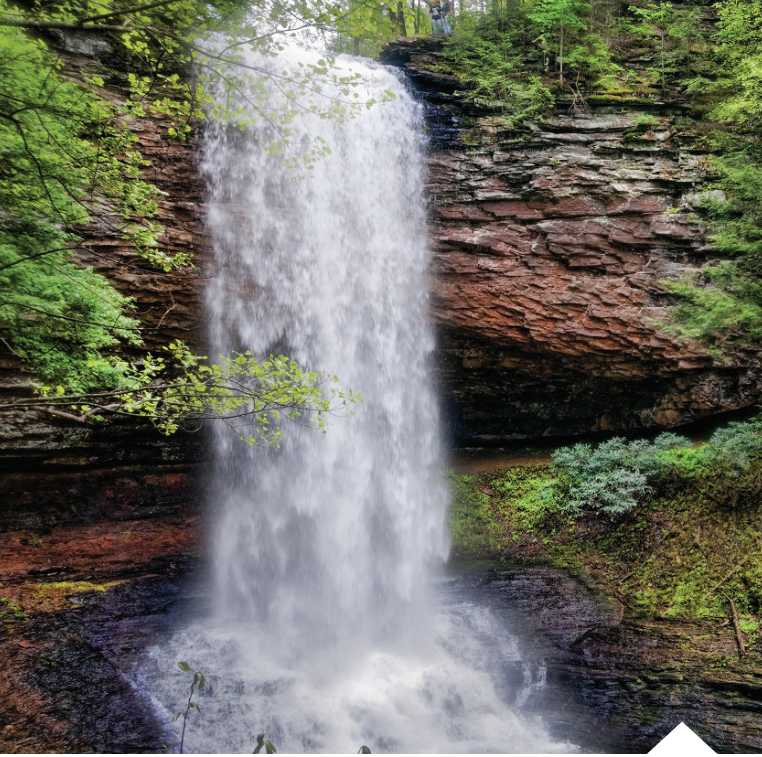


Photo credit: Ronnie Phipps

12 Upper Piney Falls and Lower Piney Falls

**The Cumberland Trail:
Piney Falls Designated State Natural Area
Grandview, TN (Rhea Co.)**

This 2.2 mile round-trip trail will take you to where Little Piney Creek plunges some 80 feet over Upper Piney Falls into a pool below, and then drops another 40 feet over Lower Piney Falls. From the parking lot, follow the trail along an old dirt road for about a half mile until you come to a fork in trail. The trail to the right leads to the ledge overlook of Upper Piney Falls (use caution on ledges!) and a trail to the left leads to the base of the falls down in the gorge. These two trails eventually connect if you wish to hike the full loop. The Lower Falls is not easily accessible by the main trail for viewing.

Directions:

From Chattanooga, follow US-27 N to TN-68 N in Spring City. Follow TN-68 N into the Grandview Community. Look for a sign for Piney Falls State Natural area and turn left on Firetower Rd. Travel 1.5 miles to the parking area and trailhead on the right.



GPS Waypoint:
35.73111, -84.86361

Waterfalls Within the Cherokee National Forest

Home to the Ocoee and Hiwassee rivers, the Cherokee National Forest, the largest tract of public land in Tennessee, is a landscape defined by cascades, rapids, and scenic waters. The Forest also offers numerous opportunities for hiking, paddling, biking, and camping.

Ocoee Ranger District

3171 US-64

Benton, TN

423-338-3300

fs.usda.gov/cherokee



SoutheastTennessee.com



13 Benton Falls

Cherokee National Forest: Chilhowee Recreation Area
Benton, TN (Polk Co.)

Located in the Chilhowee Recreation Area near the Ocoee River, the drive to Benton Falls following the Ocoee Scenic Byway is just as scenic as the waterfall, offering overlooks of Sugarloaf Mountain and Parksville Lake. From the McKamy Lake parking lot, take Benton Falls Trail #131 for an easy 3 mile round-trip hike to this stunning 65-foot-high waterfall. Cool off from your hike in the shallow pools at the bottom of the falls. **Camping:** recreation.gov/camping

Directions:

From Chattanooga, take I-75 N to exit 20 (Cleveland) and turn right on US-74 E. Travel US-74 E for approx. 6 miles to US-64 E. From US-64 E, follow the Ocoee Scenic Byway and turn left on FS Road 77. Travel approx. 7.5 miles to the Chilhowee Recreation Area (McKamy Lake). Trail begins to the left of the bathhouse. Day use fee: \$3



GPS Waypoint:
35.14048, -84.5961

14 Rock Creek Falls/Chestnut Falls

Cherokee National Forest: Clemmer Trailhead, Benton, TN
(Polk Co.)

The Rock Creek Gorge is home to a jaw-dropping sixteen named waterfalls, spread across Rock Creek and several of its tributaries. The only easily accessible waterfalls are Rock Creek Falls, Benton Falls, and arguably Chestnut Falls. The lush (4 mile round-trip) trail meanders along picturesque Rock Creek. There are two creek crossings that may be impassable after heavy rains. Rock Creek is a 20-foot falls, emptying into a small lower pool. The officially maintained trail ends at Rock Creek Falls, but it's fairly easy to proceed upstream. From the trail's end by the falls, a distinct scramble path turns acutely left. The path follows and rounds the bluff line. Stay left on the Chestnut Mountain Falls path, which makes a short, steep drop to the creek. You'll need to scramble over some large, slippery boulders along the final stretch to Chestnut Falls, a beautiful 40-foot falls. Camping is available nearby in the Cherokee National Forest at Chilhowee Campground with 70 sites available. **Recreation.gov/camping**

Directions:

From Chattanooga, take I-75 north to exit 20 (Cleveland) and turn right on US 74. Travel US-74 for 6 miles to US-64 E and continue to the intersection of US-30 (approx. 15 miles). Turn left on Hwy 30 and immediately turn into the parking lot on the left at Clemmer Trailhead. Follow the blazed trail until you see signs for the waterfall trail.



GPS Waypoint:
35.114156-84.578613





16 Coker Creek Falls

Cherokee National Forest
Coker Creek, TN (Polk Co.)

Take Coker Creek Trail #183 for a 3 mile round-trip hike to Coker Creek Falls, a series of cascades ranging from 5 to 45 feet. The trail follows Coker Creek, a shallow creek perfect for summertime splashing.

Directions:

From Chattanooga, take I-75 N to exit 60 (Sweetwater). Turn right on TN-68 S and drive approx. 35 miles to Coker Creek. Turn right on Ironsburg Road (County Rd. 628) and proceed approx. 3.52 miles. Turn left on FS Road 2138 and follow downhill for approx. 0.92 miles to the Coker Creek Falls trailhead parking lot.



GPS Waypoint
35.19727, -84.37028

15 Gee Creek Falls

Cherokee National Forest: Gee Creek Wilderness
Benton, TN (Polk Co.)

Gee Creek Trail #191, which lies almost entirely within the congressionally designated Gee Creek Wilderness, is an easy 2.6 mile round-trip hike leading to a gorgeous double waterfall that plunges 25 feet into a deep pool. Look for a concrete water divider within the creek that was used in the late 1800s to wash mined silica during the region's mining era. This is a hiking-only trail. Recreation in congressionally designated Wilderness is intended to be primitive in nature and group size is limited to 12 people. For more information, visit: fs.usda.gov/activity/cherokee/recreation/hiking

Directions:

From Chattanooga, take I-75 N to exit 20 (Cleveland) and turn right on US-74 E. Travel US-74 E for 6 miles to US-64 E. Take US-411 N exit and travel approximately 14 miles. In Delano, turn right on Gee Creek Road and continue for 2.2 miles to the signed trailhead, just before a left curve. Paved road becomes dirt road ending at FS Trail #191 trailhead parking lot.



GPS Waypoint:
35.247, -84.5261



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