

#3

Self-Guided Driving Tour: "Suches It Is" loop from Morganton to Suches

- ⑥0 Highway number
- 1 Start Drive
- 2 Serenberry Vineyards
- 3 Wilscot Gap
- 4 Old Skeenah Mill
- 5 The Swinging Bridge
- 6 Fish Hatchery
- 7 Deep Hole Rec. Area
- 8 Coopers Creek Rec. Area
- 9 Suches
- 10 Woody Lake
- 11 Woody Gap Vista
- 12 Lake Winfield Scott
- 13 Vogel State Park
- 14 Reese Farm & Heritage Center
- 15 Sunrise Grocery
- 16 Richard Russell Scenic Hwy.
- 17 Mimms Moonshine Distillery
- Welcome Center



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#3 Self-Guided Driving Tour: "Suches It Is" loop from Morganton to Suches

This day trip follows Highway 60 south from Morganton to Wolf Pen Gap (Hwy 180) in Suches with Blairsville as your final destination before returning to Blue Ridge. You will discover Suches, the highest "community" in the state called "the Valley Above the Clouds." Elevation in "downtown" Suches is 3,000 feet, according to Bill's Guide to Suches.

The drive combines some of the prettiest views of the countryside with curvy mountain roads and lots of roadside attractions, including the historic Skeenah Mill, Swinging Bridge on the Toccoa River, Chattahoochee National Fish Hatchery, Lake Winfield Scott, Vogel State Park and more opportunities for side trips. It can easily turn into a full day trip. Round trip mileage is 76 miles and approximate driving time without stops is two hours.

Total Miles (in-between miles) in Blue GPS Fixes in Red

0.0 (0.0) Start your drive at the intersection of Hwy. 515 and Hwy. 5 in Blue Ridge (McDonalds on corner). Begin your trip by going east on Highway 515 toward Blairsville.

4.0 (4.0) Turn right on Georgia Highway 60 toward the little town of **Morganton**. **N 34°52.525' W084°14.536'**

4.5 (.5) Turn left at stop sign on GA Hwy 60.

6.0 (1.5) Turn right on GA Hwy 60 South toward Dahlonega.

10.2 (4.2) Serenberry Vineyards 450 Tipton Trail – Morganton, GA 30560. Turn left On Tipton Trail to visit Serenberry Vineyards, a charming farm winery in a beautiful country setting. Enjoy a little taste! **N34.850' W084 19.49'**

13.5 (3.3) Wilscot Gap The Benton MacKaye Trail (BMT) crosses here. It is pronounced "mack-eye". The trail in Georgia stretches 78.6 miles from Springer Mountain to Double Spring Gap on the Tennessee border. **N 34°48.500' W084°11.272'**

17.2 (3.7) Old Skeenah Mill 20 Skeenah Gap Rd, Suches, GA. 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 in 1839. The Mill is listed on the National Register for Historic Places. A water-powered sawmill was also located on the creek. It 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'**

17.9 (.7) The Swinging Bridge Forest Service Road 816 On the right is Forest Service Road 816, and the second crossing of the Benton MacKaye Trail. A side trip of 3 bumpy miles will lead to a 260' suspension bridge over the Toccoa River. Park at the berm and walk in ¼ mile to the bridge. This

is a beautiful area with huge old growth hemlocks. **N 34°44.350' W084°10.213'**

20.5 (2.6) Chattahoochee National Fish Hatchery Forest Service Road 69. Forest Service Road 69 on the right will take you to the Chattahoochee National Fish Hatchery and Frank Gross Campground on Rock Creek. The fish hatchery raises a million rainbow trout each year to stock the streams and lakes of north Georgia. Visitors can tour the hatchery and visitor center (M-F call 706-838-4723 for hours), and also picnic, hike, camp or fish. **N 34°42.382' W084°08.969'**

20.8 (.3) Deep Hole Recreation Area On the right is the entrance to Deep Hole Recreation area on the Toccoa River. Deep Hole is a year-round campground with six picnic sites and a canoe launch. It is the beginning of the Toccoa River Canoe Trail, a nationally designated river trail. **N 34°44.574' W084°08.345'**

21.5 (.7) Cooper Creek Road A six-mile trip on Cooper Creek Road takes you to two National Forest campgrounds, hiking trails & access to popular trout stream Cooper Creek.

32.1 (10.6) Suches You are in the town of Suches, which is the highest "community" in the state called "the Valley Above the Clouds." Elevation in "downtown" Suches is 3,000 feet, according to Bill's Guide to Suches. Woody Gap School, on the right, is the smallest public school in the State of Georgia, with 100 K-12 students.

32.4 (.3) Intersection of Highway 180 Wolf Pen Gap Road. The area is a popular route for motorcyclists, who stop at TWO (Two Wheels Only) ahead on the right. Turn left and continue the driving tour or take a short side trip to Woody Gap Vista ahead 2 miles.

For a quick side trip, continue to Woody Gap Vista.

(.3) Woody Lake On the left is Woody Lake and just above the lake is the house of Arthur Woody, the "Barefoot Forest Ranger." He was the founder of the Chattahoochee National Forest and is recognized for preserving the land and revitalizing the area's deer and trout population. **N 34°41.115' W084°01.182'**

(2) Woody Gap Vista The Appalachian Trail crosses Highway 60 at Woody Gap. View is on the right. To continue the driving tour, return to Highway 180 and turn right.

36.8 (4.4 from Hwy 180) Lake Winfield Scott Recr. Area 439 Winfield Scott Road, Suches. This 18 acre lake high in the Chattahoochee National Forest, was built for the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1930's and offers opportunities to picnic, swim, fish, boat and hike. **N34 738' W083 972'**

43.6 (6.8) Highway 19 Turn left to continue driving tour or right to visit **Vogel State Park** 405 Vogel State Park Rd., Blairsville. One of Georgia's oldest and most popular state parks, offering tent and camper sites, rental cottages, a 20-acre lake, mini golf, swimming beach, picnic shelters, paddle boats and more. Located directly below Lake Trahlyta is a 40 foot stepping stone waterfall. **N34 767 W083 9197'**

44.3 (.7) Byron Herbert Reese Farm & Heritage Center 8552 Gainesville Hwy, Blairsville. Take in the history of early Appalachian living from a famous farmer and poet. Features a gift shop, museum, farm and history exhibits. Open seasonally Thursday through Saturday. **N34 46' N50 948'**

45.2 (.9) Sunrise Grocery 7568 Gainesville Hwy, Blairsville Sunrise Grocery is a little country market with fresh veggies and fruits, boiled peanuts, homemade local treats and souvenirs! First open for business in this picturesque setting in the early 1920's, the grocery is one of the oldest businesses in Union County. Great place for pumpkins and gourds in fall.

(.5) Richard B. Russell Scenic Highway To drive the Richard Russell Scenic Highway, you can turn right at Hwy. 180 ½ mile from the Sunrise Grocery and drive approximately 1 mile to Hwy. 348, which continues to Helen. (Or continue straight on Hwy. 180 to visit Brasstown Bald, the highest point in GA).

48.2 (3) Granddaddy Mimms Moonshine Distillery located at Pappy's Trading Post, 2743 Pappy's Plaza, Blairsville. Stop for a taste of authentic moonshine based on Granddaddy Mimm's recipe from the 1930's. Museum features souvenirs and memorabilia. **N34 824' W083 909'**

53.2 (5) Blairsville Follow Highway 19/129 to the Square. Explore the town of Blairsville, established in 1835, and return to Blue Ridge, 22.8 miles via Hwy. 515 or or for a pretty alternative take scenic Old Hwy. 76 back to Blue Ridge.

A Word to the Wise ... Do not try to drive on any rough forest dirt road in low clearance cars! The law of the forest is "leave no trace." 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.

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