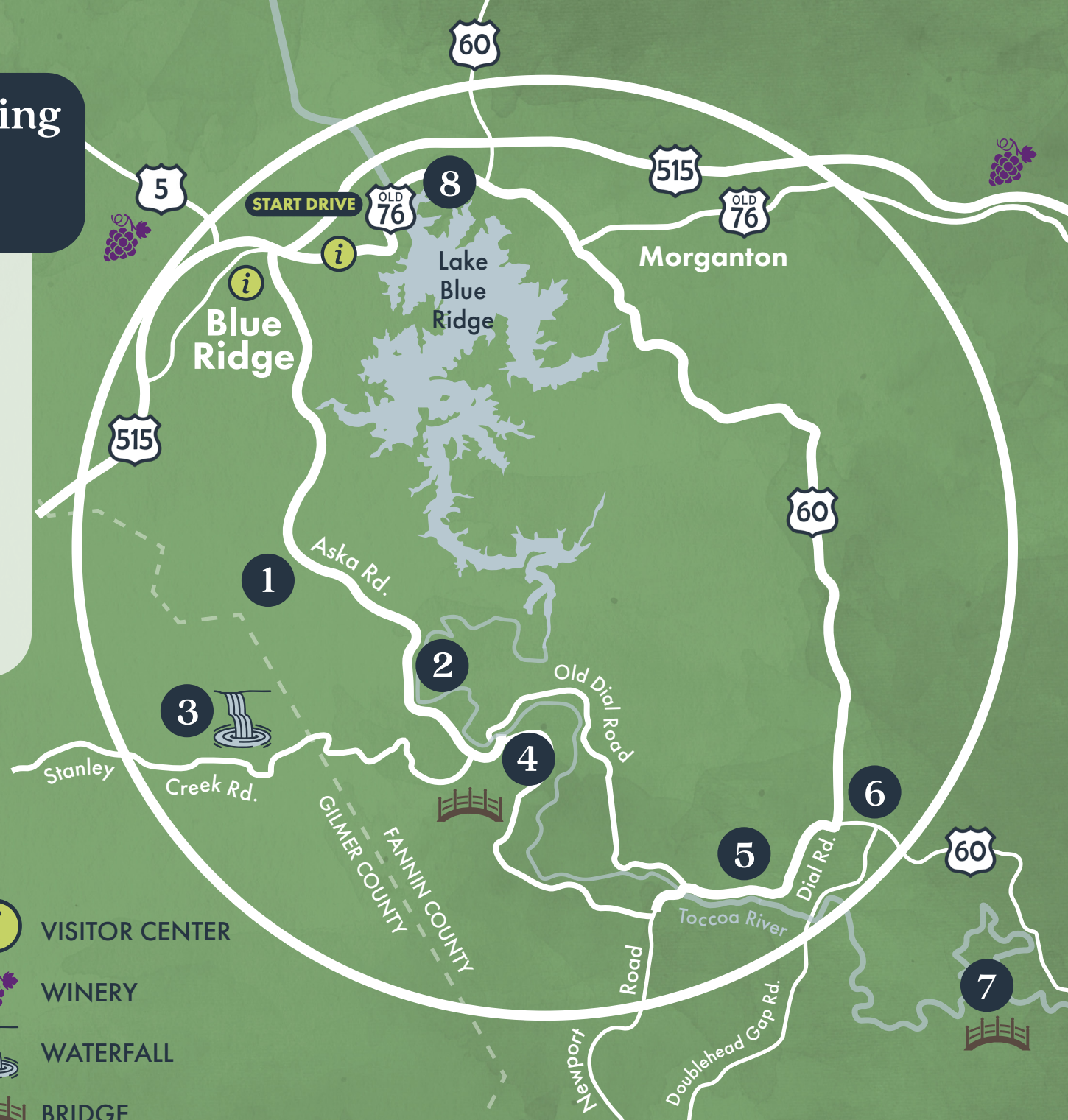


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Self-Guided Driving Tour: Mountains & Countryside

1. Aska Trails
2. Toccoa River Rapids
3. Falls Branch Falls
4. Shallowford Bridge
5. Cochran-Davenport Homestead
6. Old Skeenah Mill
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Experience the breathtaking beauty of North Georgia at your own pace with this scenic driving tour. Wind your way through rolling countryside and mountain landscapes, where every curve in the road reveals a new surprise—whether it's a hidden waterfall, a historic homestead, or a sun-dappled overlook. This thoughtfully curated route invites travelers to step into the soul of the Blue Ridge Mountains, with stops that showcase the region's rich blend of natural wonders and cultural heritage. From the vibrant greens of spring and summer to the fiery colors of autumn, and even the quiet charm of winter's bare ridgelines, this drive is a year-round invitation to slow down, explore, and connect with the land.

“Start Drive” at the intersection of Hwy 5 and Hwy 515/US 76 in Blue Ridge, Georgia.

1. Aska Trails

101 Shady Falls Rd, Blue Ridge, GA
The Aska Adventure Area—a local favorite—is a hiking-mountain bicycling system 17.0 miles in length developed on National Forest lands near Deep Gap on Aska Road. Trails range in length from 1.0 to 5.8 miles and are open to the public year-round. Trails ascend to near 3,200 feet, providing vistas of mountain ridges and descend to the shores of Lake Blue Ridge. They also pass through coves of mature hardwoods and thickets of mountain laurel and rhododendron.

From “Start Drive,” head east on Hwy 515/US 76 for .7 miles, turn right onto US 76 Connector, then left at stop sign. Continue down Old Hwy 76 for .2 miles, turn right onto Aska Rd for 4.4 miles, destination will be on the right.

2. Toccoa River Rapids

Aska Rd, Blue Ridge, GA
This is a beautiful and popular place to view the Toccoa River, one of Georgia's most pristine trout streams. 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.

From Aska Trails, continue down Aska Rd and travel for 2 miles. Destination and pull-off parking area will be on the left.

3. Fall Branch Falls

Stanley Creek Falls, Cherry Log, GA
This short 1 mile adventure along the Benton MacKaye Trail winds through a lush, scenic forest and leads to one of Georgia's most breathtaking waterfalls. The hike to Fall Branch Falls is a steady uphill climb and offers a mild challenge, but the reward is well worth it: a stunning double cascade tumbling over moss-covered rocks and framed by twisted rhododendron branches.

From Toccoa River Rapids, continue down Aska Rd for 1 mile, turn right on Stanley Creek Rd and continue for 3.2 miles. Trailhead will be just past the Benton MacKaye Trail on the right.

4 Shallowford Bridge

Shallowford Bridge Ln, Blue Ridge, GA
The Shallowford Bridge is a charming and enduring symbol of early 20th-century Appalachian engineering. Built in 1920, this historic one-lane steel truss bridge spans the scenic Toccoa River and is the last remaining bridge of its kind. The surrounding area is equally inviting—watch for anglers casting into the river below, tubers floating past on warm days, and hikers enjoying nearby trails. Adjacent to the bridge, you'll find a quaint general store, a perfect stop to stretch your legs and soak in the peaceful, rustic beauty of the area.

From Fall Branch Falls, continue back down Stanley Creek Rd/Rock Creek Rd in the same direction you came, then take a right onto Aska Rd. Continue on for .4 miles, destination will be on the left.

5. Cochran - Davenport Homestead

2350 Dial Rd, Blue Ridge, GA
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. This property is private and only viewable from the roadside.

From Shallowford Bridge, turn left onto Aska Rd and continue on for 4.7 miles. Turn left on to Newport Rd and drive for .7 miles, turn right onto Dial Rd. Destination will be on the left.

6. Old Skeenah Mill

20 Skeenah Gap Rd, Blue Ridge, GA
Inside the Skeenah Creek Campground you'll find the Old Skeenah Mill, which is listed on the National Historic Register. The 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. 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.

From Cochran Davenport, continue on Dial Rd for 2.4 miles. Turn right onto GA 60, and a left onto Skeenah Gap Rd. The campground will be immediately to the right, and you'll find the mill toward the back.

7. Toccoa Swinging Bridge

FS Rd 816, Blue Ridge, GA
This 270-foot-long hiking bridge is the longest swinging bridge east of the Mississippi River. The Swinging Bridge over the Toccoa River is located on the Benton MacKaye Trail and the Duncan Ridge National Recreation Trail. The bridge was built by the US Forest Service in cooperation with the Appalachian Trail Club in 1977.

From the campground, turn left on Skeenah Gap Rd, then another left at the stop sign and onto Hwy 60/Morganton Hwy for .8 miles. Take a sharp right turn on FS Rd 816 and continue for 3 miles to the parking area. The Toccoa Swinging Bridge is a short 5-minute walk.

8. Lake Blue Ridge Dam Recreation Area

6408 Old Hwy 76, Blue Ridge, GA
Lake Blue Ridge Dam, located on the Toccoa River in the heart of the North Georgia Mountains, stands 200 feet tall and stretches 1,500 feet across, creating the stunning 3,290-acre Lake Blue Ridge. Completed in 1930 by the Toccoa Electric Power Company, the dam serves as a vital flood control, power generation, and recreation resource. Visitors can enjoy scenic views of the dam and lake, as well as opportunities for boating, fishing, and hiking in the surrounding area. The dam is a key feature of the Blue Ridge region's natural beauty and outdoor adventures.

From the Toccoa Swinging Bridge, continue back down FS Rd 816, turning left onto Hwy 60/Morganton Hwy. Follow Hwy 60/Morganton Hwy to Old US 76 for 31 miles, destination will be on the left.