

THE GREATER BIRMINGHAM

OUTDOOR GUIDE

Visitors are often surprised by what surrounds Birmingham. From rugged ridgelines to peaceful forests and cascading creeks, the Magic City offers outdoor escapes that make it easy to reconnect with nature—whether you're looking to hike, bike, climb, camp, or simply unwind.



Red Mountain Park

RED MOUNTAIN PARK

Just minutes from downtown, Red Mountain Park spans more than 1,500 acres along the Red Mountain Ridge and is one of the largest urban parks in the U.S. It offers a unique blend of natural beauty and rich mining history that shaped the Magic City. Explore over 18 miles of hiking and biking trails, visit unique tree houses, stroll the sensory trail, or let your four-legged friend roam freely at the popular Remy's Dog Park.

Hike: Grace's Gap

RUFFNER MOUNTAIN

Nestled in the heart of Birmingham, Ruffner Mountain invites visitors to explore more than 1,000 acres of oak, hickory, and pine forest on a reclaimed mining site. With over 11 miles of scenic hiking trails, you'll encounter native wildlife, unique geology, sweeping views, and remnants of the area's mining history.

Hike: Hawk's View Overlook

TURKEY CREEK NATURE PRESERVE

Located 15 miles north of Birmingham, Turkey Creek Nature Preserve offers a peaceful retreat surrounded by natural beauty and rich biodiversity. Wander along more than seven miles of scenic hiking and biking trails through pine and hardwood forests, take in the rush of a cascading waterfall, or admire seasonal wildflowers and native birdlife.

Hike: Narrows Ridge Trail

MOSS ROCK PRESERVE

Moss Rock Preserve is a beautiful 349-acre nature preserve abundant with forests, large rock outcroppings, streams, waterfalls, wildlife, and unique natural features in Hoover. Its Boulder Field is a favorite among climbers, offering numerous technical formations and routes for all skill levels.

Hike: White Trail Loop

OAK MOUNTAIN STATE PARK

Alabama's largest state park, Oak Mountain offers endless ways to experience the outdoors across more than 9,900 acres of rolling wooded terrain. In addition to The Oaks 18-hole championship golf course, the park features 84 improved campsites, 60 primitive campsites, and 10 fully equipped cabins. Visitors can explore over 50 miles of hiking, biking, and equestrian trails, enjoy the scenic lakes for swimming, paddleboarding, and fishing, or visit the Alabama Wildlife Center and Oak Mountain Interpretive Center.

Hike: King's Chair Trail

WEST ROCK MOUNTAIN PRESERVE

West Rock Mountain Preserve is one of the Greater Birmingham area's newest outdoor destinations, offering scenic hiking and mountain biking trails through more than 600 acres of protected forest. Located just outside Birmingham, the preserve features beautiful overlooks, diverse wildlife, and peaceful natural landscapes, making it a great escape for outdoor enthusiasts of all skill levels.

Hike: Mountain Top Trail

Urban Trails

JEMISON PARK

This 54-acre linear park designed for preservation as a green way, is used for walking, jogging, reading, bird watching, and enjoying a picnic.

ROTARY TRAIL BIRMINGHAM

Rotary Trail is a scenic half-mile linear park in downtown Birmingham that connects the city center to the historic Jones Valley corridor, featuring landscaped walking paths, public art, and the iconic Rotary Trail sign.

CITYWALK BHAM

CityWalk features a 1.2-mile paved walking path that stretches beneath Interstate 59/20 through downtown Birmingham, connecting parks, playgrounds, public art, sports courts, and gathering spaces in a vibrant urban greenway.

RAILROAD PARK

Located in the heart of downtown, this 19-acre green space is commonly referred to as “Birmingham’s Living Room” and features a 1-mile walking path for walking, running, or skating, a scenic lake, and panoramic skyline views. The expansive lawns are perfect for a picnic and often play host to concerts, yoga classes, and other public events

LAKESHORE TRAIL

Also known as the Shades Creek Greenway, this scenic 5.6-mile paved trail follows Shades Creek through a wooded corridor, offering a peaceful setting for walking, running and biking. The trail connects Lakeshore Foundation to the Jemison Park area and is popular with outdoor enthusiasts of all abilities.

Waterways

CAHABA RIVER

The longest free-flowing river in the state, the Cahaba begins near Trussville and meanders through several suburban Birmingham communities on its journey south to the Alabama River. One of the most biologically diverse rivers in North America, the scenic Cahaba is a popular waterway for kayaking, canoeing, fishing, and wildlife-watching.

LAKE PURDY

Roughly 20 minutes from downtown lies this 1,000-acre reservoir that provides drinking water and a peaceful respite from the noises of life. Anglers can fish for bass, crappie, bream, and catfish from the bank or rent non-motorized boats, kayaks, or paddle boats from Lake Purdy Fishing. Outside boats are strictly prohibited.

OAK MOUNTAIN LAKES

The seven scenic lakes at Oak Mountain State Park (Double Oak, Lunker, Beaver, Tranquility, Catfish, Demopolis, and Belcher) offer clear waters surrounded by the beauty of forested Appalachian foothills. Recreational options, which may vary from lake to lake, include fishing, swimming, and watersports. Boat rentals are available.

SHADES CREEK

A 55.8-mile stream winding through the Birmingham metro area, Shades Creek flows from Irondale to its confluence with the Cahaba River near the line dividing Shelby and Bibb counties. The creek is a natural and ecological resource for the region and offers recreational opportunities such as fishing, canoeing, swimming, and hiking.

