It's easy to see why this is one of Georgia’s most popular state parks. **Amicalola**, a Cherokee Indian word meaning “tumbling waters,” is an appropriate name for these 729-foot falls ~~ the tallest cascading waterfall east of the Mississippi River. An 8.5-mile approach trail leads from the park to Springer Mountain, the southern end of the famed 2,135-mile Appalachian Trail. However, numerous other trails are available for shorter journeys.

A beautiful lodge at the top of the mountain is popular with guests who prefer traditional hotel comforts, while the cottages and campgrounds are more rustic. The park's Maple Restaurant is known for its spectacular views and Sunday brunch buffet. For hikers who enjoy more adventure, a 5-mile trail leads to the backcountry [Len Foote Hike Inn](http://www.hike-inn.com).

Be sure to stop by the visitor center to see an Appalachian Trail display, nature exhibits, live animals and a gift shop. Please note that Amicalola Falls is exceptionally busy during peak leaf season. Guests may prefer to visit during the week or carpool on weekends. Advanced reservations for accommodations are highly recommended.

**Park Hours:** 7AM to 10PM
**Office Hours:** 8AM to 5PM
**Lodge open 24 hours** - [www.AmicalolaFalls.com](http://www.AmicalolaFalls.com)
[www.GeorgiaStateParks.org/AmicalolaFalls](http://www.gastateparks.org/AmicalolaFalls)

**FACILITIES:**

* 829 Acres
* 24 Tent, Trailer, RV Campsites ($25-$28)
* 14 Cottages ($85-$165) -- #5 (Bottom of Falls) and #6 (Top of Falls) are dog friendly ($40 per dog, max 2)
* 4 Picnic Shelters ($45)
* Group Shelter (seats 75, $80)
* 56-Room [Lodge & Conference Center](http://www.amicalolafalls.com) ($75-$200)
* Maple Restaurant (Closed on Christmas Day)
* 20-Room [Hike Inn](http://www.hike-inn.com)
* Visitor Center
* Ropes Course (groups only, advanced reservations required)
* Playgrounds
* Gift Shops

**ACTIVITIES:**

* [GeoCaching](http://www.gastateparks.org/GeoCaching)
* [Hiking](http://www.gastateparks.org/net/content/page.aspx?s=147672.0.1.5) - 12 miles of trails
* Picnicking
* Trout Fishing (seasonal)
* Interpretive Programs
* Photography
* [Weekday Programs - August 2010](http://www.gastateparks.org/content/Georgia/pdf/Amicalola-August2010.pdf)
* [Amicalola Falls School Program Brochure](http://www.gastateparks.org/content/Georgia/parks/FieldTrip/SchoolBrochures/AmicalolaFalls-SchoolBrochure.pdf) (pdf document)
* [Become a "Friend" of Amicalola Falls](http://www.friendsofamicalolafalls.org)

**NEARBY ATTRACTIONS:**

* [Alpine Village of Helen](http://www.helenga.org/)
* [Blue Ridge Mountains](http://www.BlueRidgeMountains.com)
* Burt's Farm
* [Cabbage Patch Kids / Babyland General](http://www.cabbagepatchkids.com)
* [Chattahoochee National Forest](http://www.fs.fed.us/conf/overview.htm)
* [Dahlonega Gold Museum State Historic Site](http://www.gastateparks.org/DahlonegaGoldMuseum)
* Dawson County, Georgia
* Ellijay Apple Country
* [Fort Mountain State Park](http://www.gastateparks.org/FortMountain)
* Funk Heritage Center
* Kangaroo Conservation Center
* [New Echota State Historic Site](http://www.gastateparks.org/NewEchota)
* North Georgia Premium Outlet Mall
* [Unicoi State Park and Lodge](http://www.gastateparks.org/Unicoi)
* [Vogel State Park](http://www.gastateparks.org/Vogel)
* [White County, Georgia](http://whitecountychamber.org)
* Wildlife Management Areas

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| **Amicalola Falls State Park**About North Georgia

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| Amicalola Falls in the fall |

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Amicalola. The [Cherokee](http://ngeorgia.com/history/cherokee.html) had a name for it. High in the watershed of a ridge known as Amicalola Mountain a body of water forms, enthusiastically called a river. Along the western slope the river runs, until it tumbles, swirls and drops off a ledge at the southern end of the [Blue Ridge Mountains](http://ngeorgia.com/mountains/blueridgemountains.html). Amicalola. Tumbling water. **This article was written in 1997. Since then the drive on GA 136 has filled in.** Our journey to Amicalola Falls State Park begins heading east from Jasper, Georgia, north and west of [Atlanta](http://roadsidegeorgia.com/sitecity/Atlanta). Not the quickest or easiest route, State Highway 136 affords the best long distance view of the falls' 729 foot tumble. It is absolutely stunning, especially in the winter when the barren trees afford the falls little cover. The waterfall dwarfs the modern lodge to right.

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| The Falls in Winter |
| Amicalola FallsThe winter and early spring are the best time to view the falls, although they are impressive year-round |

After a quick stop at Burt's Pumpkin Farm, it's across the street to the entrance of the park. A fee is required, and the two dollars, paid on the honor system, is well worth it. The road splits just before the visitor center. Journey to the left to get to the top of the falls and the lodge, or continue straight ahead for the visitor center and the Base of the Falls Trail. We turn left on the Amicalola Falls Lodge Road which begins climbing immediately and a steep mile later the upper falls parking is to the right. The road follows the ridge line past this parking to the 57-room Amicalola Lodge. When the lodge was built quite a furor erupted over what critics called "the intrusive nature of the building". We stopped and walked the interpretive path along the ridge top south of the lodge. An easy hike, the trail is signed and lit at night, and it affords great views of the cove below and the Amicalola Watershed beneath the falls. Between the lodge and the falls, stone steps rise from the road. This is the start of the [Southern Terminus Trail](http://georgiatrails.com/trails/southterm.html). Parking on the west side of the falls is limited, however, an expansive overflow parking area is available on the east side. The area here has been repeatedly raked by weather over the last five years including an unnamed rainstorm, a blizzard commonly called the Storm of the Century and Hurricane Opal. Much of the upper observation deck and path have been rebuilt because of the storms. The deck crosses the creek, jutting out over the dramatic drop in the falls. From the deck, the foothills of the Southern Appalachian Mountains (technically, [The Dahlonega Uplands](http://ngeorgia.com/naturally/naturally.html)) spread across much of the view, which is exceptional in the fall. About halfway down the mountain a new lot allows visitors to see the falls cascading down the mountain. The [Cherokee](http://ngeorgia.com/history/cherokee.html) controlled the area until they were forcibly removed from the state of Georgia in 1838 during the "[Trail of Tears](http://ngeorgia.com/history/nghisttt.html)." Describing the falls in 1832, William Williamson wrote: In the course of my route in the Mountains I discovered a Water Fall perhaps the greatest in the World the most majestic Scene that I have ever witnessed or heard of the Creek passes over the mountain & the fall I think can't be less than Six hundred Yards. The Mountain is a least three fourths of a mile high. I made great exertions to get on the summit but the ascent was so great that I was completely exhausted by the time I reached half way. My position was such that I had a perfect view of the entire Fall The Steam is Called *Um-ma-eolola* from the Fall (Sliding Water)When the [Appalachian Trail](http://georgiatrails.com/trails/apptrail.html) was rerouted to end at Springer Mountain the park began to serve as the access point for hikers. From the park, Springer is just over 8 miles using the [Southern Terminus Access Trail](http://georgiatrails.com/trails/southterm.html)Hardwoods dominate the local forest. The river forms the Amicalola Watershed, which drains into the Etowah River further south. The mountain is the southern limit for the eastern milk snake. Occasionally rare animals such as the pileated woodpecker (like Woody) and plants like the pink lady slipper are found. Returning down the mountain, turn left at the end of the road to continue to the Base of the Falls Trail. Limited parking is available at the trailhead (at the visitors center), but parking along the road to the base augments it. The path continues to the reflection pool and winds up the cove to the observation deck at the top of the falls, although the path requires a good deal of step climbing. The path is paved in the area of the falls and is moderate. The Visitors Center is recently remodeled and expanded. Scales are provided so backpackers can check the weight of packs before they begin the trek to the top of Springer. Additional trails are available, including the Base of the Falls Trail previously mentioned and the East and West Ridge Trails. These wind their way up the ridges, the East trail climbing to the top of the falls, the West Ridge Trail climbing to a spring near Amicalola Lodge Road and the parking lot halfway up the mountain. For more information on Georgia's Amicalola Falls, visit [Georgia Trails'](http://georgiatrails.com) [Amicalola Falls, Gateway to the Appalachian Trail](http://georgiatrails.com/places/amicalola.html). Amicalola Falls State Park 418 Amicalola Falls Lodge Road Dawsonville, Georgia, 30534 DirectionsTake Ga. 400 to Ga. 53 towards Dawsonville. Turn right on Elliott Family Parkway (Hwy 183), and continue on Hwy 183 until it ends at GA-52. Turn right on GA-52, the entrance to the park is on the left about 1 mile past Burt's Pumpkin Farm on the left.  |   | [Georgia Imix](http://click.linksynergy.com/fs-bin/click?id=vHFmqh9lZRI&offerid=146261.755944101&type=10&subid=0)  |