



GEORGIA

AT FROM NEELS GAP TO HOGPEN GAP 6.5 MILES

SOAK IN THE VIEWS FROM THE TOP OF CLASSIC APPALACHIAN BALD PEAKS ON THIS REWARDING OVERNIGHT.

BY HIMIE YATES, AS TOLD TO ZOE GATES

As soon as I start the initial climb on my first multiday hike along the Appalachian Trail, I know I packed too much gear. My pack, loaded down with camera equipment, sits heavy on my shoulders, the imbalance threatening to tip me over. But as soon as I come to the first viewpoint atop 3,806-foot Lovelland Mountain, I forget all about the weight. Layers of blue-green mountains stack into the distance. This route links more than half a dozen peaks over 3,500

feet, and the ups and downs give me a sense of pride at every overlook. It's rare to stay so high in Georgia, but on this trail the long views don't stop—on 3,783-foot Green Cliff Top, a sheer dropoff gives way to westward views over the green expanse of Chattahoochee National Forest. I'm panting for breath in the summer heat as I take in the 180-degree vista, but it couldn't be a more perfect day. The sky is blue, the views are expansive, and I have one more mountain

ahead of me before I reach Hogpen Gap, the end of my hike. These handful of miles have made me a backpacker for life.

Plan it: appalachiantrail.org



HIMIE YATES is a landscape and adventure photographer from Macon, GA. She travels in her van with her husky, Bodhi, and never leaves home without her camera.

HAWAII

KUKUI TRAILHEAD TO LONOMEA BACKCOUNTRY SITE 5.3 MILES

ESCAPE THE CROWDS TO DISCOVER A WHOLE NEW SIDE OF HAWAII'S BACKCOUNTRY ON HAUAI.

BY WILL MCGOUGH

I stand alongside the river, watching the water staircase its way down the gorge over boulder fields and cliff edges. It branches off into waterfalls, filling inviting pools below, while the red, towering canyon walls rise more than 2,000 feet above my head.

The red rocks are reminiscent of the southwest, but the river banks—full of guava, avocado, mango, and kukui nut—are constant reminders of my tropical location.

I'm deep within the backcountry of Waimea Canyon, also known as the "Grand Canyon of the Pacific," on Kauai. It's 3,600 feet deep, a mile wide, and close to 14 miles long. The rim of Waimea Canyon is one of the most-visited places on Kauai, riddled with scenic overlooks and criss-crossed by

helicopter fly-overs. Down here, though, it still feels like one of the least-explored places in Hawaii, where the wilderness remains untamed. Four swimmable pools, filled by waterfalls and within a short walk of the most remote campsite, Lonomea, offer absolute tranquility and the chance to swim beneath the towering canyon walls.

It's not the Hawaii you picture when you close your eyes—it's nowhere near the beach, and there's more red rock than rainforest—but that's exactly why I love it. All the other islands have those beautiful beach hikes or volcanic terrain; this 5.3-mile adventure is one of a kind, and not overcrowded like other trails. With permits limited to one eight-person group per night, Lonomea guarantees

privacy and even a little bit of convenience, with a covered shelter, cooking pit, and composting toilet in the wooded area adjacent to the river. With plenty of side canyons to explore, I recommend a two-night stay. Hot tip: Pack a small, inflatable inner tube to ensure maximum relaxation in the waterfall pools.

Plan it: bit.do/hawaicamping



WILL MCGOUGH runs tent testing for *Backpacker* and is based in Palisade, CO. He is currently obsessed with slow-cooking soups over a campfire, which often makes his friends hangry.