



# HOOKED ON THE OUTDOORS

By  
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For anyone that has moved houses, neighborhoods, or even states, you know there is a point in time when you stop feeling like a visitor at your new location, and start feeling like a true local. Now that we are in our 4<sup>th</sup> year living in Carolina, we are now feeling like true residents (probably a bit longer until we feel like locals), but we are still suffering from one seemingly incurable malady...."Explore-itis". Yes this is a condition in which one feels they must get out and visit and try every possible location/event within a 100 mile radius of your "new" residence. The only known cure for "Explore-itis" is to get in a car with the family, a camera, and a plan...and on one such recent such outing we discovered yet another local treasure worthy of visiting...Stone Mountain State Park.

The Stone Mountain State Park I am writing about is not the similarly named and probably better known Stone Mountain outside of Atlanta. Stone Mountain State Park is located in Roaring Gap, just a little over an easy one hour drive from Lewisville. Once one gets off of routes 421 and 77 you are immediately transported to a simpler place and time. Two lane roads meandering through a rolling, rural setting with few retail establishments, and those that are present are the mom and pop variety (and of course with the local charm and characters that come with it). It's a short scenic ride to the entrance of Stone Mountain State Park, and this is where the real fun and adventure begins.

Outside of trees, which you see an abundance of; one of the first things you'll probably see upon entering the park is wildlife. There are deer everywhere, and knowing they must be somehow protected within the park boundaries, they aren't tremendously skittish around people. Yes, there are other furry and squirmy type creatures within the park confines, so make sure you bring a camera to capture these beautiful animals in their natural environment.

Of course this writer, as my loyal readers know, is particularly fond of what I call "aquatic therapy", otherwise known as fishing. Stone Mountain State Park offers a variety of fishing options for the hard core angler to the novice angler... places to fish for free, and places to pay to fish at. The main game is river and creek fishing for trout, and we usually get our "River Runs Through It" fix by fly fishing when in the park. You'll often find the fish abundant, albeit not large in size, and fairly accommodating to your "offering". A good rule of thumb is take a picture of any fish you catch and put it back so someone else can experience the thrill of the catch.

If hiking is your game, this is a great place to visit. The Park offers trails of various difficulty levels and lengths, again something for the novice hikers to the most experienced. The trails are very well marked, and often end up taking you to great views of the Stone Mountain, or views of the Blue Ridge Mountain vista. In fact visiting the park and not taking a hike would be akin to going out on Black Friday and not buying anything...it is just something that shouldn't be done. Wear light clothing; bring water and a trail map with on your hike....and of course like everything else you do in the park have your camera at your side and at the ready.

There is much more to do in the park too....from just having a simple picnic to wading in a creek and cooling off during a sweltering summer day. While our visits to the park have been in the summer, it would be a very educated guess that the lush foliage throughout the park would be

worth a visit during the color explosion of Fall. For more information on the Park, you can visit:  
<http://www.ncparks.gov/Visit/parks/stmo/main.php>

Well that's all for this edition. Last month a few of you came up to me commented about enjoying this regular feature...thanks for that...we are trying. Until next edition, get outside and enjoy this beautiful part of the country we live in, and of course....tight lines!!!