



There's magic coursing through the towns, the people, and the nature of Alabama's Fayette, Lamar, Marion and Winston counties. The hardworking people who call this region home find joy in each other and the beautiful moments they create in a place where it's easy to feel like you belong. A place with adventures in awe-inspiring nature.

Alabama's I-22 Region lives deep in nature filled with plenty of opportunities for recreation and exploration. The region's rolling hills and rushing headwaters sit along scenic routes perfect for road tripping. Twisting, winding roads and trails will take you to the Sipsey Wilderness, buried deep within the Bankhead National Forest. Alabama's largest national forest is filled with bluffs, canyons, waterfalls, springs and lakes that help you connect with nature. You can take your adventure beyond the forest and swim in the sparkling lakes or canoe down one of the winding rivers that start in the region. When you're ready for a relaxed day, you can visit one of the rustic mineral-rich springs that have been thought to have health-restoring qualities.

- 1** Lamar County Lake
- 2** Fayette County Public Fishing Lake
- 3** Sam's Smokehouse
- 4** Wilderness Whitetails Alabama
- 5** Tin Top Inn
- 6** Bankhead National Forest
- 7** Sipsey Wilderness
- 8** Natural Bridge
- 9** Marion County Lake
- 10** Bear Creek Canoe Run / Floatway
- 11** Motorcycle ride loop National Forest Route 1 and 2

36 Hours Exploring Outdoors & Nature

Alabama's I-22 Region

Route.

Lamar > Fayette > Winston > Marion

Whether you love to hike, paddle, swim, or ride, you can admire the region's natural beauty from a distance or up close and personal. No matter how you choose to explore, there's no denying that this place is magical.

Let's head out to **1 Lamar County Lake**, one of the 280 Alabama Birding Trail sites. This 68-acre lake is a favorite with local fishermen and has stunning views of the surrounding forests. Bird watching is a popular hobby in the area, with a variety of birds frequenting the area including Barn Swallows, Purple Martins, American Goldfinches and Pine Warblers. Bird boxes, seed feeders, and hummingbird feeders hanging from the porch of the fishing store attract Ruby-throated Hummingbirds and other feeder birds. Hiking access is available, but the beautiful landscape of open woods, as well as the birds that inhabit it, is easily viewable from the gravel entrance road along the property. Be sure to show us your birding finds using #AlabamaBirding.

Another option is the **2 Fayette County Public Fishing Lake** that is stocked with Florida largemouth bass, bluegill sunfish, redear sunfish and channel catfish. In addition, golden shiners and threadfin shad were stocked as forage to enhance largemouth bass growth. Personal fishing boats may be launched at the lake with the possession of a valid fishing permit.

If you don't bring along a picnic to the lake, **3 Sam's Smokehouse** is a wonderful BBQ option for lunch. Named a finalist in AL.com's Alabama's Best BBQ Ribs, Sam's Smokehouse offers hickory-flavored ribs that fall off the bone, among an entire menu of delicious BBQ options. They are a favorite on the West Alabama BBQ Trail.

If hunting is more to your liking, get your trophy whitetail deer hunting fix at **4 Wilderness Whitetails Alabama**, located in the foothills and valleys surrounding the Sipsey River in Fayette, Alabama. One on one guide service will help you to judge the size of your trophy and will video your experience for a memory that will last a lifetime. Hunting takes place in large shooting houses overlooking food plots or in a ladder stand over wooded trails. Non-hunting guests are also welcome. Guests who tag out early may continue their hunt outside of the trophy preserve on a semi-guided hunt for the opportunity to take another buck or doe.

After a day of enjoying Alabama the Beautiful we suggest overnighting at **5 Tin Top Inn**, a newly built casual, lodge-style bed and breakfast located minutes from downtown Fayette. The Tin Top Inn nestled in the trees is the perfect place to relax and unwind surrounded by nature. The Inn also has campsites for RVs.

See the Natural Sights

Don't miss the **6 Bankhead National Forest** and its trail systems as it takes the explorer a step back in time with its tinkling waterfalls and moss-covered stones decorating one of the finest forests Alabama has to offer. Each spring, this verdant forest trail is surrounded with the songs of Cerulean and Black-throated green warblers, the cheery sounds of Summer and Scarlet tanagers, and the strident calls of Ovenbirds as they forage about on the forest floor.

Take a hike and explore the "Land of 1000 Waterfalls" in the **7 Sipsey Wilderness** that is loaded with falling water features ranging from 20 to 100 feet high. The Sipsey Wilderness is an outdoor lover's dream buried within the Bankhead National Forest in north Alabama.

Be sure to stop by **8 Natural Bridge Park** in Winston County that features a 148-foot sandstone bridge that towers 60 feet above winding pathways as the longest natural bridge east of the Rockies. The park has a picnic area perfect for bringing a lunch to eat before or after you hike the approximately two-mile trail through the park. The stream that runs through the park and the small waterfall at the back of the park are refreshing to sit and listen to the musical water. During the spring, you'll find all kinds of wildflowers, and in the fall, you'll see the vibrant foliage. Under the natural bridge at Natural Bridge Park is a cave-like bluff that you can walk around in. This natural bridge formation dates back to two million years ago and was once home to the Creek Indians who used this cave-like formation as shelter from the elements. Don't miss the Native American face that was etched by nature in the large rock!

Adventure Abounds

Another great adventure can be found at the **9 Marion County Public Lake**, a well-maintained man-made lake surrounded by mixed woodland. The lake is another site on the Alabama Birding Trail and offers an opportunity to check many birds off your list. The all-weather road provides access to various picnic tables, some of which offer unimpeded views of the entire lake. Let us know about your sightings using #AlabamaBirding.

If you feel like getting on the water, the **10 Bear Creek Floatway** is considered one of the best trips canoeists can take in Alabama. The four lakes **Cedar Creek, Little Bear, Upper Bear and Bear Creek** are rated among some of the cleanest recreational waters in the South. The lakes have produced smallmouth over 5-lbs. and largemouth bass over 15-lbs., offering trophy fishing, boating, sand beaches, group pavilions, designated swimming areas, hunting, developed camping, picnicking and hiking. A 30-mile canoe float stream is located between Upper Bear and Big Bear Reservoirs. The five campgrounds are open mid-March through mid-October, and the lakes are open year-round.

If you packed your motorcycle and want to feel the wind in your hair, may we suggest you take the **11 Motorcycle ride loop National Forest Route 1 and 2 - North Alabama Motorcycle Routes**. Find out more at northalabama.org.

More Dining Options

Tuugie's II
954 Hwy 18 E
Berry, AL 35546

Woodpecker's Steak and Fish
309 Crosby Road
Detroit, AL 35552

Café 30
7016 State Hwy 129
Winfield, AL 35594

The Mill House Coffee and Café
228 First Street
Hamilton, AL 35570

Lakeshore Inn & Marina
364 Lakeshore Lane
Double Springs, AL 35553

More Lodging Options

Vernon Motel
44554 HWY 17
Vernon, AL 35592

Twin Forks Campground
740 Twin Forks Rd
Bear Creek, AL 35543
82 campsites w/power and water

Smith Lake Bed and Breakfast
944 County Road 4230
Crane Hill, AL 35053