

THE BIG PICTURE

NATURAL ATTRACTION

Lookout Mountain is a destination in and of itself. Visit **Ruby Falls**, the 145-foot waterfall inside a limestone layer of the mountain (rubyfalls.com); tour **Rock City Gardens**, featuring ancient rock formations, more than 400 native plant species, and a panoramic view of seven states (seerockcity.com); ride the **Incline Railway**, the world's steepest railway at a 72.7 percent grade near the top (ride theincline.com); hang glide at **Lookout Mountain Flight Park**, where the launch site rests 1,350 feet above Lookout Valley (hangglide.com); or go rock climbing. Kirk Brode, a southeast Tennessee representative for the Southeastern Climbers Coalition (seclimbers.org), says Lookout Mountain is just one of many climbing areas within a 45-minute drive from downtown Chattanooga.

Groups and individuals interested in a guided climbing experience can contact Rod Thomas, an American Mountain Guides Association certified rock-climbing instructor (pictured climbing the route called Flagstone at Lookout Mountain) at 706-889-3049 or through Granite Arches Climbing Services at granitearches.com.