



Go Glamping

At The Martyn House in Georgia, get back to nature with (most of) the comforts of home.

IF YOU LIKE THE IDEA OF GETTING CLOSER TO NATURE but not the idea of sleeping with nothing between you and the cold, hard ground but a few layers of fabric and only a tent between you and the great outdoors, then The Martyn House in Ellijay, Ga., is the place for you.

On 18 acres tucked into the ups and downs of North Georgia's Appalachian mountains, owners JoAnn and Rick Lucas welcome those who want to unplug and relax without sacrificing comfort. They call their way of enjoying the great outdoors "glamping," a marriage of "glamour" and "camping." While the two words might not seem to have any business being used together, the mix works at The Martyn House.

On arrival, you're greeted by a smiling JoAnn, who offers a property tour while Rick whisks your things to your tent. There's the main house, built in the 1930s, where you'll enjoy a gourmet breakfast (included in your rate) on the wrap-around porch. There's the chicken coop, where hens lay eggs to be used in your morning meal.

Next, it's on to Rick's studio, where you'll see an impressive collection of work from his years as a professional photographer. JoAnn's studio is just down the path in a rustic cabin that's her workspace and a showcase for the pottery she creates. A fire pit out front is ringed in brightly hued Adirondack chairs where you might have a drink (or two) before heading to bed.

That bed is waiting for you in one of The Martyn House's four named tents. Whether yours is Ridge Roost, Bohemian Bungalow, Hummingbird Haven or Nightingale Nest, you're in for a pleasant surprise.

You can safely call your stay here camping since you do, in fact, sleep in a tent, surrounded by nothing but trees. You can also describe the experience as glamorous, since said tent is a colorful and spacious room on stilts, decorated in a shabby-chic style with flea-market-find

BY JENNIFER STEWART KORNEGAY
PHOTOS COURTESY OF RICK LUCAS





THIS PAGE, FROM TOP: Colorful wayfinding signs offer a glimpse of each tent's decor. Guests may join The Martyn House's owners around the fire pint outside of owner JoAnn Lucas' studio. **OPPOSITE FROM TOP:** The exterior, top, and interior, bottom, of the Bohemian Bungalow.



lamps, plush rugs, soft linens and vintage quilts, electricity, a propane heater, fans, hot running water, an eco-friendly composting toilet and its own covered deck. There's even in-room coffee (courtesy of a French press) to be sipped from one of JoAnn's whimsical mugs.

Printed fabrics cover interior walls made of a thick, heavy canvas that keeps the elements (and most bugs) out. It is still a tent, and you are in the woods, so a few determined moths and other little critters might make it in, especially if you've got the lamps on.

But even though it's an attractive amenity when camping, there's no reason to use much electricity. Instead, sit on your deck and soak up the quiet that's only occasionally broken by a chirp or the rustle of leaves.

At breakfast, Rick will whip up some scrambled eggs (remember those hens?) with fresh herbs grown onsite and a side of bacon. Blueberry preserves made from local fruit are perfect for slathering on thick slices of whole-wheat toast. Coffee and juice round out the feast and set you up for a day of doing, well, whatever. Walk in the woods, drive into town, paddle an area river, read a book, even throw some pottery with

JoAnn. There's no right or wrong way to go "glamping;" you just need to go. ■

Don't Miss

Some guests travel to The Martyn House to take advantage of their hosts' creative abilities, enjoying art workshops led by both. Others use it as a home base for exploring Ellijay and the surrounding areas. Hit these highlights while you're there.

JJ's On River Street: In downtown Ellijay, this casual restaurant offers yummy bistro basics. In the summer, refresh with a basil-lemonade cocktail on the second-story terrace.

Apple Picking (September-November): Ellijay is the apple capital of Georgia and boasts multiple farms with U-pick operations. Grab a fried apple pie at Penland's Apple House or the Panorama Farm Market.

Details

The Martyn House is closed December through March, and with only four tents, it fills up fast in spring and fall, so make your reservations early. Learn more at themartynhouse.com.



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