

Southern Style

Atlanta has the
best of the best

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The ATL, Hotlanta, A-town and The A are just a few of Atlanta's nicknames. Whatever you call it, this hot Southern city offers a great mix of sports, dining and entertainment to easily fill a weekend or more (much, much more). Considered by many to be the hip-hop capital of the world, Atlanta might have you running into residents Ludacris, Big Boi or Young Jeezy. No, you don't have to look hard to find a good time in this Southern-belle city. Hear some up-and-coming music acts, catch a baseball game or enjoy some time in the sun—we have you covered.

Downtown To-Do

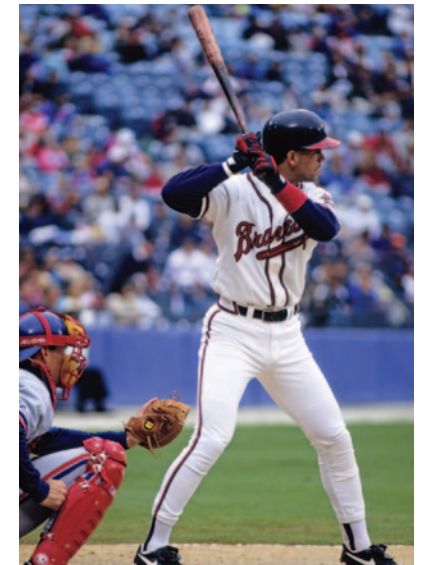
Steps from Centennial Olympic Park are the outstanding Georgia Aquarium (georgiaaquarium.org) and the World of Coca-Cola (worldofcoca-cola.com). At the World of Coke, explore the Atlanta drink's history and sample more than 60 international Coca-Cola products. Once you're all jacked-up on caffeine, the Georgia Aquarium boasts the world's largest aquarium exhibit, featuring whale sharks and manta rays, a 4D Theater, and a live theatrical show. With so much to drink in, you're sure to enjoy your visit to both spots.

For a look at Atlanta's cultural history, visit the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site (nps.gov/malu). You can take a tour of Dr. King's birthplace and visit Ebenezer Baptist Church, where he once preached. Sweet Auburn—Atlanta's historic black business district—is just a short walk away. The area is experiencing a lively resurgence, and new shops, bars and restaurants are springing up all over. It's especially hopping after the sun goes down.

Sports and Thrills

In the summer, all eyes are on the Atlanta Braves. Will they or won't they make it to the playoffs? That is the question. For the answer, head over to Turner Field (atlanta.braves.mlb.com), which locals jokingly call "The Ted" after former Braves' owner and CNN founder Ted Turner. Even if the Braves aren't in town, baseball fans can still enjoy a stadium tour and a visit to the Braves Museum & Hall of Fame.

Although football season is over, you may be able to catch the Atlanta Falcons (atlantafalcons.com) hard at work at their



ABOVE: The Atlanta Braves

BELOW: Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site



+ more



training camp beginning in late July. The camp and Falcons Headquarters are located about 45 miles north of town in Flowery Branch. Call before you head out to make sure you can catch the players in action.

If you love the great outdoors, Atlanta doesn't disappoint. The city boasts several public parks, and the Chattahoochee National Recreation Area (nps.gov/chat/index.htm) just north of town offers hiking trails, rafting, canoeing and more.

Home Cooking Just Like Mom's (or Better)

Atlanta has an abundance of locally owned restaurants that will give you a taste of the true South. For barbecue, two joints stand out. Fox Brothers BBQ (foxbrosbbq.com) has achieved national acclaim for its Texas-meets-Georgia barbecue. The beef brisket is exceptional, and the large patio and stellar selection of brews make it a top place to cool off in the summer. Located near Turner Field is Daddy Dz BBQ Joynt (daddydz.com), where the house specialty is ribs—and the pulled pork is mighty fine, too.

Who knew that chicken and waffles taste great together? Empress of Soul Gladys Knight did when she opened up her namesake restaurant Gladys Knight's Signature Chicken and Waffles (gladysandron.net) in Atlanta. There are now three locations. For more excellent fried chicken, try The Busy Bee Café (thebusybeecafe.com). This downtown institution has been dishing out soul-food favorites since 1947.

Nighttime Beats

When the lights go down, the music cranks up. The Apache Café (apachecafe.info) in Midtown always seems to be on the cutting edge of what's new and hot in the music scene. The performance venue, art gallery and Caribbean-style restaurant features live jazz, hip-hop and spoken word.

For easy bar-hopping, head to the funky Little Five Points neighborhood on the east side of town. The Five Spot (fivespot-atl.com) offers an eclectic mix of jazz, funk, hip-hop, blues and rock. If you want to kick back and relax, the Wrecking Bar Brewpub (wreckingbarbrewpub.com) is just a short hop down the street. Housed in what through the years has been a mansion, church, dance studio and antiques store, it offers some of the freshest hand-crafted beer in town.

Good music, good beer, good food and good fun. You may just find you'll never want to leave the The Big A. + by rachel roberts



TOP LEFT: Catch some live music at the Apache Café

TOP RIGHT: Explore the World of Coca-Cola and sample away

BOTTOM: Gladys Knight's Signature Chicken and Waffles will hit the spot

+ Free and Cheap Summer Fun

Atlanta Jazz Festival | May 26–28

One of the largest jazz festivals in the country—and it's free. Located in historic Piedmont Park, it's a Memorial Day Weekend tradition. (atlantafestivals.com)

Fourth of July at Lenox Square | July 4

The world's largest 10K, the Peachtree Road Race, kicks off from here every 4th of July. Around 500,000 people usually turn out that evening to see the Southeast's largest fireworks extravaganza. (peachtreerodrace.org)

Grant Park Summer Shade Festival | August 25–26

Set in one of Atlanta's oldest and largest public parks, this festival features diverse arts and crafts, live music, and of course, plenty of excellent food. (gpconservancy.org)

Starlight Six Drive-In

It's a do-it-yourself "dinner and a movie" at this old-fashioned drive-in. For \$7, you can catch a double feature of the latest Hollywood releases from the comfort of your car. Set up a table and chairs, bring a grill—anything goes! (starlightdrivein.com)