

Atlanta Isn't All Business: A Local's Travel Guide to the City's Hot Spots

One of the country's biggest business hubs has morphed into a happening vacation spot. Here, the smartest ways to navigate the sprawling city, neighborhood by neighborhood.

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WHEN I FIRST MOVED TO ATLANTA, in 1995, my idea of a big night out was dinner at the Cheesecake Factory in Buckhead. Granted, I was a college student with limited experience in fine dining but the restaurant scene in Georgia's capital hardly sent hearts racing. Much of Atlanta was a put-your-head-down-and-work kind of town, headquarters to corporate powerhouses like [Coca-Cola](#), Home Depot and Delta; media titan CNN and a fledgling music industry. Tourists who came to tour Martin Luther King, Jr.'s haunts found few other reasons to linger.

The city perked up the following year, after the Olympics sprinted into town in 1996, and it's been evolving rapidly ever since as tech companies and the film industry have moved in. Today's visitors face a multitude of enticing options, all scattered across Atlanta's daunting sprawl.

For a more manageable bite of the ATL, as locals call it, follow these guides to five key sections of the city.

3. BUCKHEAD

Undoubtedly the ritziest neighborhood in Atlanta proper, Buckhead has roots that date to an 1830s general store, where, as legend has it, owner Henry Irby mounted a buck's head on a stake outside the building to give visitors a landmark. The city's northernmost section has become a thoroughly modern financial district, full of manicured neighborhoods, historic houses (some of which survived the burning of Atlanta in 1864) and a sense of both established and aspirational wealth.

WHERE TO GO

[Bobby Jones Golf Course](#), named for the Atlanta-born golfing great, is a public, reversible 9-hole course that lies near Buckhead's southwestern edge, adjacent to the Atlanta Beltline's walkable mile-long Northside Trail. At the Murray Golf House, you'll find the Georgia Golf Hall of Fame, a pro shop for anything you forgot to bring, and Boone's restaurant, overlooking the course. Boone's is a good spot to lunch or take in the setting sun over the city's skyline while enjoying pimento cheese fritters and neat pours of whiskey (2205 Northside Drive NW).