



## **Atlanta Sports and Recreation**

ATLANTA -- Atlanta is fit for professional sports fans and outdoor enthusiasts, whether they want to cheer for their favorite team on the sidelines or hop in on the action by hiking, biking, sailing or exploring the city's great, green outdoors. In addition to being one of the nation's top sports cities and home to seven major sports teams, Atlanta hosts national, regional and local events annually in several world-class facilities.

### **Annual Sporting Events**

#### **March**

##### **[Kobalt Tools 500](#)**

This 500 mile NASCAR NEXTEL Cup series invades Atlanta Motor Speedway in March and is a full weekend of excitement.

##### **[ING Georgia Marathon and Half Marathon](#)**

Experience one of the most beautiful running events in the country with 13.1 miles and 26.2 miles through the city of Atlanta.

#### **April**

##### **[Tour de Georgia](#)**

In 2008, America's Premier Cycling Event covers 600 Miles of Georgia, starting on the coast, winding through the Blue Ridge Mountains and ending with a new circuit course in downtown Atlanta.

#### **May**

##### **[AT&T Classic](#)**

AT&T Classic hosts the finest professional golfers in the world at Tournament Players Club at Sugarloaf in Duluth, Ga. Annually, the event has attracted more than 125,000 golf fans.

#### **July**

##### **[Peachtree Road Race](#)**

On the Fourth of July, more than 50,000 runners participate in the annual Peachtree Road Race. The race is the largest 10K road race in the world and consistently attracts scores of elite runners.

#### **September**

##### **[Bank of America Atlanta Football Classic](#)**

The Bank of America Atlanta Football Classic features historically African-American colleges and a weekend of activities including a parade, half-time band jamboree and college and health fairs.

##### **[PGA TOUR Championship](#)**

The PGA TOUR Championship is open to the top 30 money winners. Atlanta's East Lake Golf Club is the permanent home of The TOUR.

#### **October**

##### **[Pep Boys Auto 500](#)**

In October, the NASCAR NEXTEL Cup drivers return to Atlanta Motor Speedway for one of the final races of the year. More than 150,000 people from all over the globe attend this event.

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##### **[Petit LeMans](#)**

The Petit Le Mans is an annual 1,000-mile/10-hour race at Road Atlanta. Road Atlanta is the only Series circuit to hold more than one race in a single season and has hosted more American Le Mans Series events than any circuit in Series history.

## **December**

### **[The SEC Championship](#)**

Each year, the Georgia Dome hosts the best in Southeastern Conference football as the East takes on the West to decide who will be champion.

### **[The Chick-fil-A Bowl](#)**

The Chick-fil-A Bowl is the ninth-oldest bowl game in college football. The Bowl also holds the record for the largest football crowd in history at the Georgia Dome (75,125 in 2003) and leads bowl games in charitable and scholarship contributions. Bowl Week features more than 30 events, including a basketball doubleheader, a game-day parade and a FanFest.

## **Sports Teams**

Atlanta is the only city where all five major teams: MLB, NFL, NBA, WNBA and NHL are located downtown.

### **[Atlanta Braves](#)**

In the 90s, the MLB Atlanta Braves were dubbed "worst to first" after coming from last place to capture the 1992 National League Championship. In 1995, the Braves won their first World Series. Between 1991 and 2006, the Braves set many major professional sports records including 14 consecutive division titles and five National League pennants.

### **[Atlanta Dream](#)**

Atlanta has been awarded a Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) expansion team for the 2008 season, with games set to tip off at Philips Arena in May. The new franchise is owned and operated by Atlanta businessman Ron Terwilliger, and marks the women's basketball league's 14th team.

### **[Atlanta Falcons](#)**

In 2002, the NFL approved the purchase of the Falcons by Author Blank, the co-founder and retired co-chairman of Atlanta-based Home Depot. The Georgia Dome is the home facility for the Falcons and features an outdoor fan experience called Falcons Landing. The team is part of the NFC South division.

### **[Atlanta Hawks](#)**

The Atlanta Hawks are led by head coach Mike Woodson. Games are held at Philips Arena and are preceded with festivities at Hawks Walk including contests, special concerts and interactive games.

### **[Atlanta Silverbacks](#)**

The city's professional men's soccer team is part of the United Soccer League's A-League Eastern Conference. The A-League is home to current and future national team players from more than 35 countries and its teams are among the top 21 soccer teams in the United States. The Silverbacks play at the RE/MAX Greater Atlanta Stadium.

### **[Atlanta Thrashers](#)**

The Thrashers, who call Philips Arena home, took to the ice in 1999 as the 28<sup>th</sup> NHL franchise team. With some of the brightest young stars in the game, including Marian Hossa and Ilya Kovalchuk, interim coach and executive vice president/ general manager Don Waddell guides this team into one of the strongest contenders in the Eastern Conference.

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### **[Georgia Force](#)**

The Georgia Force arrived in Atlanta in 2001 and was acquired in 2004 by NFL Falcons owner Arthur Blank. In 2005, the team captured its first-ever Southern Division championship and ended the season as runners-up in Arena Bowl XIX, the Super Bowl of the AFL.

## **Facilities**

**[Atlanta Motor Speedway](#)** is just 20 miles south of Atlanta in Hampton, Ga. The 870-acre speedway is the state's largest sports facility. Atlanta Motor Speedway annually hosts two of the biggest events on the NASCAR Winston Cup circuit - the Kobalt Tools 500 and the Pep Boys Auto 500.

### **[The Georgia Dome](#)**

Adjacent to the Georgia World Congress Center, the Georgia Dome is the largest cable-supported dome in the nation. Home to the NFL Atlanta Falcons since 1992, the 71,250-seat stadium is a world-class facility for major sporting and entertainment events, conventions and exhibitions. The Dome hosted Super Bowl XXVIII in 1994; Super Bowl XXXIV in 2000; the 2002 and 2007 Men's NCAA Final Four basketball championships; the 2003 NCAA Women's Final Four; and activities during the 1996 Olympics Games. Tours of the facility are available.

### **[Philips Arena](#)**

Philips Arena is the home of the NBA Atlanta Hawks, the NHL Atlanta Thrashers and the AFL Georgia Force. The 21,000-seat arena has a vertical suite design, opera house look and high-tech acoustic sound. Seating capacity for a hockey game is 18,750 and for basketball games, 18,729.

### **[Road Atlanta](#)**

Road Atlanta is recognized as one of the premier road courses in the world. The 2.54-mile, 12-turn Grand Prix course is challenging for competitors and features a 700-acre fan-friendly park. In addition to hosting major events like the Petit Le Mans and the AMA Suzuki Superbike Showdown.

### **[Turner Field](#)**

Turner Field was originally constructed for the 1996 Centennial Summer Olympics and, after the Games, became the home facility of the Atlanta Braves. Seating more than 50,000, Turner Field combines the nostalgia and the atmosphere of old-time baseball with a state-of-the-art environment. The Grande Entry Plaza features two food and game-filled pavilions, Scouts Alley, and Cartoon Network's Tooner Field. The Ivan Allen Jr. Braves Museum & Hall of Fame features more than 600 artifacts that trace the team's history, as well as tours that depart every half hour and take visitors to the Braves locker room, press box and other areas of the ballpark.

### **Atlanta's Great Outdoors**

Set at the foot of the Appalachian Mountains and blessed with a mild climate year-round, Atlanta has city parks and trails as well as outlying areas that present challenging outdoor adventures.

**[Piedmont Park](#)** provides an in-town recreational venue in Atlanta's Midtown area. With 185 acres, sidewalks and expansive green spaces, the park includes playgrounds for children of varying ages, baseball, soccer and football fields as well as public tennis courts. Pedestrian walkways are perfect for a stroll, providing spectacular views of the city skyline and Lake Clara Meer. Canine lovers can exercise their pets at the Piedmont Park Dog Park, an enclosed area where dogs can play off-leash.

The **[PATH](#)** trails for pedestrians, bikers and rollerbladers is 18 miles from Georgia Tech through Atlanta suburbs to Stone Mountain Park. Stop at the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum, experience the quirky Little Five Points, or enjoy lunch in Decatur. Other in-town PATH trails include the South Decatur Trolley Trail, the Westside Trail and the Chastain Park Trail.

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**[Stone Mountain Park](#)** is a 3,200-acre state park and offers hiking trails, camping, streams and a lake with fishing and canoe and paddleboat rentals. Hike 15 miles of wooded nature trails or climb the 1.3 mile trail to the top of the mountain. Many locals picnic near the Grist Mill and Covered Bridge or fish in the 363-acre lake. Don't forget to tee off on one of the two beautiful Georgia golf courses with scenic views. In 2008, Sky Hike opens as a trek through the treetops on the nation's largest family adventure course. The Hike will feature suspended bridges, high ropes and vertical nets.

**[The Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area](#)** includes 50 miles of hiking trails, picnic areas, canoe and raft rentals and year-round fishing. For a lazy day on the river, do as locals do and shoot the 'Hooch: rent inner tubes or rafts and drift down the river.

**[The Chattahoochee Nature Center](#)** encompasses several acres with outdoor activities on the banks of the Chattahoochee River. The center offers guided activities including canoe trips, wildlife and horticulture walks, and includes marshes, river wetlands, aviaries, greenhouses and indigenous gardens.

From the Chattahoochee River runs another series of multi-use pathways ending at **[Kennesaw Mountain Battlefield Park](#)**. This 2,884-acre National Battlefield preserves a Civil War battleground of the Atlanta Campaign and offers 16 miles of trails around the base and to the top of the mountain, providing views of the downtown Atlanta skyline and the North Georgia mountain region.

**[The Silver Comet Trail](#)**, just 11 miles northwest of Atlanta, is the largest example in Georgia of abandoned railways converted into multi-use recreational trails. The trails span 37 miles for cyclists, skaters, runners and walkers winding through old rail tunnels. The PATH Foundation plans to extend this trail to encompass 57 miles across Georgia, linking it to a system of paths in Alabama and developing a system of recreational trails throughout the Southeast.

**Lake Lanier** is 40 miles north of Atlanta. The 14,000-acre lake was constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and has 540 miles of shoreline that includes recreational areas, parks, campgrounds and marinas. **[The Lake Lanier](#)**

**Islands Beach and Water Park** has water slides, a wave pool and beach. The local equestrian center offers guided trail rides through the hills of North Georgia while Harbor Landing has boats for day rentals.

**Callaway Gardens** is a 14,000-acre garden, resort and preserve in the southernmost foothills of the Appalachian Mountains. Callaway offers championship golf courses, as well as a soft and hard court tennis facility that is recognized as one of the top 50 tennis resorts in the country by *Tennis* magazine. Take advantage of 13 lakes or enjoy Robin Lake Beach for swimming, shuffleboard, volleyball and paddleboat rentals. Nine trails for beginners to intermediate hikers are available. The Discovery Bike Trail is a 10-mile paved path throughout the garden, and the mile-long fit trail circling Robin Lake provides exercise stations along the way.

**The Beltline** is a 12-year development plan that will transform the city's existing railroad system into parks and green space, creating a 22-mile loop for hikers and bikers; a mass transit route; and a green corridor that will string together many of the city's parks. Within a two- to four-mile radius from Downtown, the corridor will link the city's historic neighborhoods and skirt attractions like the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum and the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site. The \$2.8 billion undertaking, funded primarily by a new Beltline tax allocation district, is scheduled to complete its first phase by 2011. Full completion is expected between 2026 and 2031.

Established in 1913, Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau is a private, nonprofit organization created to favorably impact the Atlanta economy through conventions and tourism. [www.atlanta.net](http://www.atlanta.net)

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## **Atlanta Heritage is a Year-Round Celebration**

**ATLANTA** –Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau (ACVB) is proud to be among the first convention and visitors bureaus to design programs geared toward African-American tourists and conventioners.

"Atlanta is known for its rich African-American culture," said Kathleen Bertrand, ACVB senior vice president of governmental and community affairs. "Visitors to Atlanta may find history, cultural attractions and the spirit of the black family in the many churches, restaurants and attractions in Atlanta."

Events honoring the culture and heritage of African-Americans are held throughout the year. In January, the city comes together to honor the birth of civil rights leader, Martin Luther King, Jr. Services are held each year at the newly renovated Ebenezer Baptist Church, where three generations of the King family served as pastor or co-pastor. A memorial service is held at King's burial site on Auburn Avenue.

In May, the soulful sounds of the saxophone can be heard on stages throughout the city at the [Atlanta Jazz Festival](#), the largest free jazz festival in the country. Atlanta celebrates the largest collection of arts and artists of African descent in the world at the [National Black Arts Festival](#) (NBAF). The festival showcases works of African-American artists, including dance, film, folk, art, literature, music, performance art, theater and visual art. The bulk of NBAF activities are held in July.

Explore how Atlanta's heritage has impacted the world, any time of the year. The [Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site](#), located in the Sweet Auburn district, is open year-round and free to the public. Tour King's birth home, visit the gravesite of Dr. King and his wife, Coretta and take the self-guided GPS Ranger Tour. You can also [download](#) a 45-minute podcast walking tour of the neighborhood, commented by civil rights activist Andrew Young. The [African-American Panoramic Experience \(APEX\) Museum](#) showcases artistic and historic exhibitions of Atlanta's African-American heritage, including a model of Georgia's first black-owned drugstore.

In 2012, Atlanta will welcome the Center for Civil and Human Rights (CCHR). The museum will offer visitors insight into the contributions made by Atlantans and Georgians to the historic struggle for African-American freedom and equality. In addition, the Center will house the Morehouse College Martin Luther King Jr. Collection and feature interactive audio and video exhibits. The Center will also include a meeting and performance space for artistic and educational programming. The location for the facility, which is adjacent to the World of Coca-Cola and the Georgia Aquarium, will contribute to the continued revitalization of Atlanta's downtown core.

ACVB offers multiple ways for visitors to receive further information:

- Call 1.800.ATLANTA to request the *Atlanta Heritage* guide
- Log onto [www.atlantaheritage.com](http://www.atlantaheritage.com)

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**Atlanta Heritage Facts:**

- \* Atlanta is named one of the "Top Cities for African Americans," according to *Black Enterprise* (2007), which ranks cities based on entrepreneurial opportunities, earnings potential, diverse cultural offerings, business, housing and education.
- \* Atlanta is the nation's number one destination for African-American travelers, according to an annual Travel Industry Association report (2004).
- \* A prominent monument to John Wesley Dobbs, the godfather of black business in Atlanta, also testifies that "Sweet" Auburn Avenue, is home to one of the nation's oldest sustained Black business districts, anchored by the second largest black life insurance company and one of the largest Black banks.
- \* Three generations of the King family preached at Ebenezer Baptist Church. A.D. Williams and "Daddy" King (Martin Luther King, Sr.) served as pastor for a collective 81 years and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. served as co-pastor.
- \* Some of Atlanta's oldest and most historically significant African-American churches, as well as a few that are making history today include: Antioch Baptist Church North, New Birth Missionary Baptist Church and Big Bethel AME Church.
- \* Atlanta University Center houses the largest consortium of black colleges and universities in the country. The campus is comprised of six colleges and universities including Morris Brown College, Clark-Atlanta University, Spelman College, Morehouse College, Interdenominational Theological Seminary and Morehouse School of Medicine.
- \* A 10,000-piece collection handwritten notes and unpublished sermons composed by Martin Luther King Jr. is housed at Morehouse College, King's alma mater. The planned Center for Civil and Human Rights will be the future home of this collection.
- \* Morris Brown College is the only school in the state of Georgia founded by and for African-Americans.
- \* The Interdenominational Theological Center, located south of Sunset and MLK Drive, is the largest center of religious education for African-Americans in the country.
- \* Booker T. Washington High School, constructed in 1924, was the first public high school for African-Americans in the state of Georgia.

**More Attractions and Points of Interest:**

[APEX Museum](#)

[Atlanta Cyclorama](#)

[Atlanta University Center](#)

[Auburn Avenue Walking Tour](#)

[Auburn Avenue Research Library](#)

[Michael C. Carlos Museum](#)

**National African American Culinary Arts & Hospitality Assn. Soul Food Museum**

**The Wren's Nest**