

What To Do In Atlanta

"Rhett, Rhett...Rhett, if you go, where shall I go? What shall I do?"

Well frankly, my dear, I DO give a damn!! Y'all come back home to Tara in Atlanta this Memorial Day Weekend for the annual International Association of Gay and Lesbian Country Western Dance Clubs (IAGLCWDC) Convention!!! I would like to extend y'all a special welcome from Southern Line Atlanta (SLA) this coming May 2007. We are the host team volunteers this year and have been working hard with the IAGLCWDC Board to ensure that everyone has a peachy time in Atlanta. As you know, things are running a little differently this year with the organization of the annual event. There were no bids last year to be the host city, so IAGLCWDC has organized a board to run the annual this year, obtaining assistance from the host city. The IAGLCWDC Board has chosen Atlanta as the host city for the 2007 Annual. SLA is proud to assist with the convention this year, as we have a few surprises for you on hand. You definitely won't want to miss this year's Opening Ceremonies, as we have a bit of a twist lined up for the opening ceremonies that "might" (i.e. will) involve some good southern flavor served by your favorite Southern Belles...and I am not talking about food!! However, don't worry, after attending the opening ceremonies, you'll feel like you "will never be hungry again!!"

I will be writing to you all during the next couple of weeks to inform you of some of the local activities, events, and attractions to visit during your time here in Atlanta. I would like to acquaint you with the city of Atlanta and the State of Georgia so that you will have a variety of things to do and places to see while in town. Founded in 1837, Atlanta is situated in the mid northern part of the state and is famous for being one of the most historic and populated cities of the South. As the capital of Georgia, Atlanta has now reached over 5.1 million inhabitants in the Atlanta metro area and is known as one of the leading financial and cultural centers of the nation and of the world. It is also regarded as one of the most populated gay areas of the country. Midtown is the "gay" area of Atlanta with more of the gay or gay-friendly restaurants, bars, clubs, and stores located in its vicinity. However, you can almost go anywhere in town, whether it be North Atlanta, Buckhead, or Downtown, and find your gay-friendly places and people. You will see that there are a lot of gay people in and around town. Atlanta is also known as "Hotlanta", and you will definitely know why when you come. Yes, I would like to say that we have some of the most "hot" people and fun events in town, but weather wise, Atlanta will be hot and humid in May, so pack accordingly.

So what site seeing places should one visit in Atlanta? Of course, we hope that you will be dancing your little boots away with us most of the time, but you can't miss coming to

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Atlanta and not seeing some of the places that make Atlanta what it is today. Atlanta has a new logo and theme which is "Every Day is an Opening Day". Visit www.atlanta.net for detailed information about the city and what to do and where to go. I have included below some of the highlights from the website that we think you shouldn't miss on your visit. You can also pick up the latest ATLANTA NOW® magazine at the Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau. It is the official Atlanta Visitors Guide with feature-length articles, a complete calendar, maps, listings and transportation information. With one main airport, Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, and a variety of Atlanta transportation options such as MARTA Rail and Bus System, getting around the city is easy. MARTA, Atlanta's transportation system, is just \$1.75 per ride. Special rates and a trip planner are available on MARTA's site <http://www.itsmarta.com/>. And of course if you want to see what is available for the gay community in town, check out www.gay-atlanta.com. Until then, "Tomorrow is Another Day!!" ;)

Piedmont Park - Piedmont Park, with more than 180 acres, is situated between 10th Street and Piedmont Avenue in Midtown. The Park features woods, sports fields, Lake Clara Meer, picnic spots, walking and skating paths and annual events. These events include the Atlanta Dogwood Festival; Bark in the Park concert by the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra for patrons and their canine friends; and Screen on the Green, weekly free movies in June played on a large outdoor screen. **(1/2 block from the host hotel!)**

Atlanta Botanical Garden - This peaceful oasis includes 30 acres of gardens, an urban forest, wildflower trails, the Dorothy Chapman Fuqua Conservatory and the 10,000-square-foot Fuqua Orchid Center. A charming bridge links the main gardens to the Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Children's Garden where an amphitheatre, maze and waterfall delight the young at heart. The Garden also offers year-round special events, exhibits and educational workshops. **(Walking Distance from the host hotel!)**

High Museum of Art - The High Museum of Art is the leading art museum in the southeast, where visitors can expect a broad, diverse selection of art comprising 19th- 20th century American works, European paintings, decorative arts, African, African-American art, photography, modern and contemporary art. The High recently completed a major expansion, the cornerstone of Atlanta 's Woodruff Arts Center. Three new buildings have more than doubled the size of the museum's landmark building designed by Richard Meier. In October 2006, the High also launched an unprecedented, three-year partnership with the Musee du Louvre, which will

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bring hundreds of works of art from Paris to Atlanta. (**One block from the host hotel!**)

MLK, Jr. National Historic Site & Sweet Auburn District -

This area served as the thriving center of black enterprise in Atlanta from the 1890s through the 1940s and is the birthplace of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Explore his birth home, historic Ebenezer Baptist Church and The King Center, where Dr. King's Nobel Peace Prize is on exhibit. The gravesite of Dr. King and his wife, Coretta Scott King are also located at The King Center. The Visitors Center features exhibits telling the Civil Rights Movement story.

The NEW World of Coca-Cola - The NEW World of Coca-Cola at Pemberton Place™ in downtown Atlanta, is the only place where you can explore the past, present and future of the world's best-known brand. See a 4-D movie experience, a fully operational bottling line and sample more than 70 Coca-Cola products around the world.

The Georgia Capital - Native gold from Dahlonega, Georgia (the site of the nation's first gold rush) tops the dome of the Georgia State Capitol. This restored 1889 building houses a museum, which collects, maintains and exhibits significant artifacts, including a collection of Georgia 's state flags. 60-90 minute tours are available.

The Georgia Aquarium - The world's largest aquarium, the Georgia Aquarium is home to more than 100,000 animals of 500 different species and eight million gallons of fresh and marine water with five galleries depicting different habitats. Saying hello to the beluga whales, penguins and whale sharks, the largest fish on the planet will plunge you into a one-of-a-kind aquatic experience.

Atlanta Braves and Turner Field - The Atlanta Braves regular season takes place April through September at Turner Field. The Ivan Allen, Jr. Braves Museum and Hall of Fame at Turner Field offers two new Hank Aaron exhibits. Both the Braves Museum and Turner Field are open year-round, even when the team is not in action. Ride the shuttle from Underground Atlanta directly to Turner Field.

The Fox Theater - Broadway shows are presented by the professional theater groups of Broadway in Atlanta and Theater of the Stars at performing arts venues such as The Fox Theatre and the Boisfeuillet Jones Atlanta Civic Center. Discount tickets for performances are often available through AtlanTIX, which offers same day, half-price tickets. (Walking distance)

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Stone Mountain Park/Laser Show Spectacular - Stone Mountain Park is Georgia 's #1 visited attraction. The Park, located just east of Atlanta, is over 3,200 acres of natural beauty and offers families recreational activities, special events, lodging, camping, entertainment, themed attractions and the Lasershow Spectacular. Take the Skylift to the top of the mountain, or enjoy the 1870s town of Crossroads @ that includes live shows, craft demonstrations, shopping, dining and attractions. New in 2007, Coca-Cola Snow Mountain will be added to A Stone Mountain Christmas. The new attraction includes a 400' tubing hill, a snow play area and more.

Zoo Atlanta - Located in historic Grant Park, the Zoo features more than 200 species of animals from destinations such as the African plains and Asian forests. The Zoo's landscape spans nearly 40 acres of lush greenery and forests. Unusual animals include the Bornean Sumatran orangutans, Asian small-clawed otters and Sumatran tigers. The Ford African Rain Forest houses one of the largest captive gorilla populations in North America with a total of 23 gorillas. Zoo Atlanta's Giant Pandas - Lun Lun and Yang Yang - are proud parents of baby Mei Lan (Atlanta Beauty) in 2006 and every minute of her young life has caused a commotion around the world.

Gone With the Wind Experience - Start by touring the three-story Tudor Revival mansion in Midtown where author Margaret Mitchell and wrote her Pulitzer Prize-winning novel. The Margaret Mitchell House & Museum offers tours, a museum and museum shop, as well as a literature series that showcases Southern authors. Then, head north to Marietta's Gone with the Wind Movie Museum featuring the largest private collection of movie memorabilia. Another exceptional collection of "Gone With The Wind" memorabilia owned by Herb Bridges can be found at The Road To Tara Museum, located at the Jonesboro Depot Welcome Center.

The Westin Peachtree Plaza - Visit the sky lounge and see the view of Atlanta

Jimmy Carter Library and Museum - One of 10 presidential libraries administered by the National Archives & Records Administration, the Jimmy Carter Library and Museum includes photographs, historical memorabilia from his presidency (1976-1981), an exact replica of the Oval Office, an exhibit of significant events during Carter's life and political career, and the permanent home of the former president's Nobel Peace Prize.

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Atlanta Ballet - The Atlanta Ballet is the oldest professional dance company in America. The company's performances combine contemporary and traditional with classic ballets and new choreography. Its annual season is presented at the Fox Theatre, including the holiday season's favorite-- "The Nutcracker."

Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and Chastain Park Amphitheatre - The Classic Chastain series features musicians and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra performing at Chastain Park Amphitheatre while guests dine by moonlight. The Symphony also presents concerts at parks and churches in addition to the regular season at Symphony Hall in the Woodruff Arts Center.

Atlanta Opera - The Atlanta Opera features four main stage productions each season, in addition to other programs such as Pre-Opera Lectures and student matinees to further enhance the experience of opera. The company will launch a new era on Sept. 29, 2007 for its 28th season, moving its home to the new Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre.

Lake Lanier Islands - Forty-five minutes from northeast Atlanta, Lake Lanier Islands Resort is situated on the shores of Lake Sidney Lanier and is Georgia's most visited lakeside resort destination. The 1,100-acre resort provides a variety of amenities and services. Emerald Pointe Hotel & Conference Center, 30 lakeside cottages, two award winning golf courses Emerald Pointe and PineIsle, scenic horseback riding, spa services, famed wine tasting dinners, campsites and boat rentals from Harbor Landing are currently available for reservations. Each year, the Beach & WaterPark is open during the summertime and Magical Nights of Lights, the world's largest animated holiday light extravaganza, takes place mid-November until the end of December.

Atlantic Station - Atlanta's newest shopping district - movies, stores, restaurants, etc. - Atlantic Station features boutiques, sidewalk cafes, hip restaurants and more, all in a streetscape-style setting with brick paved streets, Regal Cinemas 16, festivals, concerts and TWELVE® Hotel. Free shuttles from the Arts Center MARTA Station are available.

CNN Center - Even if you're not a top news anchor, you can still get in on all of the action of TV news making at the headquarters of CNN and Headline News. The Inside CNN Studio Tour includes the Control Room Theater, a look at CNN Español, the workings of the Special Effects Studio and the Main Newsroom.

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Centennial Olympic Park - This 21-acre site was one of the most popular spots in the city during the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games. Today, year-round programming featuring concerts, family activities and artists' markets make the park a gathering place for Atlantans and visitors alike. The park features the world's largest Olympic Ring fountain.

Six Flags Over Georgia and Six Flags White Water - At Six Flags Over Georgia, ride thrills like Batman The Ride and Superman-Ultimate Flight, or cool off in Skull Island, the world's largest interactive theme park water play structure. The tallest roller coaster in the Southeast is Goliath, soaring over 200 feet above the park. Six Flags White Water offers a variety of exhilarating water rides, slides and waterfalls, including Tornado, the Ultimate Storm, and Cliffhanger, one of the tallest freefalls in the world.

Atlanta History Center - This Buckhead attraction features 32 acres of gardens and wildlife trails and includes the 1840s Tullie Smith Farm, the 1928 Swan House mansion and Swan Coach House restaurant. The museum features permanent exhibitions such as "Down the Fairway with Bobby Jones" and changing exhibitions showcasing the Civil War, African-American heritage and Southern folk art. The Center recently expanded to include a wing dedicated to the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games in Atlanta.

Atlanta Walking Tours -

A multitude of walking tours are available from historic neighborhoods to prominent buildings. The Atlanta Preservation Center offers guided walking tours of neighborhoods such as:

- * Ansley Park , a 230-acre residential district developed in 1904
- * Druid Hills, where you will find the home used in the movie "Driving Miss Daisy"
- * Grant Park, with restored Victoria homes, the Atlanta Cyclorama and Zoo Atlanta
- * Beautiful Inman Park , one of Atlanta 's first garden suburbs
- * Historic Downtown
- * The Fox Theatre, one of the few remaining exotic movie palaces of the 1920's;
- * Sweet Auburn/Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic District, the heart of African-American commerce in Atlanta at the turn of the century.

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Atlanta City Segway Tours - Cruise effortlessly through downtown Atlanta while receiving an orientation of the city, historical and current-day information and heaps of unique stories from your guide on the City Segway Tour. A Ghost Tour is also available.

Chattahoochee River Fun - Sixteen recreation areas along a 48-mile stretch of the Chattahoochee River have been designed to conserve the river and provide outdoor entertainment. In addition, the Chattahoochee Nature Center in Roswell offers educational environmental programs, canoe trips and other recreational activities.

Fernbank Natural History Museum - Sink your teeth into adventure at Atlanta 's home to dinosaurs. At Fernbank Museum of Natural History, come face to face with the world's largest dinosaurs, explore the development of life on Earth through the landscapes of present-day Georgia , connect with cultures from around the globe, engage in a variety of hands-on exhibitions, and more! And don't miss stunning traveling special exhibitions or the incredible five-story experience of an IMAX® film.

Center for Puppetry Arts - The Center for Puppetry Arts is the largest organization in North America dedicated to the art of puppetry. Located in Midtown, the center offers performances from the Family Series to New Directions for adults. An interactive museum, Puppets: The Power of Wonder, is the largest puppetry museum in the United States.

Baton Bob - An Atlanta Legend! You just may see him twirling his baton on the streets of Atlanta on any day at any time...you'll know when you see him!! Believe me!!!!!!!!!!

City of Decatur - Located on the Marta line, Decatur is filled with boutiques, restaurants and more in the area around the square. The Old Courthouse on the Square is the focus of annual festivals and special events, including the Decatur Arts Festival in May, the Decatur Beach Party in June and outdoor concerts in the spring and fall.

Buckhead, A Luxurious Experience - Buckhead is not only noted for exquisite homes on rolling, wooded lands but also as the ultimate shopping destination in the southeast. In addition to fabulous boutiques and spas, art & antique galleries, two elegant malls, and a host of fine dining restaurants, Buckhead is also home to the Georgia Governor's Mansion and the Atlanta History Center.

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Marietta Historic District - This city, established in 1832, is introduced to visitors through a walking or driving tour of its five National Register Historic Districts. Visit the square, with specialty and antique shops, nightspots, restaurants, Theater in the Square and Glover Park .

Midtown, the Heart of the Arts - A cosmopolitan community connecting Downtown Atlanta with Buckhead, Midtown has cultural destinations, green space, neighborhoods and contemporary high-rise condos springing up along Peachtree Street . Serving as the bookends for Midtown's cultural explosion are The Fox Theatre at its southern boundary and the Woodruff Arts Center, a few blocks away. The Woodruff Arts Center is the largest in the southeast, ranked among the top four centers in the United States , and serves as the home to the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, High Museum of Art, Alliance Theatre, the 14th Street Playhouse and Young Audiences .

Roswell Historic District - Take a walking tour of Roswell starting at the Historic Roswell Visitors Center or tour the antebellum homes such as Bulloch Hall , the childhood home of former United States President Theodore Roosevelt's mother, or Smith Plantation built in 1845 and fully furnished in period pieces belonging to the original family.

Virginia-Highland - This community east of Midtown is best known for its restaurants, pubs, galleries and interesting shops. Local favorites include Murphy's, dish, La Tavola, Noche, Blind Willie's blues bar and 20th Century Antiques.

Underground Atlanta - Six city blocks in the heart of downtown Atlanta have been transformed into a spirited marketplace that offers historic guided tours and features Kenny's Alley with 12 spectacular restaurants, more than 100 specialty stores, entertainment emporiums, street-cart merchants, and the newest attraction, Aero Balloon, an adventure ride that rises up to 350 feet above Atlanta's downtown streets. Segway Tours also offers a unique tour of the city.

Georgia Force vs Tampa Bay (Saturday, May 26 @ 7 p.m. at the Philips Arena) - The Georgia Force is an Arena Football League team based in Atlanta that plays in the Southern Division of the National Conference.

Atlanta Jazz Festival - The Atlanta Jazz Festival is held in May, and is a 31-day schedule of events that features internationally renowned jazz artists and activities throughout the Metro Atlanta area. Culminating during Memorial Day weekend, May 26 - 28, the 3-day festival will feature show-stopping performances at Piedmont Park.

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The William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum - Through its exhibitions, publications and resources, this museum of the Atlanta Jewish Federation explores Jewish heritage in general and relates to other cultures and religions. It contains two permanent galleries and hosts special rotating exhibits year-round.

The Rocky Horror Picture Show - Playing at the Peachtree Cinema, 6135 Peachtree Parkway, Norcross, GA, 30092, Starts on Saturday, April 28 and beyond.

Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition - at the Atlanta Civic Center opens November 11, 2006 and continues for the next six months. This is the second exciting exhibit to come to the Atlanta Civic Center this year, following on the heels of the well-received Bodies- The Exhibition.

Atlanta Civil War & History - The 100-year old Atlanta Cyclorama tells the story of the 1864 Battle of Atlanta through a massive circular painting and narrated dialogue. Learn more about Atlanta's role in the Civil War by visiting the Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park featuring 11 miles of Union and Confederate earthworks marking Civil War sites. Historic Oakland Cemetery serves as the final resting place for more than 3,900 Confederate soldiers, Atlanta author Margaret Mitchell, golfing legend Bobby Jones, six Georgia governors and 25 Atlanta mayors. The Atlanta History Center has the largest private collection of civic war memorabilia in the nation.

Discounts Galore!!!! -

AtlanTIX, the same day, half-price ticket booth, offers local attractions, theater, dance, and musical performances. Tickets may be purchased at Underground Atlanta at the ACVB Visitor Center on the corner of Upper Alabama and Pryor Streets; and at Lenox Square at the Simon Guest Services booth on the main mall level.

Atlanta CityPass offers tickets to the Georgia Aquarium, the new World of Coca-Cola, the High Museum of Art, Inside CNN Studio Tours, Fernbank Museum of Natural History, or the Atlanta Botanical Garden and Zoo Atlanta or the Atlanta History Center for savings up to 50 percent.

Jay Cleaver
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