

"If heaven is full of artists & hipsters it will probably be something like Athens."

- Southern Living

King BMX Stunt Show
@Athens Twilight
Courtesy Connor Ryan



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Tourism expenditures for 2019 contributed \$350.71 million to Athens-Clarke County's economy, put 3,076 local residents to work, and generated \$23.93 million in local and state taxes.

SIZE AND LOCATION

Georgia's smallest county, at 122 square miles, is located just over 60 miles northeast of Atlanta via I-85 and Georgia 316.

POPULATION

128,671 (2020 U.S. Census; includes UGA students residing in Clarke County)

GOVERNMENT

In 1991, the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County became the 28th consolidated city-county government in the U.S. and the third in Georgia. Mayor Kelly Girtz was elected in 2018.

HOTELS AND MEETING SPACE

26 hotels, 2,637 guest rooms. Northeast Georgia's premier conference, convention, and performing arts center is The Classic Center in Athens, Georgia, which provides more than 373,000 square feet of flexible meeting and exhibit space. The new 6,500-seat Classic Center Arena will open in fall 2023.

FOUNDED

Clarke County was founded in 1801, Athens was chartered in 1806.

TAXES

Sales tax 7 percent, Hotel/Motel tax 7 percent

ELEVATION

802 Feet

“A community of creative entrepreneurs are giving [the] Georgia college town Athens a big jolt of energy.”

- Condé Nast Traveler



From the whimsical art that decorates the buildings and streets to the energetic cultural events held throughout the year, Athens is known for its creative energy.

PORCELAIN AND DECORATIVE ARTS MUSEUM

One of the world's largest porcelain collections is displayed in eight gallery spaces that blend conservation, botanicals, art, beauty and curiosity. The museum is the newest attraction at the State Botanical Garden of Georgia. After a soft opening during Covid, the dedication of the museum and surrounding Center for Art and Nature will be held in spring 2022.

PUBLIC ART

Art is around every corner in Athens. Throughout the city, public artwork decorates the streets with creatively designed fire hydrants, bus shelters, bulldog statues, mosaic light pole bases, murals and more. The art in Athens, GA, makes for a creative vibe.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN VAUDEVILLE THEATRE

The **Morton Theatre** is one of the first and oldest surviving vaudeville theatre in the United States built and operated by an African-American. Built by Monroe Bowers ("Pink") Morton in 1910, the building also served as offices for African-American doctors, dentists, pharmacists and other professionals. This theatre is located in downtown Athens on what is known as Hot Corner, a popular spot for African-American entrepreneurship and entertainment for the community during the early 20th century. In its heyday, the Morton hosted notable acts such as Louis Armstrong and Bessie Smith.

GEORGIA MUSEUM OF ART

Founded in 1945, the **Georgia Museum of Art** is the state's official museum and hosts a permanent collection of more than 17,000 works of art as well as a variety of traveling exhibitions to showcase emerging and established artists over a wide range of cultures and historical periods.

LYNDON HOUSE ARTS CENTER

Originally housed within the historic **Ware-Lyndon House**, the community visual arts complex includes large airy galleries, a children's wing, artists' workshops and a gallery shop.

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"The density and diversity of bands still teeming in downtown Athens keep it the alpha and omega of the college music scene."

- Rolling Stone

The Flaming Lips, @Georgia Theatre
Courtesy Jason Thrasher

**Legendary bands like R.E.M. and Widespread Panic were born in Athens.
Hundreds of bands still call Athens home.**

MUSIC WALK FAME

In the fall of 2020, the Athens Music Walk of Fame inducted its first group of honorees. This new downtown attraction passes by some of Athens' most famous music venues such as the Georgia Theatre and the 40 Watt Club. Visitors can download a mobile app that will share specific sights and sounds as they discover the markers. The Walk of Fame is a must-see attraction for all music fans and is a perfect daytime activity before heading to listen to live music in the evening.

WORLD-FAMOUS VENUES

The **Georgia Theatre** and fabulous **40 Watt Club** attract up-and-coming musical acts as well as established headliners. Rock, hip hop, Americana, indie and classical music play almost every night of the week. Athens was called "Live Music Central" by the *New York Times* and is imminently diverse and exceptionally affordable.

MUSIC HISTORY TOURS

Visitors can take a self-guided tour to explore the roots of Athens music or reserve a specialty guided tour through **Historic Athens**.

MUSIC INFLUENCE IN RESTAURANTS

Weaver D's Fine Foods serves up soul food under the slogan "Automatic for the People," the inspiration for the title of R.E.M.'s 1992 album. **The Last Resort** building is the site of memorable performances from the B-52s, Jimmy Buffett and Steve Martin. Dine among musicians at spots like **The Grit** and **Mama's Boy**.

MUSIC FESTIVALS

AthFest is the annual June showcase of Athens music and art, featuring more than 100 bands playing all weekend on outdoor stages and in the clubs. Other events throughout the year include a music focus.

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Athens is a rising star on the food scene with restaurants Five and Ten, The Last Resort, Weaver D's, home.made and more popping up each year.

INFLUENCE OF HUGH ACHESON

Since being named one of "America's Best New Chefs" by *Food & Wine*, Hugh Acheson has gone on to win two James Beard Awards and appear as a contestant and judge on *Bravo TV's Top Chef* franchise. Acheson has put Athens on the culinary map, first with his own **Five & Ten**, then with an ever-expanding list of restaurants opened by chefs who came up through the Five & Ten kitchen.

- Peter Dale has gone on to great success with **The National, Seabear Oyster Bar, Maepole and Condor Chocolates.**
- Chuck Ramsey takes barbecue and innovative sides to a new level at **Pulaski Heights BBQ.**
- Mimi Maumus is drawing national attention of her own at **home.made**, which draws from her New Orleans roots as well as her decades in Georgia for inspiration. She's even accomplished what may be the next frontier in southern cooking, creating a delectable dessert from everyone's favorite: fried green tomatoes and grits! In 2022, Mimi opened a new bar space attached to home.made called Sidecar, which provides an outlet for her creativity in food and drink, including non-alcoholic cocktails.
- Shae and Ryan Sims met working at Five & Ten and have gone on to marry, start a family and open **Dinner Party**, a small neighborhood restaurant offering a casual-yet-refined take on Chinese-American fare.

BEAN TO BAR CAFÉ OPENS DOWNTOWN

Brothers Peter and Nick Dale were born and raised in Athens, but their parents' love story began in Ecuador, where their American father met an Ecuadorian woman while he backpacked through the country. The brothers say, "**Condor Chocolates** is our homage to the birthplace of our mother, a testament to the sense of adventure that brought our Dad to her, and a celebration of Ecuador, home of the finest cacao in the world." After thriving in Athens' Five Points neighborhood, a second location opened in Downtown Athens in late 2021. The new shop and café features large windows allowing guests to watch small batch chocolate production in action.

AUTOMATIC FOR THE PEOPLE

The slogan of Weaver D's soul food restaurant inspired the title of one of R.E.M.'s best-selling albums. Chef-owner Dexter Weaver is still frying up chicken and pork chops, and his restaurant has been named one of the "South's Best Musical Landmarks" by *Southern Living* and an "American Classic" winner by the James Beard Foundation.

CRAFT BEER SCENE

The Athens Beer Trail is the newest beer getaway and adventure in the south. Visit all six local breweries to discover their individual approach to craft beer. Along the way, we guarantee you'll find new flavors, new friends, and enjoy the Athens creative vibe. It's not every day you get prizes for drinking beer. But luckily for you, that's how the Athens Beer Trail rolls. AthensBeerTrail.com launched in October 2021 as a collaboration between Visit Athens GA and all local breweries.

- How good is Athens craft beer? So good that producers of *Avengers: End Game* enjoyed **Creature Comforts** beer so much during filming that it became Thor's beer of choice in the movie. Product placement just because the filmmaker loves it, no strings (or dollars) attached? Unheard of!
- **Terrapin Beer Company** is the first and largest Athens brewery. Chopsecutioner, a version of the favorite Hopsecutioner aged in wood from Atlanta Braves' baseball bats, is served in the ATL Brew Lab at SunTrust Park and made *Sports Illustrated's* list of top Major League stadium beers. Terrapin partnered with a TV blockbuster on its *Walking Dead* Blood Orange IPA.
- **Southern Brewing Company** made its mark with a wild yeast program. Through a collaboration with the UGA Microbiology Department, Southern isolates wild yeast strains to use in their brews such as the Wild Azalea and Cherokee Rose. Fewer than 50 breweries in the United States are running a similar yeast program.

CLASSIC CITY COCKTAILS

- **The Expat:** Jerry Slater literally wrote the book on cocktails, *The Southern Foodways Alliance Guide to Cocktails*. His new restaurant and cocktail bar in the Five Points neighborhood was named one of the "South's Best New Bars" by *Garden and Gun*. His signature cocktail features Maurin Quina, Junipero gin and a touch of Luxardo Maraschino liqueur.
- **The Globe:** A downtown staple since 1989, The Globe is an Irish-style pub that is a welcoming spot for professors, students, professionals and visitors. Named one of *Esquire* magazine's "Best Bars in America."
- **The Old Pal:** The neighborhood bar, in Normaltown, offers seasonal cocktails, craft beers, and Old World wines along with a well-rounded list of whiskey and amari. The Old Pal has been named one of the "South's Best Bars" by *Southern Living* magazine.
- **The World Famous:** This unassuming downtown spot does it all well: drink menu with alcoholic and non-alcoholic creations, tasty food and live music. Named one of *Esquire* magazine's "Best Bars in America."

UP ON THE ROOF

Sometimes a lovely view provides the proverbial cherry on top of a cocktail.

- **Georgia Theatre:** The historic building housing one of Athens' most famous live music clubs burnt in 2009 and was rebuilt with the help of donations and the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation. It reopened in 2011 with the addition of a rooftop bar that's become a favorite spot for food, drink, live music and late night dance parties.
- **HyBar:** Athens' second downtown rooftop bar opened in 2019, atop the Hyatt Place hotel.



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JANUARY

MLK Day Parade and Festival

MARCH

Hip Hop Awards
Athens Jewish Film Festival

APRIL

G-Day University of Georgia's spring football scrimmage game and fan festivities.

Athens Twilight An evening cycling race that draws hundreds of professionals and 30,000 fans.

UGA International Street Festival Performances from around the globe along with food, live music and more culture.

Plantapalooza A full day of three huge plant sales by UGA Horticulture students and master gardeners.

MAY

Athens Human Rights Festival

Athens Wine Weekend A two-day event with wine tastings and seminars led by wine industry experts.

JUNE

Hot Corner Celebration & Soul Food Festival
AthFest Music and Arts Festival

JULY

Classic City American Music Festival
Star Spangled Classic Fireworks Celebration

SEPTEMBER

Insectival A family-friendly day of discovery, featuring beetle races, puppet shows and a magnificent butterfly release on the lawn.

OCTOBER

Classic City Brew Fest
Porchfest Mini-concerts on front porches throughout historic Athens neighborhoods.
Wild Rumpus Halloween Parade and Spectacle Participants parade through downtown Athens in costume, followed by revelry in the music clubs.
North Georgia Folk Festival
AthHalf A half-marathon with live music along the route and finish in Sanford Stadium.

DECEMBER

Downtown Parade of Lights
Classic City Tour of Homes UGA's sorority row is decorated for the holidays and open for tours.



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INDULGENT ATHENS

The upscale historic neighborhood of Five Points is just 1.5 miles from downtown and is the perfect spot for an indulgent weekend away. **ATH|BNB** opened in fall 2021 with 14 luxurious suites and plenty of amenities, including breakfast and afternoon tea from **Café on Lumpkin**. Just two doors down, **Five & Ten** put Athens' food scene on the map. There are plenty of other restaurants within a few blocks, plus retail gems like **Avid Bookshop** and **Independent Baking Co.** Visitors love to stroll down S. Milledge Avenue, "Greek Row" for University of Georgia students.

FAMILY FUN

Athens may be best known as a college town, but it is also a fantastic place to visit with younger children. Attractions like the **Georgia Museum of Art** have special family day programming plus anytime activity packs available for kids. The **Children's Garden at the State Botanical Garden of Georgia** is 2.5 acres of immersive experiences, and **Bear Hollow Wildlife Trail** and **Sandy Creek Nature Center** are also geared towards families. Best of all – all these attractions are FREE! Stop for a treat and to see chocolate being made at **Condor Chocolates**. Cap off the day with fun eats at **Clocked!** or **Ted's Most Best**, followed by a family game night at **The Rook & Pawn**.

AMERICA'S FIRST GARDEN CLUB

The first garden club in America, the Athens Ladies Garden Club, was founded in 1891. The group is memorialized at Founders Memorial Garden, on the University of Georgia campus. Today, Athens is home to the headquarters of the **Garden Club of Georgia**. Athens is also home to the **State Botanical Garden of Georgia**, a 313-acre preserve with trails, extensive themed gardens and a stunning tropical conservatory. The Garden has been named an important bird area by the Audubon Society. Another must-see attraction for green thumbs is the **Trial Gardens at UGA**, where visitors can see horticulturists in action as they cultivate new, obscure and favorite plants to determine the "best of the best" for our region's heat and humidity.

CYCLING IN THE CLASSIC CITY

Athens is home to the **Twilight Criterium** each April, one of the top stops on the professional cycling tour and one of the first evening criterium courses in America. The race draws hundreds of participants and more than 30,000 spectators. Forty years of professional racing has put Athens on the cycling map. **Trail Creek Park**, with more than five miles of professionally constructed mountain bicycle trails, opened in 2018. The **Firefly Trail** is a rails-to-trails project which will extend 39-miles from Athens to Union Point. The first Athens segment, including a 500' bridge over the North Oconee River and a connection to the North Oconee River Greenway and Dudley Park, opened in late 2017.

MADE IN ATHENS

Niche shops, coffee roasters and craft breweries are just some of the outlets local Athens makers have created that give the community a special flair. Athens is now home to six local breweries, all part of the new **Athens Beer Trail**. **Condor Chocolates** creates artisan Equadorian chocolates. Start ups like **Normal Soap Co.**, **Bee Natural** and **Little Light Co.** offer fresh scents for home and body. **Community** offers a great selection of locally-made goods, as well as upcycled and sustainable fashion. There are also fun collaborations between local makers, such as Wake n Bake versions of both **Terrapin** beer and **Jittery Joe's** coffee. Athens' creative community is on full display at events like the **Athens Farmers Market** and **Indie South Fair**.

ROADSIDE WONDERS: ONLY IN ATHENS!

The Tree that Owns Itself is located at the top of the steep hill where Dearing and Finley Streets intersect, and may be the most unusual property holder in the world. The tree pays no taxes, is protected by the community and rests secure in its own enclosed garden-type lot.

Double-Barreled Cannon. Built at the local foundry in 1863 when an anxious community feared attack by invading Northern armies, this one-of-a-kind weapon is among the most unusual relics preserved from the Civil War. A spectacular failure in testing, it has met with success as a cherished landmark of Athens. Faces north (just in case!) on the grounds of City Hall.

WILD RUMPUS PARADE AND SPECTACLE

Each Halloween weekend, the freaks come out in Athens! The vision of The Wild Rumpus is to provide an organized outlet for the massive array of Athens creativity. Revelers of all ages are invited to be a part of the Wild Rumpus Parade by showing up in costume and romping through the streets of downtown with thousands of other Wild Things... shouting at the sky, pounding drums, and howling by the light of the Moon in the dark night. Children's parties take place earlier in the day and the party moves off the streets into the clubs after the parade.