

# 3 days in atlanta

WORDS JESSICA BOWERS



1 / 100,000 freshwater and saltwater animals call the largest aquarium in the world home.  
 2 / Laughter and the Olympic spirit combine as kids cool off in Centennial Olympic Park.

*As the birthplace of *Gone with the Wind* and the Civil Rights Movement, Atlanta has earned the right to be called the "Capital of the South." But with a mix of urban attractions and Southern hospitality, the city also makes a great family-friendly destination. Planning three days or longer in Atlanta is as easy as (peach) pie. Here's how.*

## day one

From the 1996 Centennial Olympics to the present, downtown Atlanta is where to find the action. Buildings of gleaming glass and steel are surrounded by sprawling green lawns that provide easy walking access to the top Atlanta attractions. Start the day with Atlanta's most famous native: **The World of Coca-Cola**. Check out the fascinating history of this famous soda brand through interactive exhibits and sample from more than 60 brands from around the world. Refreshed from the smile-making soda samples, head across the street to another Atlanta giant. The **Georgia Aquarium** is the largest in the world and includes an encounter with three majestic whale sharks. After spending the day under the sea, it's time to head outside. **Centennial Olympic Park** sits in the heart of downtown, offering playgrounds for the kids, the famous Olympic rings fountain and memorials to the 1996 games.

No need to leave the park when hunger strikes; **Googie Burger** is just a short stroll away. This

Atlanta original creates handcrafted burgers and thick-cut fries for a perfect casual dining experience in the park. Kids' meals have an extra dash of fun when served on a Frisbee, encouraging kids to eat up so they can join in a game of toss in the park nearby.

You won't want to give up on the action just because it's time to rest your head, so book a room at the **Omni Hotel at CNN Center**, just steps from Centennial Park. With rooms surrounding the CNN world headquarters, you can keep your finger on the exciting breaking news with a peek at the Jumbotron situated in the courtyard outside your hotel balcony. Kids get the VIP treatment with a Discovery Backpack filled with goodies at check-in and a sweet treat of milk and cookies before they turn out the light.

## day two

Waking up in the heart of the CNN machine means you're just steps away from the **Inside CNN Atlanta** studio tour. See what it takes to put together a news broadcast and even learn

how the weather map works. From the news desk, step out onto the streets of Atlanta to explore the rich and storied history. The **Atlanta History Center** features the nation's largest exhibition of Civil War history. Kids will enjoy the full-sized battle scenes and interactive touch screens. They'll come away from the exhibit with a better understanding of the impact of the Civil War on the South.

Stay in the Old South mood and enjoy some comfort food at **PittyPat's Porch**. Hostesses in hoop skirts serve mint juleps along the porch, while inside you'll be surrounded by *Gone with the Wind* memorabilia and down-home delights.

## day three

After a day of serious history pursuits, you've earned some playtime. **Stone Mountain Park** is set in 3,300 acres of natural beauty, providing the perfect place for families to enjoy entertainment and recreation. In an 1870s Georgia town setting, you'll find a 4-D theater, train ride, miniature golf and an antebellum plantation to explore. Brave explorers will want to take a turn on the Treehouse Challenge, a three-story ropes course challenge, while the whole family will enjoy the interactive games and slides in the indoor farm-themed playground. Of course, no visit to the park is



complete without riding the skylift up Stone Mountain to get a closer look at the world's largest relief carving, depicting heroes from the Civil War.

Southern comfort comes easy for lunch or dinner at Miss Katie's Sideboard, located right in the heart of Stone Mountain and serving fried chicken with all the fixin's. Watch out for (literally) hand-tossed rolls coming your way. As the sun sets, Stone Mountain presents a 45-minute laser and fireworks show, allowing your days in Atlanta to end with a bang. ☺

- GEORGIA AQUARIUM**  
404/581-4000; [georgiaaquarium.org](http://georgiaaquarium.org)
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