



# ALTERNATIVE COUNTRY

*Been there, done that. Swap your old-hat travel destinations for somewhere fresh and new—here's where to slurp oysters in **CHARLESTON**, explore the New South in **ATLANTA**, play castaway on the **GOLDEN ISLES**, watch the sunrise in the **SMOKY MOUNTAINS** and gallery hop in **SANTE FE***



BY KATIE BRIDGES, ZACH MATTHEWS  
AND EMILY VAN ZANDT





Familiar favorites like St. Louis and Chicago are mainstays when Arkansans are craving a *taste of the Big City*. But for an alternative to the familiar Midwest, why not spend a long weekend in the Deep South's capital city: *ATLANTA, DARLIN'*

**A**TLANTA: 6 MILLION STRONG, the seat of Southern hospitality, capital of the region vaguely dubbed the "New South" and home of the Braves. Thanks to a population explosion starting around the time of the 1996 Olympics, the metro area has become a cultural crossroads, drawing not only from its deep-seated antebellum heritage, but also from

its new position as the commercial and financial nexus of the South. Fewer of its residents were born there than in almost any Southern city. Walking down Peachtree Street on a cool summer evening, you'll hear Midwestern accents, deep Southern drawls, Appalachian twangs, even authentic New York Yankee. With such a mix, you could be almost anywhere.

But make no mistake—this town is Southern, emphatically so. Every stone is imbued with history—some the city is proud of, some not as much. It is the home of Martin Luther King Jr.'s **Ebenezer Baptist Church** (407 Auburn Ave. NE; [historicebenezer.org](http://historicebenezer.org)). It's also home to a little house on Peachtree Street where Margaret Mitchell wrote her classic *Gone With the Wind* (990 Peachtree St. NE; [atlantahistorycenter.com](http://atlantahistorycenter.com)). And just north of town, **Kennesaw Mountain National**

**Battlefield Park** (900 Kennesaw Mountain Drive, Kennesaw; [nps.gov/kemo](http://nps.gov/kemo)) preserves the site of the South's last victory against Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman before he began his famous March to the Sea, setting fire to Atlanta in the process.

Museums like these record Atlanta's history, but its cultural offerings—things like food, music, the arts—represent the living legacy of the South. In Atlanta, you can still sample an authentic "cathead biscuit" (so named because they are "as big as a cat's head, sugar!") at **Mountain Biscuits** (1718 Old 41 Highway NW, Marietta; (770) 419-3311), right outside the battlefield park. Trendy West End restaurants like **Abattoir** (1170 Howell Mill Road NW; [starprovisions.com](http://starprovisions.com)) or **Miller Union** (999 Brady Ave. NW; [nullerunion.com](http://nullerunion.com)) preserve the region's agricultural heritage, offering up locally grown pork and seasonal vegetables such as ramps and morels in the spring, or Vidalia onions, okra and sweet corn during the heart of summer. Seafood joints like **The Optimist** (914 Howell Mill Road; [theoptimistrestaurant.com](http://theoptimistrestaurant.com)) offer Gulf oysters and shrimp and grits.

Those same "slow food" restaurants have become a great place to spot celebrities, too, thanks to the favorable state tax credits that lured Hollywood filmmakers to **Pinewood Atlanta Studios** (461 Sandy Creek Road, Fayetteville; [pinewoodgroup.com](http://pinewoodgroup.com)), meaning you might just run into

## Resources

### STAY

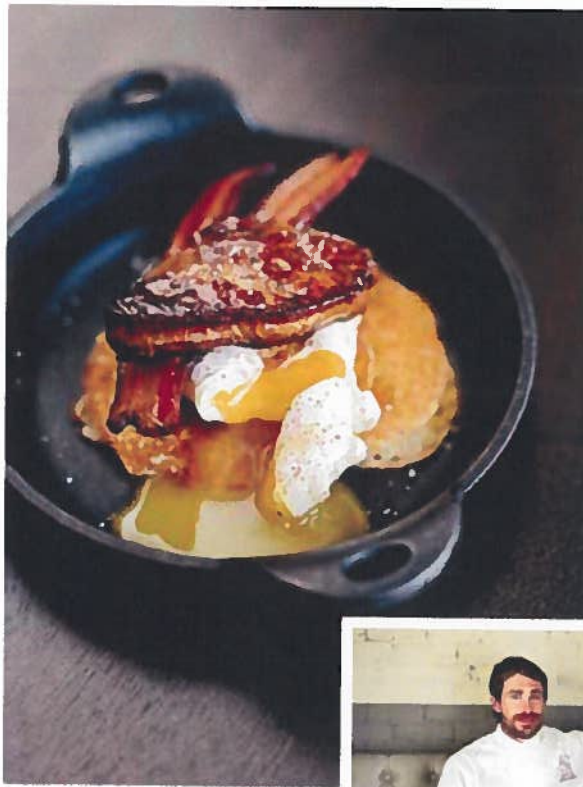
- The **Georgian Terrace** hotel (659 Peachtree St. NE; [thegeorgianterrace.com](http://thegeorgianterrace.com)) offers elegant accommodations in a newly refurbished structure featuring a beautiful dining terrace, right on Peachtree Street and directly across from the **Fox Theatre** (660 Peachtree St. NE; [foxtheatre.org](http://foxtheatre.org)), where you can catch off-Broadway productions like "The Lion King," "Evita," and "The Phantom of the Opera."

### EAT

- You'll kick yourself if you leave town without trying the cocktails and custom charcuterie at **Holeman & Finch Public House** (2277 Peachtree Road NE; [holeman-finch.com](http://holeman-finch.com)).
- If you're looking for a little more relaxed atmosphere (often with live music), head over to **The Family Dog** (1402 N. Highland Ave. NE; [thefamilydogatlanta.com](http://thefamilydogatlanta.com)) in the Virginia Highlands.
- Or if it's a cold ale you're after, seek out **The Wrecking Bar Brewpub** (292 Moreland Ave. NE; [wreckingbarbrewpub.com](http://wreckingbarbrewpub.com)) in upscale Little Five Points.

### SHOP

- Atlanta's got a lot of history, and much of that history finds its way into its large antiques markets. One of the best is **Paris on Ponce** (716 Ponce De Leon Place NE; [parisonponce.com](http://parisonponce.com)), the only antiques store in the world that also houses a complete burlesque-style theater venue.
- Meanwhile, **Kudzu Antiques Market** (2928 E. Ponce De Leon Ave., Decatur; [kudzuantiques.com](http://kudzuantiques.com)) specializes in vintage midcentury European imports.
- If local boutiques are more of your thing, head over to the Virginia Highlands to browse the goods at **Miczi and Romano** (1004 N. Highland Ave.), **Festivity** (1039 N. Highland Ave. NE; [festivityonline.com](http://festivityonline.com)) or **Bill Hallman** (792 N. Highland Ave. NE; [billhallmanonline.com](http://billhallmanonline.com)).



PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHNNY AUFREY



Atlanta is an eating town—make sure to stop by Holeman & Finch for a foie gras-topped johnny cake (above), and to slide into one of the sleek booths at Abattor (right).

Jake Gyllenhaal, Samuel L. Jackson or Jennifer Lawrence as you sip an Old Fashioned. (Note: **Canoe** (4199 Paces Ferry Road SE; [canoeatl.com](http://canoeatl.com)), an elegant restaurant on the banks of the Chattahoochee River, makes a great one using Bulleit Rye Whiskey and pulped oranges and cherries.) Hollywood actors are a novelty, but to really feel the soul of a town, you've got to get in touch with the land it's built on—and Atlanta just so happens to be rife with outdoor opportunities.

The "Hooch," as it is affectionately known to locals, courses right through the heart of the Metro area, lined on both sides by National Parks Service wilderness. **Chattahoochee Coffee Co.** (6640 Akers Mill Road SE; (770) 955-0788) offers decks running out onto the rocks of Devil's Race Course Shoals, where part of the Olympic kayaking competition was held. Sip your morning coffee as you watch kayakers fly-fishing for striped bass and trout, or take a stroll under the dogwoods and watch for deer or foxes. You'd never know you're inside the boundaries of a metro of millions.

Getting in touch with the land doesn't mean you have to book a whitewater rafting trip, of course. Instead, you could simply stroll through **Piedmont Park** (1320 Monroe Drive NE), just a couple blocks from Peachtree Street, when the crape myrtles are blooming and the peach trees themselves are bearing. **Park Tavern** (500 10th St. NE; [parktavern.com](http://parktavern.com)) offers a patio bar that rolls right into the Park's open turf, where hip young families play soccer or let their little ones walk the family dog. If not for the beautiful Southern weather, Piedmont Park on a Saturday could be in Seattle, or California—that's part of what people mean when they say Atlanta is now in the "New South."

That term has proved controversial because it is mostly a definition of what Atlanta no longer is. What it is can be hard to pin down, but to many, the New South is about inspiration—about building on what came before to make something better, but still recognizably Southern. These days, the





PHOTOGRAPHY BY AMBER FOUTS

South draws new talent from all over the world. For example, Jiyeon Lee was a teenage pop star in Korea until she grew tired of the limelight and moved to the United States to attend culinary school. With her partner, Cody Taylor, she founded **Heirloom Market BBQ** (2243 Akers Mill Road; [heirloommarketbbq.com](http://heirloommarketbbq.com)) in a repurposed liquor store. Despite cramped seating and near-constant lines, her unique Asian/Southern fusion has become an Atlanta staple—a delicious symbol of cultural mixing in the “City Too Busy to Hate.” Traditional dishes like deep-fried okra take on shocking new flavor profiles when dipped in spicy tangy Korean sauces, and it turns out kimchee is ridiculously good on a pulled-pork sandwich.

That’s the New South for you, right there on your plate. —ZM

Get away from the hustle and bustle of downtown at The Wrecking Bar Brewpub in trendy Little Five Points, or with a nerside cup of joe at Chattahoochee Coffee Co.



**DAHLONEGA, GEORGIA**

Atlanta visitors looking for just a little less of the big city will get a big surprise if they head north to Georgia’s wine country, centered on the quaint town of Dahlonega (duh-lawn-eh-guh). In addition to mountain music outdoors on the town’s brick-and-antique-store-lined central square, you’re only a half hour in any direction to wineries like **Montaluce** (946 Via Montaluce, Dahlonega; [montaluce.com](http://montaluce.com)) or **Frogtown Cellars** (700 Ridge Point Drive, Dahlonega; [frogtownwine.com](http://frogtownwine.com)). Serious hikers can also check out Springer Mountain, the southern terminus of the Appalachian Trail.



**PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA:**

Those hungry for a history lesson will find plenty to whet their appetites in the City of Brotherly Love, founded in 1682.

**DENVER, COLORADO:**

Laidback and lovely, Denver offers a two-birds-one-stone scenario similar to that of Atlanta: You get the perks of a major metro area, with plenty of outdoors activities to boot.

**SEATTLE, WASHINGTON:**

Speaking of the great outdoors—Seattle’s got Puget Sound, Olympic National Park and Mount Rainier within a stone’s throw. Spend your days in the sun and your nights exploring the city’s trendy food-and-drink scene.