

travelgirl

CELEBRATING
15
YEARS

contents

tg main itinerary

18 TG City Guide: Atlanta

There's a lot to do; here's an insider's guide

25 Cover Story: TG Honorees

Meet four fabulous women who who are game changers for Atlanta and beyond

36 The ATL Foodie Scene

There's a little bit of every type of cuisine — and it's all delicious

42 Ask The Experts: Atlanta's Medical Marvels

Insight from some of Atlanta's top doctors

52 5 Things to do OTP

Some *Travelgirl* favorites outside the city limits

60 Staff Picks

Our favorite restaurants, shops and entertainment



Atlanta's FOODIE SCENE!

Top Chefs Cook up Eclectic, Creative and Delectable Dishes.

Story By Malika Bowling



DINING OUT IN ATLANTA GOES FAR BEYOND FRIED CHICKEN and okra — not that there's anything wrong with finding that combination on your plate! But if you haven't been to the Georgia capital recently, you're in for some delicious surprises. Atlanta's foodie scene is thriving: it's home to internationally known chefs and creative cuisines that range from dishes from the South to South Africa. So, whether you're a local — or just visiting — there are lots of reason to enjoy the culinary delights that Atlanta offers.

Here are the best restaurants and spots that are trending.

SOUTHERN

Wisteria remains a top spot for fine dining and upscale southern food. Not only is the long-time Inman Park favorite housed in a beautiful historic building, but they've also got a modern take on traditional southern with items like black-eyed pea hummus and southern fried quail with a sorghum glazed biscuit. Other southern favorites are **JCT Kitchen & Bar** in West Midtown, known for its fried chicken. *Travelgirl tip:* Try the delicious seafood-heavy menu on the upstairs patio. **Mary Mac's Tea Room**, one of the oldest Atlanta restaurants, features a bevy of southern fried favorites too. **Watershed** has inventive dishes and some of the best fried chicken in the city.

ICONIC RESTAURANTS

Atlanta can be fickle when it comes to dining. But there are a handful of spots that have stood the test of time. **Bacchanalia**, part of the Anne Quatrano restaurant empire, is the flagship eatery, serving up a multi-course menu that Atlantans reserve for special occasions. For steaks, **Bone's** has been pleasing a loyal crowd for four decades plus. On the menu: an outstanding NY strip, but you should splurge for the seafood tower too. **Canoe**, with dining overlooking Atlanta's Chattahoochee River, does the city (and the South!) proud.

HOTEL EATS

Even if you're relegated to hotel eating, you won't have to sacrifice taste if you're staying at these hotels: **Atlas** at the St. Regis in Buckhead, **Bar Margot** at the Four Seasons or **Polaris** in the Hyatt Regency Atlanta. Not only are the cocktails at Atlas sublime, but they are also best enjoyed on the outdoor patio. Dishes such as the lobster en croute or rabbit loin will have you fondly thinking about your next visit, when you can explore the menu further. At Midtown's Bar Margot, the sexy atmosphere comes with tantalizing menu items like beef tartare and a steak that can't be beat. Though dormant for many years, the downtown Hyatt has resurrected the Polaris, a rotating restaurant with stunning Atlanta views. The small menu features an ever-changing list of chef's creations, plus it has its own signature Polaris bourbon.



View from Atlas at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta



Cocktails at Bar Margot at the Four Seasons Hotel

TOP CHEFS

When in Atlanta, make time for a stop at one of the celebrity chef's restaurants. Ford Fry's restaurants can be found throughout the city, and the flagship, **The Optimist**, is a must for seafood lovers. **St. Cecilia** serves lovely Italian in Buckhead. Kevin Gillespie, of *Top Chef* fame, has converted an old house into the southern favorite, **Revival**. Lunch menus are similar to dinner and it's easier to get seated. However, you may find a crowd at his more popular



Deserts at Gunshow

eatery, **Gunshow**, which features an American take on dim sum. Hugh Acheson's popular **Empire State South** features modern southern, and he's just opened **Achie's** at The Battery, next to the new Atlanta Braves baseball stadium.

BUFORD HIGHWAY

For years, this stretch of road has been Atlanta's mecca for ethnic eats. Comprised of Chinese, Korean, Mexican, Vietnamese and others, it's been considered a cheap thrill for adventurous eaters. Luckily, it's gotten the recognition it deserves, and more diners are making their way here on a regular basis. Besides no frills dining, you'll find **Food Terminal** here. The magazine-style menu will leave you drooling, but make sure to get the Roti Canai and Grandma Wonton BBQ Pork.

MARKETS

Food halls, popular in big cities like New York and San Francisco, have made their way south to Atlanta, with **Krog Street Market** and **Ponce City Market** using refurbished factories for their hubs. Both are located steps from the Atlanta BeltLine, a paved bike and walkway that connects neighborhoods. Grab lunch from one of the food stalls featuring diverse cuisines, then shop for clothes and home goods, or at Ponce City, head to the rooftop (\$10 entry fee per person) and enjoy boardwalk-style games.



PHOTOS BY GLEN BOWLING



Barely garden's beer drinking

PATIOS AND ROOFTOPS

Barleygarden Kitchen & Craft Bar is a fine dining establishment located in nearby Alpharetta. Beer snobs will appreciate the 80 or so options at Barleygarden and should take advantage of its gorgeous rooftop patio, where you'll find gourmet hot dogs and sandwiches. **Gypsy Kitchen** has a posh Buckhead patio that is in high demand come warm weather for its delightful rooftop views. Visit Sundays for their Basque evenings featuring live flamenco music, rosé, and Mediterranean tapas. **Nine Mile Station** is located atop Ponce City Market and the restaurant has stunning skyline views. At brunch, get the huge sticky buns, French toast and the eggs Benedict, served on a pretzel croissant, and sip on a not-too-boozy concoction. **Portofino** is an Italian restaurant that will wow you first with its beauty inside and out, followed by outstanding cuisine and an impressive wine list. The wrought iron and brick patio is a perfect spot for a romantic meal.



Better Half silk handkerchief pasta



Ladybird's chicken sandwich

FLOUR POWER

For hungry travelers not on a low carb diet, there's a handful of delectable options. **Colletta**, located in Alpharetta's Avalon, pleases with both unique pies and pastas like pappardelle with pork and ricotta, as well as scrumptious agnolotti. **Donetto** is the favorite see-and-be-seen restaurant on Atlanta's hip Westside. Start with beef carpaccio and the Negroni on tap. For pastas, get the truffle ravioli or the Mezzaluna with sundried tomato. **Osteria Mattone** is in a renovated home in upscale Roswell and is perfect for an intimate dinner. The short rib pasta dish is a must order. **Varuni Napoli** is a standout with its Neapolitan-style pizza made with imported Italian ingredients. *Travelgirl tip: The patio seating among the trees is well worth the wait.*

NEIGHBORHOOD FAVORITES

Better Half started out as a Westside supper club run out of

Zach and Cristina Meloy's loft and quickly became so popular, it evolved into full-fledged restaurant serving up its Southern/Latin fusion food (think collard green empanadas). The menu changes weekly, save for the Silk Handkerchief pasta, the dish he made for his wife on their first date. **Cast Iron** is an unassuming spot in Old Fourth Ward that serves impressive dishes and one-of-a-kind cocktails, such as the Close Quarters made with Earl Grey Syrup, elderflower and cider — refreshing while still packing a punch. Get the griddled octopus or rye spaghetti with pork. **Iberian Pig** is steps from the MARTA stop in Decatur, and this lively tapas joint loves group dining. Pork cheek tacos and rabbit dishes shine but the Iberico charcuterie is worth the splurge. **Ladybird** is popular with Millennials for late nights, but brunch is where it's at for dining. Items like the skillet of the day or hot chicken biscuit will leave you satiated all day, plus they are situated along the BeltLine, where you can go for a stroll and walk it off.

REST OF THE BEST

10 Degrees South is a South African hot spot from restaurateur Justin Anthony that features sweet and savory dishes like boboties, a sweet ground beef mixture topped with a custard. Sister restaurants, **Cape Dutch** and **Yebo Beach Haus**, are stellar as well.

A sampling of Desta's dishes



Desta is the go-to-choice for fragrant Ethiopian dishes. Portions are large so bring a group. Start with the Sabusa, a flavorful lentil stuffed delicacy masquerading as an innocuous "spring roll," then move on to the Tibs platter with beef, lamb and chicken.

Poor Calvin's joins Southern and European influences in a downtown setting; the menu includes items like fried grouper curry and Pop Rocks duck pate. Saltyard is an American tapas spot in Buckhead where dishes like octopus are served over a verdant cilantro sauce. Duck with crispy cabbage and a smoked

beet salad are sure to make you swoon. Two Urban Licks was one of the first edgier restaurants to open in Atlanta and it remains a top choice for foodies and food lovers alike, with its jaw-dropping design. Get the salmon chips and scallops. UMI has perhaps the best sushi in Atlanta and it's a popular spot for celebs. Sit at the sushi counter and order the omakase (chef's choice) for the best experience. At around six courses, you won't leave hungry! *tg*

Pear dessert from Poor Calvin's

