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Atlanta ranks high in quality of life

...to a city where every other street seems to have “Peachtree” in its name, where its citizens are as determined and resilient as Scarlett O’Hara, where a soft drink has become “the Real Thing” the world over, where the courageous leader of America’s civil rights movement called home and where the status of an international city is firmly established by hosting the Olympics.

The area of Atlanta was originally populated by a Native American mound-building society. Many of Atlanta’s corridors follow the paths created by the Creek and Cherokee Indian nations, who inhabited the area until the early 19th Century. A large Creek settlement was called Standing Pitch Tree after a tall lone tree. Over time, the “pitch tree” became “peach tree.” No matter where you go in Atlanta, you always seem to be driving on Peachtree.

At the time of the American Revolution, the Creek, thought to be descendants of the early inhabitants, had established Standing Peachtree Village near the site of an ancient mound by the confluence of the Chattahoochee River and Peachtree Creek. The village was a hub for several major trails and functioned as an important trading center. A large section of one of the main trails, which ran from the village to present-day Suwanee, was upgraded by local European settlers near Fort Daniel built, during the War of 1812, in what is now Gwinnett County. This led to the building in 1813 of Fort Peachtree on a rise overlooking the Chattahoochee River. The former trail that now connected the two forts became known as the original Peachtree Road.

In 1821 the Creek ceded the lands surrounding the Atlanta area to the State of Georgia. The first European settler in what is now Atlanta was Hardy Ivy, who in 1833 built a cabin near present day Courtland Street and International Boulevard. In 1836, in an effort to compete for trade, the Georgia legislature approved the construction of a railroad to connect the area near Chattanooga, Tennessee to "...a point on the southeastern bank of the Chattahoochee River." Army engineer Colonel Stephen Harriman Long was chosen to determine the most practical route for the new Western and Atlantic Railroad line. After exploring half a dozen options he chose a site nine miles south of the river. In 1837, a stake was driven into the red clay on Hardy Ivy’s property and the town that was to become the city of Atlanta became the “end of the line.” Aptly named Terminus by the railroad’s chief engineer, the town boomed. As the town continued to grow and prosper, the name Atlanta was chosen to represent the thriving, progressive community that today nearly 5,500,000 residents call home.

Today, the Atlanta metropolitan area consistently ranks high in overall quality of life when compared to other cities in the country for numerous reasons. It is home to notable businesses such as Cingular Wireless, CNN, Cox Communications, Equifax Georgia-Pacific, Home Depot, the Weather Channel and UPS, and continues to function as a major economic hub.

With a passenger terminal complex equivalent to more than 45 football fields, Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport is the world’s busiest passenger airport. Atlanta is an ideal location for carriers like hometown Delta Air Lines, as the city is only a 2-hour flight away from 83 percent of U.S. cities. Every day, nearly 250,000 passengers travel through Hartsfield-Jackson making it the world’s busiest passenger airport. Atlanta offers its residents distinct seasons and a temperate climate. The flowering of the dogwood trees in the spring brings a festive air to
the city, one of the greenest metro areas in the eastern part of the nation. Summers, which can have extended hot and humid spells, are tempered somewhat by Atlanta’s elevation on the edge of north Georgia's Piedmont region. When fall moseys into the Atlanta region, the abundant greenery creates a decidedly more colorful canopy. Winters can be cold but daytime temperatures are usually comfortable enough to enjoy being outdoors.

Due to Atlanta’s ideal location, recreational activities abound in Georgia. Day trips offer opportunities in hiking, water skiing and whitewater rafting. A four-hour drive from Atlanta can bring you to the charm and grace of Savannah and the Georgia Coast, or the splendor of the North Carolina Mountains.

With over 8,000 restaurants in the metro area that range from simple and satisfying to elegant and gourmet, one never needs to go far to find a good meal. With every major U.S. regional cuisine represented as well as offerings from the cuisines of Europe, Latin and South America, Africa and Asia, those in search of outstanding culinary experiences will have an endless adventure.

Cultural appetites can also be well sated. The High Museum of Art, The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the Atlanta Ballet, the Alliance Theater, the famous Fox Theater and the Civic Center plus art galleries, comedy clubs, live music venues and local festivals are but a few of the host of choices available for a sophisticated night on the town or a weekend of fun. For entertainment the whole family would enjoy Atlanta offers Six Flags Over Georgia, the Presidential Center, the Fembank Natural History Museum, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, Zoo Atlanta, the Georgia Aquarium and the World of Coke.

Pro sporting events run year-round in Atlanta, which is home to baseball’s Atlanta Braves, football’s Atlanta Falcons, basketball’s Atlanta Hawks and hockey’s Atlanta Thrashers. Three state-of-the-art facilities, Philips Arena, the Georgia Dome, and Turner Field host these events and have also been home to the World Series, Major League Baseball’s All Star Game, two Super Bowls, NCAA Regional and Final Four basketball tournaments, the Peach Bowl and the SEC Championship Game.

Education is well served in the Atlanta area with 26 public school systems and over 150 private schools. Atlanta consistently ranks high in the total number of post-secondary degrees conferred annually. Students from around the world come to Atlanta to attend renowned institutions such as Emory University, the Georgia Institute of Technology and Georgia State University.

Housing choices abound in the metro Atlanta area. Because the region covers such a large area there are homes and settings available to match any lifestyle. For those who enjoy in-town living, choices can run the gamut from quaint bungalows, 19th century Victorian homes and amenity-rich condo and apartment communities to trendy urban lofts, posh high-rises and modern, custom-built mansions. Prefer a suburban setting? There are plentiful options that range from family-oriented neighborhoods to upscale golf, equestrian and tennis communities featuring luxurious homes.

The rural areas of the metro region offer spacious settings for existing or new homes with a relaxed feel embodying the graciousness of the South. Land is available for people who have plans for building a dream house, while existing homes offer choices sure to satisfy anyone seeking a pastoral repose.

Opportunities are also available for homeowners with exclusive tastes. Numerous choices exist in golf and country club communities offering private memberships and custom homes.
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• Spring Jonquil Festival
  April 23 & 24

• Food Truck Tuesdays
  May 3 - September 27

• Fresh Produce Market
  May 7 - September 24

• Summer Concerts
  June 11 & July 16

• City Birthday Celebration
  August 6

• Bike Sharing
  All Year

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