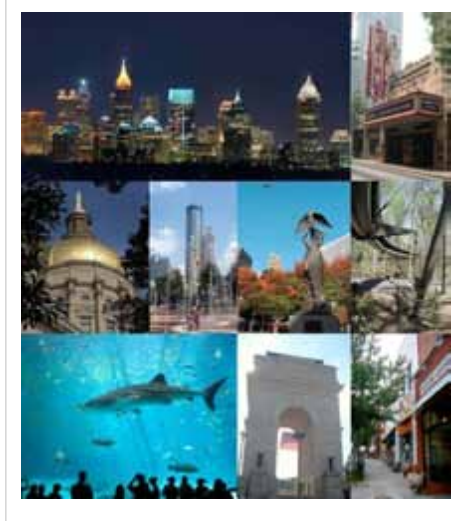


Atlanta

Atlanta

— City —



From top left: City skyline from Buckhead, the Fox Theatre, the Georgia State Capitol, Centennial Olympic Park, Atlanta from the Ashes memorial, Atlanta Botanical Garden Canopy Walk, the Georgia Aquarium, Millennium Gate, and Decatur Square

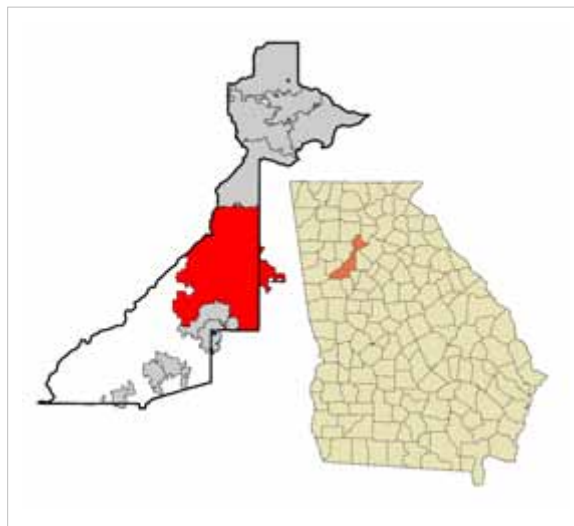


Flag



Seal

Motto: *Resurgens* (Latin = Rising again)



City highlighted in Fulton County, location of Fulton County in the state of Georgia



Atlanta

Location of the city of Atlanta, Georgia

Coordinates: 33°45′18″N 84°23′24″W

Country	United States of America
State	Georgia
County	Fulton and DeKalb
Terminus	1837
Marthasville	1843
City of Atlanta	1847
Government	
- Mayor	Kasim Reed
Area	
- City	132.4 sq mi (343.0 km ²)
- Land	131.8 sq mi (341.2 km ²)
- Water	0.6 sq mi (1.8 km ²)
- Urban	1963 sq mi (5084.1 km ²)
- Metro	8376 sq mi (21693.7 km ²)
Elevation	738 to 1050 ft (225 to 320 m)
Population (2010)	
- City	420,003
- Density	4019.7/sq mi (1552/km ²)
- Urban	3499840
- Metro	5,268,860 (9th)
- Metro density	629.4/sq mi (243/km ²)
- Demonym	Atlantan
Time zone	EST (UTC-5)
- Summer (DST)	EDT (UTC-4)
ZIP code(s)	30060, 30301-30322, 30324-30334, 30336-30350, 30353
Area code(s)	404, 470, 678, 770
FIPS code	13-04000 ^[1]
GNIS feature ID	0351615 ^[2]
Website	atlantaga.gov ^[3]

Atlanta (ⓘ /əˈlæntə/, /ætˈlæntə/, locally /ætˈlænə/) is the capital and most populous city in the US state of Georgia. According to the 2010 census, Atlanta's population is 420,003.^[4] The Atlanta metropolitan area, with 5,268,860 people,^[5] is the third largest in the Southern United States and the ninth largest in the country. The Atlanta Combined Statistical Area, a larger trade area, has a population approaching six million and is the largest in the Southeast. Like many urban areas in the Sun Belt, the Atlanta region has seen increasing growth since the 1970s, and it added about 1.6 million residents between 2000 and 2010.

Atlanta is considered to be a top business city and is a primary transportation hub of the Southeastern United States—via highway, railroad, and air.^[6]^[7] Metro Atlanta contains the world headquarters of corporations such as The Coca-Cola Company, Turner Broadcasting, The Home Depot, AT&T Mobility, UPS, and Delta Air Lines. Atlanta has the country's third largest concentration,^[8] of Fortune 500 companies, and more than 75 percent of Fortune 1000 companies have business operations in the metropolitan area, helping Atlanta realize a gross metropolitan product of US\$270 billion, accounting for more than two-thirds of Georgia's economy. Hartsfield–Jackson Atlanta International Airport has been the world's busiest airport since 1998.^[9]^[10]

Atlanta is the county seat of Fulton County and the location of the seat of government of the state of Georgia. A small portion of the city of Atlanta corporate limits extends eastwards into DeKalb County. Residents of Atlanta and its surroundings are known as "Atlantans".^[11]

History of Atlanta

Prior to the arrival of European Americans in north Georgia, Creek and Cherokee Indians inhabited the area.^[12] A Creek village located where Peachtree Creek flows into the Chattahoochee River, Standing Peachtree or Standing Pitch Tree, was the closest Indian settlement to what is now Atlanta.^[13] As part of the systematic removal of Native Americans from northern Georgia from 1802 to 1825,^[14] the Creek ceded the area that is now Metro Atlanta in 1821.^[15] White settlers arrived in 1822, and nearby Decatur was founded the following year.^[16]

In 1836, the Georgia General Assembly voted to build the Western and Atlantic Railroad in order to provide a link between the port of Savannah and the Midwest.^[17] The initial route was to run from Chattanooga to a spot called simply "Terminus," located east of the Chattahoochee River, which would eventually be linked to the Georgia Railroad from Augusta and the Macon and Western Railroad, which ran from Macon to Savannah. An engineer was chosen to recommend the location of the terminus. Once he surveyed various possible routes, he drove a stake (the "zero milepost") into the ground in what is now Five Points. A year later, the area around the railroad terminus had developed into a settlement, first known as "Terminus" and then Thrasherville, for John Thrasher, a local merchant who built homes and a general store in the settlement.^[18] By 1842, the settlement had six buildings and 30 residents and the town was renamed "Marthasville".^[19] The Chief Engineer of the Georgia Railroad, J. Edgar Thomson, suggested renaming the area "Atlantica-Pacifica" to highlight the rail connection westwards, shortened to "Atlanta".^[19] The residents approved, and the town was incorporated as Atlanta on December 29, 1847.^[20] By 1854, another railroad connected Atlanta to LaGrange, and the town grew to 9,554 by 1860.^[21]^[22]

During the Civil War, the nexus of multiple railroads in Atlanta made the city a hub for the distribution of military supplies. In 1864, following the capture of Chattanooga, the Union Army moved southward and began its invasion of north Georgia. The region now covered by Metropolitan Atlanta was the location of several major army battles, including Kennesaw Mountain, Peachtree Creek, Jonesborough (now Jonesboro), and the Battle of Atlanta. On September 1, 1864, following a four-month-long siege of the city by the Union Army under the command of General William Tecumseh Sherman, Confederate General John Bell Hood made the decision to retreat from Atlanta. General Hood ordered that all public buildings and possible assets to the Union Army be destroyed. On the next day, Mayor James Calhoun surrendered Atlanta to the Union Army, and on September 7, General Sherman ordered the city's civilian population to evacuate. On November 11, 1864, in preparation of the Union Army's march to Savannah, Sherman ordered for Atlanta to be burned to the ground, sparing only the city's churches and hospitals.^[23]

After the Civil War ended in 1865, Atlanta was gradually rebuilt. From 1867 until 1888, U.S. Army soldiers occupied the McPherson Barracks in southern Atlanta to ensure that the Reconstruction era reforms were carried out.



Battle of Atlanta during US Civil War, 1864

In 1868, the Georgia State Capital was moved from Milledgeville to Atlanta due to the city's superior rail transportation network, making Atlanta the fifth location of the capital of the State of Georgia.^[24] The Confederate Soldiers' Home was built to house disabled and elderly Georgia veterans from 1901 to 1941.^[25] Henry W. Grady, the editor of the *Atlanta Constitution* newspaper, promoted Atlanta to potential investors as a city of the "New South", one to be built on a modern economy, less reliant on agriculture. As a focal point of this change, the Georgia Institute of Technology (its future name) was established in Atlanta in 1885 (with its first classes held in October 1888).

Increased racial tensions, the result of a media-fueled hysteria over alleged sexual assaults on white women by black men, led to the Atlanta Race Riot of 1906, which left at least 27 people dead^[26] and over 70 injured.

On May 21, 1917, the Great Atlanta Fire destroyed 1,938 buildings, mostly wooden, in what is now the Old Fourth Ward. The fire resulted in 10,000 people becoming homeless. Only one person died, a woman who died of a heart attack at seeing her home in ashes.

On December 15, 1939, Atlanta hosted the film premiere of *Gone with the Wind*, the epic film based on the best-selling novel by Atlanta's Margaret Mitchell. Several stars of the film, including Clark Gable, Vivien Leigh, Olivia de Havilland, and its legendary producer, David O. Selznick, attended the gala event, which was held at Loew's Grand Theatre, now demolished.^[27] The reception was held at the Georgian Terrace Hotel, which still exists.

During World War II, manufacturing industries such as the Bell Aircraft Company's large factory in the northwestern suburb of Marietta, a massive growth in railroad traffic—and the manufacture of railroad cars—for the war effort, and great growth at Fort McPherson, Fort Gillem (est. 1941), and Rickenbacker Field forced a large growth in the population and economy of Atlanta. Shortly after the war, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention was founded in Atlanta.^[28]

In the 1950s, the city's newly-constructed freeway system enabled middle class Atlantans to relocate from the city to the suburbs. As a result, the city began to make up an ever smaller proportion of the metropolitan area's population, decreasing from 31% in 1960 to 9% in 2000.^[29]

During the 1960s, Atlanta was a major organizing center of the Civil Rights Movement, with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Ralph David Abernathy, and students from Atlanta's historically Black colleges and universities playing major roles in the movement's leadership. In 1961, Atlanta Mayor Ivan Allen Jr. became one of the few Southern white mayors to support desegregation of his city's public schools.^[30] While minimal compared to other cities, Atlanta was not completely free of racial strife. After forced-housing patterns were outlawed, violence, intimidation and organized political pressure was used in some white neighborhoods to discourage blacks from buying homes there. However, such efforts proved futile as real estate agents began engaging in blockbusting, encouraging white homeowners to sell at rock-bottom prices so that the agents could re-sell the homes to blacks at a large profit. The resulting white flight mostly affected Atlanta's western and southern neighborhoods, many of them transitioning to majority black by the 1970s.^[31] In 1961, the city attempted to thwart blockbusting by erecting road barriers in Cascade Heights, countering the efforts of civic and business leaders to foster Atlanta as the "city too busy to hate."^[31] ^[32]



In 1907, Peachtree Street, the main street of Atlanta, was busy with streetcars and automobiles.

African Americans became a majority in the city by 1970, and exercised new-found political influence by electing Atlanta's first black mayor, Maynard Jackson, in 1973. However, suburbanization, rising prices, a booming economy, and new migrants have decreased the black percentage of the city from a high of 69% in 1980 to 54% in 2010.^[33] From 2000 to 2010, Atlanta gained 22,763 white residents, 5,142 Asian residents, and 3,095 Hispanic residents, while it lost 31,678 black residents.^{[34] [35]}

In 1990, Atlanta was selected as the site for the 1996 Summer Olympic Games. Following the announcement, Atlanta undertook several major construction projects to improve the city's parks, sports facilities, and transportation. Atlanta became the third American city to host the Summer Olympics. The games themselves were marred by numerous organizational inefficiencies, as well as the Centennial Olympic Park bombing.^[36]

During the 2000s, Atlanta completed its transformation into a cosmopolitan city, becoming well known for its robust cultural offerings. Much of the city's change in the last decade was driven by young, college-educated professionals who have moved into Atlanta by the thousands, seeking a lifestyle rich in cultural variety, diversity, and excitement. From 2000 to 2009, the tree-mile radius surrounding Downtown Atlanta gained 9,722 residents aged 25 to 34 holding at least a four-year degree, an increase of 61% and the sixth-largest such increase in the nation.^[37] In fact, Atlanta is on the leading edge of a national trend: while the same growth has occurred in dozens of other American cities, the change was twice as strong in Atlanta as it was nationwide.^[38] As the city's new residents transformed communities long in decline into neighborhoods of choice, Atlanta's cultural offerings expanded to meet their increased demand. A total of 45 restaurants have opened Downtown since 2008. The High Museum of Art doubled in size and launched partnerships with major institutions such as the Louvre and New York's Museum of Modern Art. In 2007, the Alliance Theatre won a Tony Award, placing it among the nation's leading performing arts venues. The once-industrial Westside is now home to warehouse lofts, start-up companies, and buzzed-about restaurants.^[39]



The diving event at the 1996 Summer Games, with Atlanta's Olympic logo in the background

Geography



The city of Atlanta from Stone Mountain. Downtown and Midtown to the left, and Buckhead to the right.

Topography

According to the United States Census Bureau, the city has a total area of 132.4 square miles (342.9 km²). 131.7 square miles (341.1 km²) of it is land and 0.7 square miles (1.8 km²) of it is water. The total area is 0.54% water. At about 1050 feet (320 m) above mean sea level, Atlanta sits atop a ridge south of the Chattahoochee River.

The Eastern Continental Divide line enters Atlanta from the south, proceeding to the downtown area. From downtown, the divide line runs eastward along DeKalb Avenue and the CSX rail lines through Decatur.^[40] Rainwater that falls on the south and east side runs eventually into the Atlantic Ocean, while rainwater on the north and west side of the divide runs into the Gulf of Mexico^[40] via the Chattahoochee River. That river is part of the ACF River Basin, and from which Atlanta and many of its neighbors draw most of their water. Being at the far northwestern edge of the city, much of the river's natural habitat is still preserved, in part by the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area. Downstream however, excessive water use during droughts and pollution during floods has been a source of contention and legal battles with neighboring states Alabama and Florida.^{[41] [42]}



Atlanta's skyline in the background, with forest coverage in the foreground

Climate

Atlanta has a humid subtropical climate, (Cfa) according to the Köppen classification, with hot, humid summers and mild winters that are occasionally cold by the standards of the southern United States. January averages 42.7 °F (5.9 °C), with temperatures in the suburbs slightly cooler. Warm, maritime air can bring springlike highs while strong Arctic air masses can push lows into the teens (−11 to −7 °C). High temperatures in July average 89 °F (31.7 °C) but occasionally exceed 100 °F (38 °C). Atlanta's high mean elevation distinguishes it from most other southern and eastern cities, and contributes to a more temperate climate than is found in areas farther south.^[43]

Typical of the southeastern U.S., Atlanta receives abundant rainfall, which is relatively evenly distributed throughout the year, though spring and early fall are markedly drier. Average annual rainfall is 50.2 inches (1280 mm). Temperatures at or above 90 °F (32 °C) occur more than 40 days per year; overnight freezing can be expected over 45 days, but high temperatures that do not climb above the freezing mark are rare.^[44] Snow is not seen every year and averages 2.5 inches (6.4 cm) annually. The heaviest single storm brought around 10 inches (25 cm) on January 23, 1940.^[45] True blizzards are rare but possible; one hit in March 1993. Ice storms usually cause more trouble than does snowfall; the most severe such storm may have occurred on January 7, 1973.^[46] In 2010, Atlanta had its first White Christmas since 1882.

Extremes range from in February 1899 to 105 °F (41 °C) in July 1980.^[47] More recently, a low one degree away from the record, was observed on January 21, 1985.^[47]



Atlanta's Piedmont Park, with a blanket of winter snow.

Climate data for Atlanta (Hartsfield–Jackson Int'l)													
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Average high °F (°C)	51.9 (11.06)	56.8 (13.78)	65.0 (18.33)	72.9 (22.72)	80.0 (26.67)	86.5 (30.28)	89.4 (31.89)	87.9 (31.06)	82.3 (27.94)	72.9 (22.72)	63.3 (17.39)	54.6 (12.56)	72.0 (22.22)
Average low °F (°C)	33.5 (0.83)	36.7 (2.61)	43.6 (6.44)	50.4 (10.22)	59.5 (15.28)	67.1 (19.5)	70.6 (21.44)	69.9 (21.06)	64.3 (17.94)	52.8 (11.56)	43.5 (6.39)	36.2 (2.33)	52.3 (11.28)
Precipitation inches (mm)	5.03 (127.8)	4.68 (118.9)	5.38 (136.7)	3.62 (91.9)	3.95 (100.3)	3.63 (92.2)	5.12 (130)	3.67 (93.2)	4.09 (103.9)	3.11 (79)	4.10 (104.1)	3.82 (97)	50.20 (1275.1)
Snowfall inches (cm)	1.0 (2.5)	.5 (1.3)	.6 (1.5)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	.3 (0.8)	2.4 (6.1)
Avg. precipitation days (≥ 0.01 in)	12.1	9.8	10.9	8.4	9.6	9.8	11.5	9.5	8.3	6.4	9.4	10.4	116.1
Avg. snowy days (≥ 0.1 in)	.6	.7	.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.3	1.8
Sunshine hours	164.3	172.3	220.1	261.0	288.3	285.0	272.8	257.3	228.0	283.7	186.0	164.3	2783.1
<i>Source: NOAA (1971–2000) ^[44] HKO (sun only, 1961–1990) ^[48]</i>													

In 2007, the American Lung Association ranked Atlanta as having the 13th highest level of particle pollution in the United States.^[49] The combination of pollution and pollen levels, and uninsured citizens caused the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America to name Atlanta as the worst American city for asthma sufferers to live in.^[50]

However, the city was recently commended by bodies such as the Environmental Protection Agency for its eco-friendly policies.^[51] In 2009, Atlanta's Virginia-Highland became the first carbon-neutral zone in the United States. Verus Carbon Neutral developed the partnership that links 17 merchants of the historic Corner Virginia-Highland shopping and dining neighborhood retail district, through the Chicago Climate Exchange, to directly fund the Valley Wood Carbon Sequestration Project (thousands of acres of forest in rural Georgia).^{[52] [53]}

On March 14, 2008, an EF2 tornado hit downtown Atlanta with winds up to 135 mph (217 km/h). The tornado caused damage to Philips Arena, the Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel, the Georgia Dome, Centennial Olympic Park, the CNN Center, and the Georgia World Congress Center. It also damaged the nearby neighborhoods of Vine City to the west and Cabbagetown, and Fulton Bag and Cotton Mills to the east. While there were dozens of injuries, only one fatality was reported.^[54] City officials warned it could take months to clear the devastation left by the tornado.^[55]

Tree canopy

Atlanta has a reputation as the "city in a forest" due to its abundance of trees, unique among major cities.^{[56] [57] [58] [59] [60]} The city's main street is named after a tree, and beyond the Downtown, Midtown, and Buckhead business districts, the skyline gives way to a dense canopy of woods that spreads into the suburbs. The nickname is factually accurate, as the city's tree coverage percentage is at 36%, the highest out of all major American cities, and above the national average of 27%.^[61] Atlanta's tree coverage does not go unnoticed—it was the main reason cited by *National Geographic* in naming Atlanta a "Place of a Lifetime".^[62]

"For a sprawling city with the nation's ninth-largest metro area, Atlanta is surprisingly lush with trees—magnolias, dogwoods, Southern pines, and magnificent oaks."^[63]



The Atlanta Plaza skyscraper surrounded by trees



Trees on the campus of Georgia Tech

The city's lush tree canopy, which filters out pollutants and cools sidewalks and buildings, has increasingly been under assault from man and nature due to heavy rains, drought, aged forests, new pests, and urban construction. A 2001 study found that Atlanta's heavy tree cover declined from 48% in 1974 to 38% in 1996. This loss of tree canopy resulted in a 33% increase in stormwater runoff and a loss of 11 million pounds of pollutants removed annually, a value of approximately \$28 million per year.^[64] Due to a historic drought in the late 2000s, Atlanta lost trees at an unprecedented rate. For example, Piedmont Park lost about a dozen large, historic trees in 2009, compared to two or three during normal years. Although many of Atlanta's trees are between 80–100 years old and thus reaching the end of their normal lifespan, the drought accelerated their demise by shrinking the trees' roots. However, the problem is being addressed by community organizations and city government.^[57] Trees Atlanta, a non-profit organization founded in 1985, has planted and distributed over 75,000 shade trees.^[65] Atlanta's city government awarded

\$130,000 in grants to neighborhood groups to plant trees.^[57]

Being a city of trees encourages outdoor activity, and thanks to a perpetually mild climate, nature is a constant guest in Atlanta. The city is home to the Atlanta Dogwood Festival, an annual arts and crafts festival held one weekend during early April, when the native dogwoods are in bloom. Downtown's Centennial Olympic Park is the start and finish of the Georgia Marathon, which courses through central Atlanta and Decatur suburbs, business sections and major schools of higher learning like Georgia State University, Agnes Scott College, Emory University and Georgia Tech.

Parks, gardens, and trails

Ever-popular Piedmont Park and the quieter Grant Park call to athletes and loungers throughout the week.^[60] The Atlanta Botanical Garden is home to the Canopy Walk, a 600-foot elevated walkway ambling 40 feet from the ground through a 15-acre forest of mature hardwoods, and the only canopy-level pathway of its kind in the United States.



The BeltLine is a former rail corridor that forms a 22-mile loop around Atlanta's central neighborhoods and has been acquired as public space. Most of the corridor is already open as a rough walking path, and it is to be developed into trails with the eventual addition of transit. A trail is already built near the West End neighborhood and one is underway from Piedmont Park near Midtown, south to Inman Park. BeltLine projects will increase Atlanta's park space by 40%,^[66] including two new parks: Historic Fourth Ward Park, now open, and Westside Park.

PATH maintains a network of biking and walking trails in Metro Atlanta including one that passes along the Carter Center and through Freedom Park.

Cityscape



Midtown Atlanta from the Northwest near the Cobb County/Fulton County border on the Chattahoochee River. Atlantic Station is visible to the left with the Atlantic skyscraper in the foreground. April 2010



A 2008 aerial photo of Atlanta's urban core viewed from the Southwest near Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. Downtown Atlanta (in the foreground) is followed by Midtown, and then Buckhead. Sandy Springs and Dunwoody's Perimeter Center skyline is visible in the background. In 2008, the entire region had a population of 5,729,304.

Architecture

Atlanta's skyline is punctuated with highrise and midrise buildings of modern and postmodern vintage. Its tallest landmark—the Bank of America Plaza—is the 52nd-tallest building in the world at 1023 feet (312 m).^[67] It is also the tallest building in the United States located outside of Chicago and New York City.

Unlike many other Southern cities such as Savannah, Charleston, Wilmington, and New Orleans, Atlanta chose not to retain its historic Old South architectural characteristics. Instead, Atlanta viewed itself as the leading city of a progressive "New South" and opted for expressive modern structures.^[68] Atlanta's skyline includes works by most major U.S. firms and some of the more prominent architects of the 20th century, including Michael Graves, Richard Meier, Marcel Breuer, Renzo Piano, Pickard Chilton, and locally based internationally known Mack Scogin and Merrill Elam Architects.

Atlanta's most notable hometown architect may be John Portman whose creation of the atrium hotel beginning with the Hyatt Regency Atlanta—one of the tallest buildings in Atlanta at the time of its completion in 1967^[69] —made a significant mark on hospitality architecture. Through his work, Portman—a graduate of Georgia Tech's College of Architecture—reshaped downtown Atlanta with his designs for the Atlanta Merchandise Mart, Peachtree Center, the Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel, and SunTrust Plaza.



Midtown boasts various modern and post-modern architectural styles

Neighborhoods

Atlanta fell victim to the urban flight that affected other major American cities in the 20th century, causing the decline of well-to-do east side neighborhoods such as Inman Park and Candler Park, typified by their craftsman bungalows and Victorian mansions. In the 1970s, after neighborhood opposition blocked two freeways from being built through the east side, the area became the starting point for Atlanta's gentrification wave. By the early 1990s, the neighborhoods had transformed into shining examples of renewal, and are now considered hip, urban neighborhoods, appealing to young residents who wish to be in close proximity to entertainment and commercial options.

Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, gentrification expanded into other parts of Atlanta, spreading into the historic streetcar suburbs east of Downtown and Midtown such as the Old Fourth Ward, Kirkwood, Cabbagetown, and some of the neighborhoods along the BeltLine. Older homes were renovated, new houses were constructed, and once-forgotten leafy, urban villages were rehabilitated. On the western side of the city, condos, apartments, and retail space were built into former warehouses spaces, quickly transforming once-industrial West Midtown into a shining model of smart growth. While the infill growth has slowed somewhat during the Late-2000s recession, it still continues at a steady pace, expanding into areas such as Capitol View, Peoplestown, and Adair Park.



Downtown Atlanta, with the trees of Woodruff Park seen on the left



Part of Buckhead Village

The city's highrises are clustered in the three business districts of Atlanta—Downtown, Midtown, and Buckhead (there are also two major suburban business districts, Perimeter Center to the north and Cumberland to the northwest).^[70] Downtown contains the most office space in the metro area and is home to many government offices. Notable skyscrapers include the 191 Peachtree Tower, Westin Peachtree Plaza, SunTrust Plaza, Georgia-Pacific Tower, and the buildings of Peachtree Center.

Midtown Atlanta, located north of Downtown, developed rapidly after the completion of One Atlantic Center in 1987. In addition to being a major employment center for the metro area, Midtown contains the offices of many of the region's law firms.^[71] In 2006, former Mayor Franklin set in motion a plan to make the 14-block stretch of Peachtree Street in Midtown Atlanta (nicknamed "Midtown Mile") a street-level luxury shopping destination to rival Beverly Hills' Rodeo Drive or Chicago's Magnificent Mile,^[72] ^[73] but in 2011 these plans were rolled back to more modest levels.^[74]

Buckhead, the city's uptown district, is eight miles (13 km) north of Downtown. Beginning as a wealthy suburban community with the construction of Lenox Square mall in the 1950s, the area has since developed into a major employment, commercial, and financial center. Immediately surrounding Buckhead's skyscrapers are wealthy neighborhoods of single-family homes.

Southwestern Atlanta contains a number of suburbs popular with African-Americans, such as Collier Heights, Cascade Heights and Peyton Forest.^[75]

Atlanta was in the midst of a construction and retail boom prior to the late-2000s recession, with over 50 new midrise or highrise buildings either proposed or under construction in 2006.^[76] However, new development slowed with the beginning of the recession.

Culture



The High Museum of Art, a division of the Woodruff Arts Center in Midtown Atlanta

Atlanta, while very much in the South, has a culture that is no longer strictly Southern. This is due to the fact that in addition to a large population of migrants from other parts of the U.S., nearly three-quarters of a million foreign-born people make Atlanta their home, accounting for 13 percent of the city's population and making Atlanta one of the most multi-cultural cities in the nation.^[77] A random Atlantan is more likely to have been born in Bangalore, Seoul, or Indianapolis than in Atlanta. Thus, although traditional Southern culture is part of Atlanta's cultural fabric, it's mostly the backdrop to one of the nation's leading international cities. This unique cultural combination reveals itself at the High Museum of Art, the bohemian shops of Little Five Points, and the multi-cultural dining choices found

along Buford Highway.^[78]

Entertainment and performing arts

The classical music scene in the metropolitan Atlanta area includes the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Atlanta Opera, Atlanta Ballet, Gwinnett Ballet Theatre, Atlanta Baroque Orchestra, New Trinity Baroque, the Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, Georgia Boy Choir and the Atlanta Boy Choir. Classical musicians have included renowned conductors Robert Shaw and the Atlanta Symphony's Robert Spano.

The Fox Theatre is an historic landmark and one of the highest grossing venues in the world. The city also has a large collection of highly successful music venues of various sizes that host top and emerging touring acts. Popular local venues include the Tabernacle, the Variety Playhouse, The Masquerade, The Star Community Bar and the EARL.

The city contains a flourishing theater community. Major Theater groups include the Tony Award-winning Alliance Theater (part of the Woodruff Arts Center), the internationally-known Center for Puppetry Arts, Theatrical Outfit, Seven Stages Theater, The Horizon Theater Company, improv group Dad's Garage, Actor's Express, and the Shakespeare Tavern.

Atlanta is also a major hub for the marching arts. The city is home of Spirit Drum and Bugle Corps, who competes in Drum Corps International, and both Alliance Drum and Bugle Corps and the CorpsVets Drum and Bugle Corps^[79], both of which participate in the Drum Corps Associates circuit.

Atlanta is the home of recording studios/companies So So Def Recordings, Grand Hustle Records, BME Recordings, Block Entertainment, Konvict Muzik, and 1017 Brick Squad.



The Fox Theatre

Tourism

Atlanta is one of the nation's leading tourist destinations, both for Americans and those visiting the U.S. from abroad. As of 2010, the city is the seventh-most visited city in the United States, with over 35 million visitors per year.^[80]

Atlanta features the world's largest indoor aquarium,^[81] the Georgia Aquarium, containing more animals than any other aquarium in more than eight million gallons of water and more than sixty exhibits, including a dolphin exhibit.^[82]

In 2010, *American Style Magazine* ranked Atlanta as the ninth-best city for the arts.^[83] As such, the city is home to many significant art museums. The renowned High Museum of Art is arguably the South's leading art museum and among the most-visited art museums in the world.^[84] The Museum of Design Atlanta (MODA), a design museum, is the only such museum in the Southeast.^[85] Contemporary art museums include the Atlanta Contemporary Art Center and the Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia. Atlanta's Michael C. Carlos Museum contains the largest collection of ancient art in the Southeast.^[86]



Stormtroopers at Atlanta's St. Patrick's Day parade

Atlanta also hosts a variety of history museums and attractions, including the Atlanta History Center, detailing the history of Atlanta and Georgia; the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site, which includes the preserved boyhood home of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., as well as his final resting place; the Atlanta Cyclorama & Civil War Museum, a civil war museum that houses a massive painting and diorama in-the-round, with a rotating central audience platform, that depicts the Battle of Atlanta in the Civil War; the Carter Center and Presidential Library, housing U.S. President Jimmy Carter's papers and other material relating to the Carter administration and the Carter family's life; historic house museum Rhodes Hall, a Romanesque Revival house inspired by German castles; the Wren's Nest, former home of Brer Rabbit author Joel Chandler-Harris; the Margaret Mitchell House and Museum, site of the writing of the best-selling novel *Gone With the Wind*; the World of Coca-Cola, featuring the history of the world famous soft drink brand and its well-known advertising; the Delta Heritage Museum, an aviation museum that also details the history of the Delta corporation; the Robert C. Williams Paper Museum, which showcases the history of paper and paper technology, and also allows visitors to create their own paper; the Fernbank Museum of Natural History, which presents exhibitions and programming about natural history; and the William Breman Jewish Heritage & Holocaust Museum, one of only two Holocaust museums in the southeast.



The Peachtree Road Race

Museums geared specifically towards children include the Fernbank Science Center, Imagine It! The Children's Museum of Atlanta. In addition, the Center for Puppetry Arts presents puppets from various time periods and countries around the world, hosts puppet performances, and allows visitors to create their own puppets. Future museums planned for the city include the National Health Museum, the College Football Hall of Fame, and the Center of Civil and Human Rights, all to be constructed in the emerging tourist district surrounding Centennial Olympic Park.

Due to Atlanta's mild climate, outdoor events and attractions are plentiful in the city. Piedmont Park hosts many of Atlanta's festivals and cultural events, including the annual Atlanta Dogwood Festival and Atlanta Pride.^[87] Atlanta Botanical Garden sits next to the park, home to the 600-foot-long (180 m) Kendeda Canopy Walk, a skywalk that allows visitors to tour one of the city's last remaining urban forests from 40-foot-high (12 m). The Canopy Walk is considered the only canopy-level pathway of its kind in the United States. Zoo Atlanta, located in Grant Park, houses over 1,300 animals representing more than 220 species. Home to the nation's largest collections of gorillas and orangutans, the Zoo is also one of only four zoos in the U.S. currently housing giant pandas.^[88] Just east of the city rises Stone Mountain, the largest piece of exposed granite in the world.^[89] During Labor Day weekend each year, Atlanta hosts the popular multi-genre convention Dragon*Con, held downtown at the Hyatt Regency, Marriot Marquis, Hilton and Sheraton hotels. The event attracts an estimated 30,000 attendees annually. The entire month of August is dedicated to filmmaking when Atlanta hosts the month-long celebration of independent film known as Independent Film Month.^[90] In October, Midtown Atlanta is host to the popular Out on Film gay film festival, attracting film makers and fans from around the world.^[91]

Cuisine

Atlanta's cuisine contains a mix of urban establishments garnering national attention, ethnic restaurants offering cuisine from every corner of the world, and traditional eateries specializing in Southern dining.



A meal at The Varsity

In the last decade, Atlanta has emerged as a sophisticated restaurant town.^[92] Many of the restaurants that have opened within the city's gentrifying neighborhoods since 2000 have garnered praise on a national scale, including Bocado, Bacchanalia, and Miller Union in West Midtown, Empire State South in Midtown, and Two Urban Licks, Parish, and Rathbun's on the east side.^{[39] [93] [94] [95]}

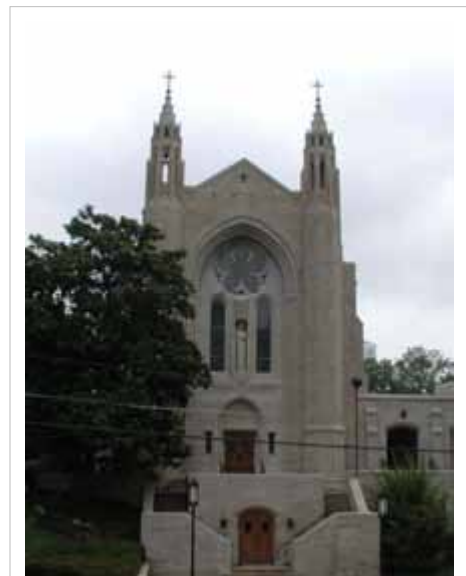
Visitors seeking to sample international Atlanta are directed to Buford Highway, the city's international corridor. There, the million-plus immigrants that make Atlanta home have established various authentic ethnic restaurants, ranging from Vietnamese, Indian, Cuban, Korean, Mexican, Chinese, Russian, and Mongolian.^[96]

For traditional Southern fare, one of the city's most famous establishments is The Varsity, a long-lived fast food chain and the world's largest drive-in restaurant.^[97] Mary Mac's Tea Room, where every morning workers shuck bushels of corn, wash selected greens, and snap fresh green beans by hand, has been Atlanta's Southern dining destination for more than 60 years. Other eateries offering Southern food include Colonnade and the Horseradish Grill.

Religion

There are over 1,000 places of worship within the city of Atlanta.^[98] Protestant Christian faiths are well represented in Atlanta,^[99] the city historically being a major center for traditional Southern denominations such as the Southern Baptist Convention, the United Methodist Church, and the Presbyterian Church (USA). Atlanta is home to various Protestant megachurches, including North Point Community Church, the second largest church in the United States,^[100] and the Anglican Church of the Apostles.

Atlanta contains a large, and rapidly growing, Roman Catholic population. The number of Catholics grew from 292,300 members in 1998 to 900,000 members in 2010, an increase of 207 percent. The population is expected to top 1 million by 2011.^{[101] [102]} The increase is fueled by Catholics moving to Atlanta from other parts of the U.S. and the world, and from newcomers to the church.^[102] About 16 percent of all metropolitan Atlanta residents are Catholic.^[103] As the see of the 84 parish Archdiocese of Atlanta, Atlanta serves as the metropolitan see for the Province of Atlanta. The archdiocesan cathedral is the Cathedral of Christ the King and the current archbishop is the Most Rev. Wilton D. Gregory.^[104]^[105] Also located in the metropolitan area are several Eastern Catholic parishes which fall in the jurisdiction of Eastern Catholic eparchies for the Melkite, Maronite, Syro-Malabar, and Byzantine Catholics.^[106]



The Roman Catholic Cathedral of Christ the King, located on Peachtree Road in Buckhead.

The city hosts the Greek Orthodox Annunciation Cathedral, the see of the Metropolis of Atlanta and its bishop, Alexios. Other Orthodox Christian jurisdictions represented by parishes in the Atlanta area include the Antiochian Orthodox Church, the Russian Orthodox Church, the Romanian Orthodox Church, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Orthodox Church in America.



North Avenue Presbyterian Church, on the southeast corner of North Avenue and Peachtree Street

Atlanta is also the see of the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta, which includes all of northern Georgia, much of middle Georgia and the Chattahoochee River valley of western Georgia. This Diocese is headquartered at the Cathedral of St Philip in Buckhead and is led by the Right Reverend J. Neil Alexander.^[107]

Atlanta also serves as headquarters for several regional Protestant church bodies. The Southeastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America maintains offices in downtown Atlanta; ELCA parishes are numerous throughout the metro area. The headquarters for The Salvation Army's United States Southern Territory is located in Atlanta.^[108] The denomination has eight churches, numerous social service centers, and youth clubs located throughout the Atlanta area.

Traditional African American denominations such as the National Baptist Convention and the African Methodist Episcopal Church are represented in the area. These churches have several seminaries that form the Interdenominational Theological Center complex in the Atlanta University Center.

The city has a temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints located in the suburb of Sandy Springs.

Atlanta also has a considerable number of ethnic Christian congregations such as Korean Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian Churches, the Tamil Church Atlanta, Telugu Church, Hindi Church, Malayalam Church, Ethiopian, Chinese, and many more traditional ethnic religious groups.

Metropolitan Atlanta is also home to a Jewish community estimated to include 120,000 individuals in 61,300 households.^[109] As of 2006, Atlanta's Jewish population is the 11th largest in the United States, up from 17th largest in 1996.^[109] There are eruvim in the Virginia Highland and Toco Hills neighborhoods inside 285, as well as in Dunwoody, Sandy Springs and Alpharetta in the North Metro Area.

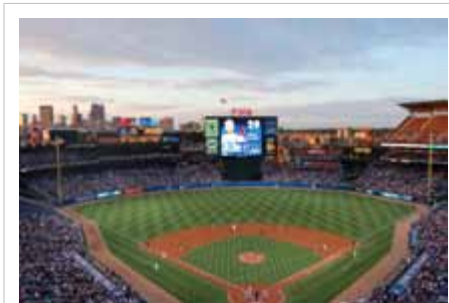
The BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir Atlanta in adjacent Lilburn, Georgia is currently the largest Hindu temple in the world outside of India.^[110] It is one of approximately 15 Hindu temples in the metro Atlanta area.

There also are an estimated 75,000 Muslims in the area and approximately 35 mosques.^[111]

Sports

Atlanta is home to professional franchises of three major team sports: the Atlanta Braves of Major League Baseball, the Atlanta Hawks of the National Basketball Association, and the Atlanta Falcons of the National Football League.

The Braves began playing in 1871 as the Boston Red Stockings, and is the oldest continually operating professional sports franchise in America.^[112] The Braves won the World Series in 1995, and had an unprecedented run of 14 straight divisional championships from 1991 to 2005.



Turner Field

The Atlanta Falcons (American football) have played in Atlanta since 1966 and currently play at the Georgia Dome. They have won the division title four times (1980, 1998, 2004, 2010) and one conference championship—going on to finish as the runner-up to the Denver Broncos in Super Bowl XXXIII in 1999. Atlanta hosted Super Bowl XXVIII in 1994 and Super Bowl XXXIV in 2000.^[113]

The Atlanta Hawks (basketball) began in 1946 as the Tri-Cities Blackhawks, playing in Moline, Illinois. The team moved to Milwaukee in 1951, then to St. Louis in 1955, where they won their sole NBA Championship as the St. Louis Hawks. In 1968, they came to Atlanta.^[114] In October 2007, the Women's National Basketball Association

(WNBA) announced that Atlanta would receive an expansion franchise, that commenced their first season in May 2008. The new team is the Atlanta Dream, and plays in Philips Arena.^[115]

From 1972 to 1980, the Atlanta Flames played ice hockey in the National Hockey League (NHL), but moved to Calgary in 1980. Then, in 1997, Atlanta was awarded an NHL expansion franchise and in 1999, the Atlanta Thrashers began playing (at Philips Arena). The Thrashers moved to Winnipeg in 2011.

The original Atlanta Beat of the Women's United Soccer Association (WUSA, 2001–2003) was the only team to reach the playoffs in each of the league's three seasons. The new Atlanta Beat made its debut in Women's Professional Soccer (WPS) in April 2010, and the following month played its first game in the new soccer-specific stadium that it shares with Kennesaw State University in the northern suburb of Kennesaw. Atlanta is also home to the Atlanta Silverbacks of the North American Soccer League (men) and W-League (women). In 2007, the Silverbacks had their best season advancing to the USL Finals against the Seattle Sounders, who have since been promoted to the MLS. The city is supposedly also being considered for a potential expansion team in Major League Soccer.^[116] The Atlanta Chiefs won the championship of the now-defunct North American Soccer League in 1968.

In golf, the final PGA Tour event of the season that features elite players, The Tour Championship, is played annually at East Lake Golf Club.^[117] This golf course is used because of its connection to the great amateur golfer Bobby Jones, an Atlanta native.

Atlanta has a rich tradition in collegiate athletics. The Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets participate in 17 intercollegiate sports, including football and basketball. Tech competes in the Atlantic Coast Conference, and is home to Bobby Dodd Stadium, the oldest continuously used on campus site for college football in the southern United States, and oldest currently in Division I FBS.^[118] The stadium was built in 1913 by students of Georgia Tech. Atlanta also played host to the second intercollegiate football game in the South, played between Auburn University and the University of Georgia in Piedmont Park in 1892; this game is now called the Deep South's Oldest Rivalry.^[119] The city hosts college football's annual Chick-fil-A Bowl (Formerly known as the Peach Bowl) and the Peachtree Road Race, the world's largest 10 km race.^[120]

Atlanta was the host city for the Centennial 1996 Summer Olympics. Centennial Olympic Park, built for the 1996 Summer Olympics, sits adjacent to CNN Center and Philips Arena. It is now operated by the Georgia World Congress Center Authority. Atlanta hosted the NCAA Final Four Men's Basketball Championship most recently in April 2007.

Atlanta is home to two of the nation's Gaelic football clubs, Na Fianna Ladies and Mens Gaelic Football Club and Clan na nGael Ladies and Mens Gaelic Football Club. Both are members of the North American County Board, a branch of the Gaelic Athletic Association, the worldwide governing body of Gaelic games.^[121]

Atlanta is also home to many rugby union clubs including the Atlanta Harlequins, ranked #2 in the United States in Division 1 for women's clubs under USA Rugby, the governing body for rugby in the United States.^[122]

Club	Sport	League	Venue	League Championships
Atlanta Falcons	American football	National Football League	Georgia Dome	0
Atlanta Braves	Baseball	Major League Baseball, NL	Turner Field	1 (1995)
Atlanta Hawks	Basketball	National Basketball Association	Philips Arena	0
Atlanta Dream	Women's basketball	Women's National Basketball Association	Philips Arena	0
Atlanta Silverbacks	Soccer (football)	North American Soccer League, Women's W-League	Atlanta Silverbacks Park	1 (2007)

Atlanta Beat (WUSA, WPS)	Women's soccer (Football)	Women's United Soccer Association (WUSA), Women's Professional Soccer (WPS)	2001–2002 Bobby Dodd Stadium, 2003 Morris Brown College, 2010 Kennesaw State University Soccer Stadium	0
Atlanta Xplosion	Women's football	Independent Women's Football League	James R. Halford Stadium	1 (2006)
Gwinnett Gladiators	Ice hockey	ECHL	Arena at Gwinnett Center	0
Gwinnett Braves	Baseball	International League	Gwinnett Stadium	0
Georgia Force	Arena football	Arena Football League	Arena at Gwinnett Center	0
Atlanta Harlequins	Rugby Union	USA Rugby	Multiple Locations	0

Media

The Atlanta metro area is served by many local television stations and is the eighth largest designated market area (DMA) in the U.S. with 2,387,520 homes (2.0% of the total U.S.).^[123] There are also numerous local radio stations serving every genre of music and sports.

Cox Enterprises, a privately held company controlled by Anne Cox Chambers, has substantial media holdings in and beyond Atlanta. Its Cox Communications division is the nation's third-largest cable television service provider;^[124] the company also publishes over a dozen daily newspapers in the United States, including *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. WSB AM—the flagship station of Cox Radio—was the first broadcast station in the South.

The notable television stations in Atlanta are Cox Enterprises-owned ABC affiliate (and the city's first TV station) WSB-TV (Channel 2.1), Fox Television's WAGA-TV (Channel 5.1), Gannett Company's NBC affiliate WXIA-TV (Channel 11.1, also known as "11 Alive") and its sister station MyNetworkTV affiliate WATL-TV (Channel 36.1, known as MyAtlTV), the Univision owned station WUVG-TV (Channel 34.1) and its sister station Telefutera (Channel 34.2), the Meredith Corporation's CBS affiliate WGCL-TV (Channel 46.1), and CBS-owned CW station WUPA (Channel 69.1).

The market has two PBS affiliates: WGTV (Channel 8.1), the flagship station of the statewide Georgia Public Television network, and WPBA (Channel 30.1), owned by Atlanta Public Schools.

Atlanta is the home of the nation's first cable superstation, then known as WTCG (Channel 17), first transmitting its signal via satellite in December 1976; the station itself first signed-on in Atlanta as WJRJ-TV in 1967. The station changed its call letters to the more-familiar WTBS in 1979, and became WPCH-TV (also known as "Peachtree TV") in 2007, when its parent company, the Time Warner-owned Turner Broadcasting System decided to separate the local and national programming feeds.

The Atlanta area is also home to other Turner Broadcasting properties TNT, CNN, Cartoon Network, HLN, truTV, and Turner Classic Movies, as well as NBC Universal's The Weather Channel.

The Atlanta radio market is ranked seventh in the nation by Arbitron, and is home to more than forty radio stations, notably of which including WSB-AM (750), WCNN-AM (680), WQXI-AM (790), WGST-AM (640), WVEE-FM (103.3), WSB-FM (98.5), WWWQ-FM (99.7), and WSBB-FM (95.5).

Economy

Atlanta is one of ten U.S. cities classified as a "beta world city" by a 2008 study at Loughborough University,^[125] and ranks fourth in the number of Fortune 500 companies headquartered within city boundaries, behind New York City, Houston, and Dallas.^[126] Several major national and international companies are headquartered in metro Atlanta, including four Fortune 100 companies: The Coca-Cola Company, Home Depot, United Parcel Service, Delta Air Lines, AT&T Mobility, and Newell Rubbermaid. Other headquarters for some major companies in Atlanta and around the metro area include Arby's, Chick-fil-A, Earthlink, Equifax, Gentiva Health Services, Georgia-Pacific, Oxford Industries, RaceTrac Petroleum, Southern Company, SunTrust Banks, Mirant, and Waffle House. In early June 2009, NCR Corporation announced that they will relocate its headquarters to the nearby suburb of Duluth, Georgia.^[127] First Data is also a large corporation who announced in August 2009 that they would move its headquarters to Sandy Springs.^[128] Over 75% of the Fortune 1000 companies have a presence in the Atlanta area, and the region hosts offices of about 1,250 multinational corporations. As of 2006 Atlanta Metropolitan Area ranks as the 10th largest cybercity (high-tech center) in the US, with 126,700 high-tech jobs.^[129]

Delta Air Lines is the city's largest employer and the metro area's third largest.^[130] Delta operates one of the world's largest airline hubs at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport and, together with the hub of competing carrier AirTran Airways, has helped make Hartsfield-Jackson the world's busiest airport, both in terms of passenger traffic and aircraft operations. The airport, since its construction in the 1950s, has served as a key engine of Atlanta's economic growth.^[131]



The Coca-Cola world headquarters

Atlanta has a sizable financial sector. SunTrust Banks, the seventh largest bank by asset holdings in the United States,^[132] has its home office on Peachtree Street in downtown.^[133] The Federal Reserve System has a district headquarters in Atlanta; the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, which oversees much of the deep South, relocated from downtown to midtown in 2001.^[134] Wachovia announced plans in August 2006 to place its new credit-card division in Atlanta,^[135] and city, state and civic leaders harbor long-term hopes of having the city serve as the home of the secretariat of a future Free Trade Area of the Americas.^[136]

Atlanta is also home to a growing Biotechnology sector, gaining recognition through such events as the 2009 BIO International Convention.^[137] Atlanta is also the headquarters of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission Region II.

The auto manufacturing sector in metropolitan Atlanta has suffered setbacks recently, including the closure of the General Motors Doraville Assembly plant in 2008, and the shutdown of Ford Motor Company's Atlanta Assembly plant in Hapeville in 2006. Kia, however, has opened a new assembly plant near West Point, Georgia (U.S. state)Georgia.^[138]



CNN Center



Delta Air Lines headquarters

The city is a major cable television programming center. Ted Turner began the Turner Broadcasting System media empire in Atlanta, where he bought a UHF station that eventually became WTBS. Turner established the headquarters of the Cable News Network at CNN Center, adjacent today to Centennial Olympic Park. As his company grew, its other channels—the Cartoon Network, Boomerang, TNT, Turner South, Turner Classic Movies, CNN International, CNN en Español, HLN, and CNN Airport Network—centered their operations in Atlanta as well (Turner South has since been sold). Turner Broadcasting is a division of Time Warner. The Weather Channel, owned by a consortium of NBC Universal, Blackstone Group, and Bain Capital, has its offices in the Cumberland district northwest of downtown Atlanta.

Cox Enterprises, a privately held company controlled by James C. Kennedy, his sister Blair Parry-Okeden and their aunt Anne Cox Chambers, has substantial media holdings in and beyond Atlanta; it is headquartered in the city of Sandy Springs.^[139] ^[140] Its Cox Communications division, headquartered in unincorporated DeKalb County,^[141] is the third-largest cable television service provider in the United States.^[142]

Unincorporated DeKalb County is also home to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Adjacent to Emory University, with a staff of nearly 15,000 (including 6,000 contractors and 840 Commissioned Corps officers) in 170 occupations, including: engineers, entomologists, epidemiologists, biologists, physicians, veterinarians, behavioral scientists, nurses, medical technologists, economists, health communicators, toxicologists, chemists, computer scientists, and statisticians. Headquartered in DeKalb County, CDC has 10 other offices throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. In addition, CDC staff are located in local health agencies, quarantine/border health offices at ports of entry, and 45 countries around the world. Originally established in 1946 as the Communicable Disease Center, its primary function was to combat malaria, the deep southeast being the heart of the U.S. malaria zone at the time.^[143]



Federal Reserve Bank in Midtown Atlanta.

Law and government

Atlanta is governed by a mayor and the Atlanta City Council. The city council consists of 15 representatives—one from each of the city's 12 districts and three at-large positions (a district system superseded the ward system in 1954). The mayor may veto a bill passed by the council, but the council can override the veto with a two-thirds majority.^[144] The mayor of Atlanta is Kasim Reed.

Every mayor elected since 1973 has been black.^[145] In 2001, Shirley Franklin became the first woman to be elected Mayor of Atlanta, and the first African-American woman to serve as mayor of a major southern city.^[146] Atlanta city politics suffered from a notorious reputation for corruption during the 1990s administration of Bill Campbell, who was convicted by a federal jury in 2006 on three counts of tax evasion in connection with gambling income he received while Mayor during trips he took with city contractors.^[147] As the state capital, Atlanta is the site of most of Georgia's state government. The Georgia State Capitol building, located downtown, houses the offices



Atlanta City Hall

of the governor, lieutenant governor and secretary of state, as well as the General Assembly. The Governor's Mansion is located on West Paces Ferry Road, in a residential section of Buckhead. Atlanta is also home to Georgia Public Broadcasting headquarters, and is the county seat of Fulton County, with which it shares responsibility for the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System.

The city is divided into 25 neighborhood planning units or NPUs, which in turn are divided into 242 officially defined neighborhoods, some of which are traditional neighborhoods, while others are large districts containing multiple neighborhoods, such as Downtown and Midtown.^[148]

Crime

Crime in Atlanta has been consistently dropping. Between 2001 and 2009 the crime rate in Atlanta dropped by 40 percent, according to the FBI. Homicide fell 57 percent. Rape is down 72 percent. Violent crime overall is down 55 percent. Atlanta's public safety improvement has occurred at more than twice the rate of the rest of the country. Crime is down across the country, but Atlanta's improvement has far surpassed the national trend. This relative improvement explains why Atlanta—after ranking in the top five highest crime cities for most of the previous three decades—now ranks 31st. Atlanta has lower crime than Salt Lake City, Orlando and Tacoma, Washington.^[149] The city is served by the Atlanta Police Department, which has an estimated 1,700 officers working in the force. Atlanta is divided into six police zones.

Demographics

Historical populations			
Census	City ^[150]	Region ^[151]	
1850	2,572	N/A	
1860	9,554	N/A	
1870	21,789	N/A	
1880	37,409	N/A	
1890	65,533	N/A	
1900	89,872	419,375	
1910	154,839	522,442	
1920	200,616	622,283	
1930	270,366	715,391	
1940	302,288	820,579	
1950	331,314	997,666	
1960	487,455	1,312,474	
1970	496,973	1,763,626	
1980	425,022	2,233,324	
1990	394,017	2,959,950	
2000	416,474	4,112,198	
2010	420,003	5,729,304	
*Estimates ^{[152] [153] [154]} Region: Combined Statistical Area (CSA)			

2010 Census figures indicated a population of 420,003 – 22.4% lower than 2009 estimates of 540,921.^[155] The huge difference between the 2010 official count and the 2009 estimates caused many to question the reliability of the 2010 count, including Atlanta mayor Kasim Reed.^[156]

According to the 2010 census, the racial composition of the city of Atlanta was as follows:

- Black or African American: 54.0%
- White: 38.4% (Non-Hispanic Whites: 36.3%)
- Asian: 3.1%
- Native American: 0.2%
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander: 0.0%
- Some other race: 2.2%
- Two or more races: 2.0%
- Hispanic or Latino (of any race): 5.3%

Source:^[157]

The city of Atlanta is seeing a unique and drastic demographic increase in its white population, and at a pace that outstrips the rest of the nation. The proportion of whites in the city's population, according to Brookings Institution, grew faster between 2000 and 2006 than that of any other U.S. city. By 2010, Atlanta's white population had increased by 22,763 people. The white percentage increased from 31% in 2000, to 35% in 2006, to 38% in 2010, more than double the increase between 1990 and 2000. During the same time, the city's black population decreased by 31,678 people, shrinking from 61.4% of the city's population in 2000 to 54.0% in 2010. The demographic changes are due to an influx of whites into gentrifying intown neighborhoods, such as East Atlanta and the Old Fourth Ward, coupled with a movement of blacks into adjacent suburbs, such as Clayton County.^{[158] [159] [159] [160]}

The median income for a household in the city was \$47,464 and the median income for a family was \$59,711. About 21.8% of the population and 17.2% of families lived below the poverty line.^[161]

The city of Atlanta also has one of the highest LGBT populations per capita. It ranks 3rd of all major cities, behind San Francisco and slightly behind Seattle, with 12.8% of the city's total population recognizing themselves as gay, lesbian, or bisexual.^{[162] [163]}

According to the 2000 United States Census (revised in 2004), Atlanta has the twelfth highest proportion of single-person households nationwide among cities of 100,000 or more residents, which was at 38.5%.^[164]

According to a 2000 daytime population estimate by the Census Bureau,^[165] over 250,000 more people commuted to Atlanta on any given workday, boosting the city's estimated daytime population to 676,431. This is an increase of 62.4% over Atlanta's resident population, making it the largest gain in daytime population in the country among cities with fewer than 500,000 residents.

According to census estimates, the city of Atlanta was the 13th fastest growing city in the nation, in terms of both percentage and numerical increase.^[166]

Since the 1990s, the number of immigrants from Latin America to Atlanta has greatly increased.^[167] This flow of immigrants has brought new cultural and religious practices and affected the economy and demography of the urban area, resulting in vibrant Hispanic communities within the city. Although the majority of the Hispanic population is made up of Mexicans, it has been declining due to an increase in deportation and the population of other Hispanic groups.^[168]

Education

Colleges and universities

The city has more than 30 institutions of higher education, including the Georgia Institute of Technology, a premier research university that has been ranked among the nation's top ten public universities since 1999 by *U.S. News & World Report*; Emory University, a prominent liberal arts and research institution that has been consistently ranked as one of the top 20 schools in the United States by *U.S. News & World Report* and is widely considered one of the leading universities in the world; Georgia State University, a comprehensive public research university located downtown; SCAD-Atlanta, the Atlanta campus of Savannah College of Art and Design, a private arts university; the Mercer University Cecil B. Day Graduate and Professional Studies campus; Morris Brown College, a four-year, private, coed, liberal arts college; and the Atlanta University Center, comprising Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College, Spelman College, and Interdenominational Theological Center, a consortium of historically-black colleges.

Greater Atlanta contains several notable colleges and universities, including Oglethorpe University, a small liberal arts school named for the founder of Georgia with a faculty rated 15th in the nation by the *Princeton Review*; Agnes Scott College, a women's college; Kennesaw State University, the third largest university in Georgia; other state-run institutions such as Georgia Gwinnett College, Clayton State University, Atlanta Metropolitan College, Georgia Perimeter College, Southern Polytechnic State University, University of West Georgia, and Gordon College; as well as private colleges, including Reinhardt University and the Atlanta Christian College.

Elementary and secondary schools

The public school system (Atlanta Public Schools) is run by the Atlanta Board of Education with interim superintendent Erroll Davis. As of 2007, the system has an active enrollment of 49,773 students, attending a total of 106 schools: including 58 elementary schools (three of which operate on a year-round calendar), 16 middle schools, 20 high schools, and 7 charter schools.^[169] The school system also supports two alternative schools for middle and/or high school students, two single-sex academies, and an adult learning center.^[169] The school system also owns and operates radio station WABE-FM 90.1, a National Public Radio affiliate, and Public Broadcasting Service television station WPBA 30.



Main Quad on Emory University's Druid Hills Campus



Part of the Henry W. Grady High School Campus in Midtown Atlanta.

Transportation

Air

Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (IATA: **ATL**, ICAO: **KATL**), the world's busiest airport as measured by passenger traffic and by aircraft traffic,^[170] provides air service between Atlanta and many national and international destinations. Delta Air Lines and AirTran Airways maintain their largest hubs at the airport.^[171] ^[172] Situated 10 miles (16 km) south of downtown, the airport covers most of the land inside a wedge formed by Interstate 75, Interstate 85, and Interstate 285. The MARTA rail system has a station in the airport terminal, and provides direct service to Downtown, Midtown, Buckhead, and Sandy Springs. The major general aviation airports near the city proper are DeKalb-Peachtree Airport (IATA: **PDK**, ICAO: **KPDK**) and Brown Field (IATA: **FTY**, ICAO: **KFTY**). See List of airports in the Atlanta area for a more complete listing.



Arts Center Transit Station

Highway

With a comprehensive network of freeways that radiate out from the city, Atlantans rely on their cars as the dominant mode of transportation in the region.^[173] Atlanta is mostly encircled by Interstate 285, a beltway locally known as "the Perimeter" which has come to mark the boundary between the interior of the region and its surrounding suburbs.



Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority provides public transportation in Atlanta

Three major interstate highways converge in Atlanta; I-20 runs east to west across town, while I-75 runs from northwest to southeast, and I-85 runs from northeast to southwest. The latter two combine to form the Downtown Connector (I-75/85) through the middle of the city. The combined highway carries more than 340,000 vehicles per day. The Connector is one of the ten most congested segments of interstate highway in the United States.^[174] The intersection of I-85 and I-285 in Doraville—officially called the Tom Moreland Interchange, is known to most residents as Spaghetti Junction.^[175] Metropolitan Atlanta is approached by 13 freeways. In addition to the aforementioned interstates, I-575, Georgia 400, Georgia 141, I-675, Georgia 316, I-985, Stone Mountain Freeway (US 78), and Langford Parkway (SR 166) all terminate just within or beyond the Perimeter, with the exception of Langford Parkway, limiting the transportation options in the central city.

This strong automotive reliance has resulted in heavy traffic and contributes to Atlanta's air pollution, which has made Atlanta one of the more polluted cities in the country.^[176] The Clean Air Campaign was created in 1996 to help reduce pollution in metro Atlanta.

Around 2008 the Atlanta metro area has ranked at or near the top of the longest average commute times in the U.S. Also, the Atlanta metro area has ranked at or near the top for worst traffic in the country.^[177]

Public transportation

Notwithstanding heavy automotive usage, Atlanta's subway system, operated by Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA), is the eighth busiest in the country.^[178] Feeding into the rail system is MARTA's bus system, the 14th largest in the country. MARTA rail lines connect many key destinations in the area such as the airport, Downtown, Midtown, Buckhead, Perimeter mall, and Decatur. However key central destinations such as Emory University and Turner Field remain unserved.

There is no commuter rail in Metro Atlanta at this time, and MARTA rail lines only reach the innermost suburbs such as Sandy Springs, Brookhaven, College Park and Decatur – only Fulton and DeKalb Counties chose to join MARTA; Cobb, Gwinnett and other counties chose to stay out of MARTA. To provide a public transportation option for suburban and exurban commuters, the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority operates the Xpress^[179] bus service from Downtown and Midtown Atlanta to 12 counties.

Public transportation originally consisted of horsecars (from 1871), which were replaced by electric streetcars (1889–1949), which were in turn replaced by trolleybuses ("trackless trolleys") (1937–1963) and buses. In 1963 all existing trolleybuses were replaced by buses. Various proposals would bring streetcars back to Atlanta. The Downtown Connector route, now funded, will connect Centennial Olympic Park with Peachtree Center and the MLK historic site. Other proposed routes include lines along the 22-mile Beltline around Atlanta's central neighborhoods, as well as on Peachtree Street, Ralph David Abernathy Blvd., North Ave., and 17th St.^[180] Proposals also exist for a commuter rail system, MARTA rail line extensions, light rail lines, bus rapid transit, and more suburban express buses.^[181]

Intercity rail

Atlanta began as a railroad town and it still serves as a major rail junction, with several freight lines belonging to Norfolk Southern and CSX intersecting below street level in downtown. It is the home of major classification yards for both railroads, Inman Yard on the NS and Tilford Yard on the CSX. Long-distance passenger service is provided by Amtrak's Crescent train, which connects Atlanta with many cities between New Orleans and New York. The Amtrak station is located several miles north of downtown—and it lacks a connection to the MARTA rail system. An ambitious, long-standing proposal would create a Multi-Modal Passenger Terminal downtown, adjacent to Philips Arena and the Five Points MARTA station, which would link, in a single facility, MARTA bus and rail, intercity bus services, proposed commuter rail services to other Georgia cities, and Amtrak.



International relations

Diplomatic missions

Atlanta, as the home of 24 general consulates, contains the seventh-highest concentration of diplomatic missions in the United States. Most of the diplomatic missions are located in Buckhead, Midtown, or Peachtree Center. The city is also home to 36 honorary consulates.^[182] In 2011, it was announced that Atlanta would be the host of the next Indian consulate.^[183]

Sister cities

Atlanta has 18 sister cities, as designated by Sister Cities International, Inc. (SCI):^[184]

-  Toulouse, France (1974)
-  Brussels, Belgium (1967)
-  Bucharest, Romania (1994)
-  Cotonou, Benin (1995)
-  Daegu, South Korea (1981)
-  Fukuoka, Japan (2005)
-  Lagos, Nigeria (1974)
-  Montego Bay, Jamaica (1972)
-  Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom (1977)
-  Nuremberg (Nürnberg), Germany (1998)
-  Ancient Olympia, Greece (1994)
-  Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago (1987)
-  Ra'anana, Israel (2000)^[185]
-  Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (1972)
-  Salcedo, Dominican Republic (1996)
-  Salzburg, Austria (1967)
-  Taipei, Republic of China (Taiwan) (1974)
-  Tbilisi, Georgia (1988)^[186]

Surrounding municipalities

The population of the Atlanta region spreads across a metropolitan area of 8376 square miles (21694 km²)—a land area larger than that of Massachusetts.^[187] Because Georgia contains the second highest number of counties in the country,^[188] area residents live under a heavily decentralized collection of governments. As of the 2000 census, fewer than one in twelve residents of the metropolitan area lived inside Atlanta city proper.^[189]

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External links

- Official Website (<http://www.atlantaga.gov/>)
 - Atlanta Department of Watershed Management (<http://www.atlantawatershed.org/>)
 - Atlanta Police Department (<http://www.atlantapd.org/index.asp?nav=MW>)
 - Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau (<http://www.atlanta.net>)
 - Entry in the New Georgia Encyclopedia (<http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Home.jsp>)
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 - Atlanta Time Machine (<http://www.atlantatimemachine.com/>)
 - Atlanta travel guide from Wikitravel
 - Atlanta, Georgia, a National Park Service *Discover Our Shared Heritage* Travel Itinerary (<http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/atlanta/>)
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