

Atlanta

Back in 1837 Atlanta was little more than a hamlet existing to serve as a railway terminus; then came the Civil War that saw the town burned to the ground. Undaunted, 135 years later Atlanta bustles with more than three million people, and has been chosen by numerous leading international companies as the home of their corporate or regional headquarters. The lively, thriving city styles itself as the capital of the 'New South', and its dramatic skyline is littered with gleaming skyscrapers. Atlanta attracts visitors both for holidays and business, with its plethora of entertainment, shopping and cultural attractions as well as innumerable top class convention and accommodation venues.

The downtown Peachtree Centre pedestrianised precinct covers 14 blocks of retail space, including three massive hotels, dozens of restaurants and imposing office towers. There are also plenty of museums, galleries and centres for performing arts, as well as the world's largest aquarium. Atlanta has not lost its pioneering southern spirit or charm despite its modern guise, and the city's symbol of the phoenix serves as enduring reminder of its troubled past and bright future.

The Atlanta Braves are a professional baseball team based in Atlanta, Georgia. The Braves are a member of the Eastern Division of Major League Baseball's National League. From 1997 to the present, the Braves have played in Turner Field.

The "Braves" name, which was first used in 1912, originates from a term for a Native American warrior. They are nicknamed "the Braves", and often self-styled as "America's Team" in reference to the team's games being broadcast on the nationally available TBS until the 2008 season, gaining a wide fanbase.

The energy that was embodied in its famous sons, Martin Luther King, Jr and Ted Turner (founder of CNN) still crackles in the air and the genteel olde-world atmosphere still lingers in the residential neighbourhoods. Above all, Atlanta radiates a warm welcome in the true tradition of Southern hospitality.

Atlanta's trains and buses reach most parts of the city, but they are not always the most convenient way to get around, and services are limited outside of the immediate city limits.

The MARTA (Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority) network is inexpensive, safe and well-integrated, but travel can be slow. A one-way MARTA pass, good for travel anywhere on the system, costs \$1.75. There are weekly, weekend and visitor's passes available for various rates that are even more economical.

Atlanta is a car-dominated city, so there is plenty of parking, especially at tourist sights, but traffic on the freeways and in the city centre can be very busy, particularly during rush hours. During conventions and big sporting and entertainment events, it is easier to use public transport to get around. 'The Buc' is operated by BATMA; it is a free shuttle service connecting the two MARTA rail stations with many hotels, shopping areas and businesses in the city.

Car rental agencies require an International Driving Permit only if the visitor's national license is not in English, and most prefer drivers to be over 25 years of age.

Taxis are available, but it is easier to order one by phone than to find one on the street; they can also be found in taxi stands around the city. Visitors should be cautious of unlicensed taxis, and women travelling alone at night should order taxis by phone.