



Relocation Guide to Atlanta, Georgia

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WELCOME & OVERVIEW



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Home to Georgia's capital, Atlanta is the 7th most visited city in the United States, with over half of the state's entire population living in the Greater Metro Atlanta area. Sparsely settled in 1821, Atlanta, first known as "Terminus" for the railroad lines that ended here, soon grew into the beginnings of the city it is today. Renamed in 1845 and incorporated two years later, this emerging Southern city was decimated only 15 years later during the Civil War.

One of the city's slogans, "Brave and Beautiful", says as much about Atlanta's past as the present and future. Upon flying into Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport for the first time, many visitors will comment on the abundance of trees and wonder where the city itself is located and where the people live.

Atlanta is comprised of 28 counties, with fewer than 10% of the metropolitan area residents actually living within the city limits. The Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce counts 140 cities and towns, and this number increases as cities become incorporated. Atlanta continues to grow – upwards, with ever-increasing numbers of high-rise office and residential buildings, and outwards, into the verdant suburbs while still retaining close proximity to the City itself.

Nearly one in five residents is an immigrant, making Atlanta a place of cultural diversity while maintaining its southern charm. Atlanta does not have a single area for each ethnic group, such as Chinatown in California and New York City, yet acknowledges the Buford Highway Corridor in DeKalb County and areas in Gwinnett County as commercial and social hubs for its international population.

The metropolitan area makes Atlanta the 9th largest city in the United States, a powerhouse of transportation, trade and industry throughout the region. The fourth largest concentration of Fortune 500 Companies calls Atlanta home, including Home Depot, United Parcel Service, The Coca-Cola Company, Delta Air Lines, Aflac, Southern Corporation and SunTrust Bank. The region hosts offices of over 1,250 international corporations and is host to more than 75% of the Fortune 100 companies.

There is room to grow in Atlanta, both personally and professionally. Let the southern hospitality welcome you!

Atlanta Overview

[Official website for the City of Atlanta](#) (for both visitors and residents)

Recommended website: www.atlanta.net (English, Spanish, French, German, Japanese & Portuguese)

Population: City 420,300; Metro 5,729,304

Land Area: City 132.4 square miles (343.0 km²); Metro 8376 square miles (21,690 km²)

Consulates: General 24, Honorary 36

[History](#)

[Museums](#)

[Atlanta Weekly Weather Forecast](#)



Photo courtesy of [Wikimedia Commons](#)

Recommended Reading (in print)

General Information:

- [Frommer's Atlanta](#)
- [The Lonely Planet: Atlanta](#)

Atlanta with Children:

- *Around Atlanta with Children: A Guide for Family Activities* www.amazon.com)

Outdoors Activities:

- *Atlanta Walks: A Comprehensive Guide to Walking, Running and Bicycling the Area's Scenic and Historic Locales* www.amazon.com)

Magazine (monthly publication): [Newcomer Atlanta](#)

What to See, Sightseeing, Tours, Value Packages and Passes, Tourist Information

- Atlanta Convention & Visitors Center, 233 Peachtree St. NE, Suite 1400, Atlanta, GA 30303, phone 404-521-6600 (www.atlanta.net)
- [Save money on attractions](#)
- [Sightseeing packages](#)
- [Visitor Information and Welcome Centers](#) (valuable for vacation planning)

Where to Find Arts & Entertainment

- [The Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#)
- [Access Atlanta](#) (entertainment/events)
- [Yelp](#) (includes reviews)
- www.atlanta.net/artsculture/index.aspx
- [Movies](#)
- [Theaters](#)
- [Concerts](#)
- [Museums](#)

Where to Eat

Local restaurants:

- www.atlanta.net/dining
- www.local.yahoo.com/GA/Atlanta/Food+Dining/Restaurants/Restaurants
- www.groupon.com/Atlanta (discounted offers, good for trying out new places)

Online reservations: www.opentable.com

Tippling & Sales Tax

When enjoying a meal at a restaurant in America, you are expected to leave a tip for your server. In a bar, café or modest restaurant, 15% is acceptable, 18% is above average, and 20% or more is excellent. Most restaurants include the tip for large groups (generally 18 – 20%); any additional tip is up to the diners' discretion.

In some restaurants, the tips are "pooled", meaning that all tips are combined and shared amongst the entire wait staff (host/hostess, server, kitchen staff, etc.). The most common place where you may see this is at a coffee shop, donut or bagel shop, ice cream shop or other locale where a "Tip Jar" is strategically placed near the cash register; in these instances, tipping is optional yet always appreciated.

Sales tax varies throughout Metro Atlanta and is voted on periodically by the constituents. The State Sales Tax is currently set at 4%, with a County Sales Tax also charged. The most recent list can be seen [here](#) (click on Sales Tax Rates).

**IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY
DIAL 911
For
FIRE, POLICE & AMBULANCE**

Language problems: If the person calling 911 does not speak English, they can tell the operator what language they speak and the operator will have an interpreter on the line to assist with the interpretation.

They will ask for the following information so keep this page close to your phone:

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
PHONE _____

If you accidentally call 911, please do not hang up. The police will automatically be dispatched to your home to make sure there are no problems. Explain to the Operator the call was an accident.

Other Important Numbers:

CLOSEST CONSULATE OFFICE _____
PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN _____
WORK PHONE NUMBER _____

911 calls can be made from any phone, wired or wireless. An emergency is a situation where immediate assistance from the fire department, police or ambulance is needed. Examples include: a fire, a crime (especially in progress), a car crash (especially if someone is injured), or a medical emergency. If you're not sure whether the situation is true emergency, call 911 and let the operator determine whether you need emergency help.

When you call 911, be prepared to answer the following questions, which may include:

- Name of the individual making the call
- Address of the emergency (street, room number if applicable)
- Phone number you are calling from
- Type of emergency
- Any details about the emergency (how many people are involved or injured, type of fire if known, names of criminals if known, etc.)

Remember, the call-taker's questions are important to get the right kind of help to you quickly.

Be prepared to follow any instructions the call-taker gives you. Many 911 centers can tell you exactly what to do to help in an emergency until help arrives, such as providing step-by-step instructions to aid someone who is choking or needs first aid or CPR.

Finally, do not hang up until the call-taker instructs you to.

If you dial 911 by mistake, or if a child in your home dials 911 when no emergency exists, do not hang up—that could make 911 officials think that an emergency exists, and possibly send responders to your location. Instead, simply explain to the call-taker what happened.

[POISON CONTROL](#) 1-800-222-1222

[ANIMAL POISON CONTROL](#) 1-888-426-4435

Embassies/Consulates

Georgia offers access to 68 governments from around the world with consular offices and/or trade representation located in metro Atlanta.

For a list of embassies/consulates located in the Atlanta area click [here](#).

Hospitals

- [Emory University Hospital](#) (Atlanta): Cancer; Ear, Nose & Throat; Geriatrics; +11 other specialties.
- [Piedmont Hospital \(Atlanta\)](#): Gastroenterology; Cancer; Diabetes & Endocrinology; +8 other specialties.
- [Shepherd Center \(Atlanta\): Rehabilitation](#).
- [Wesley Woods Geriatric Hospital \(Atlanta\)](#): Geriatrics (elderly patients).
- [Kennestone Hospital \(Marietta\)](#): Diabetes & Endocrinology; Cardiology & Heart Surgery; and Orthopedics.
- [Northside Hospital \(Atlanta\)](#): Cancer and Ear, Nose & Throat.
- [St. Joseph's Hospital \(Atlanta\)](#): Gastroenterology and Geriatrics.
- [Grady Memorial Hospital \(Atlanta\)](#): Trauma; Ear, Nose & Throat.
- [WellStar Douglas Hospital \(Douglasville\)](#): Nephrology.

Children's Hospitals

[Children's Healthcare of Atlanta \(Atlanta\)](#) (all specialties)

Veterinary Clinics

- [Clairmont Animal Hospital](#):
- [Columbia Belvedere Animal Hospital](#)
- [Paces Ferry Veterinary Clinic](#)
- [North DeKalb Vet](#)

Pharmacies

There are several national chains of pharmacies represented throughout the City of Atlanta and its surrounding areas, some of which are open 24 hours/7 days a week. It's best to call ahead if you have an off-hours emergency need for medication to see if the pharmacy is open.

- [CVS](#)
- [Kroger \(supermarkets\)](#)
- [Publix \(supermarkets\)](#)
- [Rite Aid](#)
- [Walgreens](#)

A lease is an agreement that outlines the obligations of the owner and the tenants of a house or apartment. It is a legally binding document, so it is important for you to know the exact terms of the lease agreement before you sign it. Please do not sign a lease without reviewing it with your IOR DS Consultant.

Types of rental properties

- **Apartment**
An apartment is rented from a company or individual that owns the property. Apartment buildings are usually multistory with people over, under and beside each other with common hallways or walk ways. Apartments are often rented from a company or individual in the form of an individual lease with no bearing on the other tenants of the building (besides noise complaints, property damage, etc.)
- **Studio Apartments**
A studio apartment is basically a one room apartment with sleeping, dining and kitchen all in one room plus a full bathroom. A “convertible” or “alcove” studio may have a nook or area which can be sectioned off separately for sleeping.
- **Condominium**
A condo is a communally owned estate and the owners share the ownership of the common areas such as grounds and hallways. Condominiums may be apartment style buildings or town house type buildings, but condo owners do not usually own the land. Condo owners are required to pay monthly common maintenance charges, although these might be reflected in your rental rate (it is important to clarify this with your landlord).
- **Townhouse**
A Townhouse is a kind of structure where the individual properties are flush against each other with tiny front and back “yards” and shared walls between them. Almost always they are multistory single family. Usually townhouse owners own the property under their townhouse.
- **Single Family Houses**
Single-family houses are free-standing rental properties that are habited by one person or a family. As you do not share this rental space with any other tenants, single-family homes offer the most amount of privacy. Homes also often come with a parking spot and/or garage space, but may require that you handle certain maintenance items (i.e. your lawn, minor repairs, etc.)

Rental Agents

In most situations, your IOR consultant will partner with a local realtor to have access to the most current and extensive property listings as well as the realtor's expertise in preparing and negotiating leases. This agent receives a commission for their assistance, in most US locations this commission is paid by the Landlord, not the tenant. Your IOR DS Consultant will discuss this with you.

Renter's Rights

Tenants who lease or rent property are protected against discrimination by [The Fair Housing Act](#). If you think your rights have been violated, you may write a letter or telephone the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) office nearest you. You have one year after the alleged violation to file a complaint with HUD, but you should file as soon as possible.

While you can generally expect the same service from landlords, it's important to know your state's laws. Each state and most major cities have their own tenant rights, laws and protections. [Here](#) are Georgia's.

You can also visit the [HUD website](#) for a full guide to renters' rights by states

If your rental property ever suffers any defects that make your place uninhabitable, your landlord has a duty to fix it. While some apartments let you make online requests for repairs, as well as provide a phone number for "emergencies," always make sure you document your request in writing. The landlord will then have a certain amount of time to make those repairs.

Privacy

You have the right to privacy. While the landlord owns the property, they can't access it anytime they want. All states have laws stating renters have a right to privacy while renting. Pretty much the only time the landlord can come into your rental without permission or notice is when they're responding to an emergency that threatens injury or property damage.

Any other time the landlord wants to enter your apartment, they need to have your permission and in most cases give you 24-hours' notice before entering.

What to expect from the landlord:

In most states, you are legally entitled to:

- Safe structural elements including floors, walls, roofs, and secure doors and windows.
- Privacy as described above.
- All electrical, plumbing, heating and air conditioning systems function.
- Working hot and cold water.
- Exterminating infestations of rodents and other insects.
- Access to trash receptacles.
- Landlords cannot discriminate based on race, gender, sexual orientation, or disabilities.
- Apartment buildings sometimes come with laundry and dryer machines in the basement.
- Water, electricity, and gas bills are up to you to pay. **Your IOR DS Consultant will assist you with this process.**

Utilities and Appliances

Your IOR DS Consultant will assist you or provide information on connecting your utilities. It is possible some will be included in your rent, but typically most are not.

If you are moving from Europe to North America, you might be surprised at the relatively large size of the kitchen appliances in your accommodation, especially the refrigerator! It may also surprise some expats that properties are rented **with** appliances. In the US it is standard for properties to include a refrigerator, stove, and oven. Properties may also include a dishwasher, microwave, washer and dryer depending on the location, size, and price point.

Note that you will need a social security number in order to register and pay for utilities

Recycling

The [Cartlanta Recycling Program](#) works to ensure that residential customers have the resources to participate in waste reduction and sustainability practices through recycling.



The Lease Process

Review your housing budget with your IOR DS Consultant

Your DSC can help you understand what kind of property you can afford. You also need to take into account that you may be responsible for some of the utility costs of your rental.

Know what you want

What are you looking for in a property? Do you want a studio or a single bedroom? Maybe you want to rent a single family home? Do you need the property to come with appliances, including washer and dryer? Do you want it to be close to school or your work? Do you want it to be within walking distance of retail, like groceries or coffee shops? Are you looking for a child friendly area? Keep in mind that outside of the city center in major cities, there is not much public transportation and most locals drive everywhere.

Identify potential apartments

IOR offers home finding services to aid you with this process. Your consultant may work with a local broker who will help to organize appointments and visit properties. They will also assist in the rental application and the leasing process.

Common Abbreviations and Acronyms used in rental housing listings

<u>Acronym</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
24-hr mtn	24-hour emergency maintenance
AC or A/C	Air conditioning

<u>Acronym</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
LA	Living area
LR	Living room

Appls	Appliances
Apt	Apartment
BA	Bathroom
BR	Bedroom
Bsmt	Basement
CAC	Central air conditioning
DA	Dining area
Det	Detached
Dk	Deck
DR	Dining room
Dw (D/w)	Dishwasher
Eff	Efficiency
EiK	Eat-in kitchen
Fin bsmt	Finished basement
FDR	Formal dining room
FHA	Fair Housing Act
FMR	Fair market rent
FP	Floorplan
Gar	Garage
H/A	Handicapped accessible
H/W	Hardwood floors
Hi ceil	High ceilings
HVAC	Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning

MBR	Master bedroom
MBTH	Master bathroom
Neg	Negotiable
Ofc	Office
OSP	Off-street parking
Pkg	Parking
PM	Property manager (management)
Pvt	Private
Pwdr rm	Powder room (1/2 bath)
RE	Real estate
Renov	Renovated
Rf	Roof
Rm	Room
SF	Single-family
SFA	Single-family attached
SFD	Single-family detached
Sp, Pl (S/p)	Swimming pool
Sq. ft	Square feet
Th (T/H)	Townhouse
Vw (vu)	View
W/A	Wheelchair accessible
W/W	Wall-to-wall carpeting

Visit

Make this process as efficient as possible by visiting as many potential properties as you can in one or two days. Try to go sometime during the week if possible. Your IOR DS consultant will work with you to set an appropriate schedule and to ensure that the properties you visit meet your needs as closely as possible.

What to do once you're there

As you look at the rental unit, be sure to ask a lot of questions. While you should keep small concerns to yourself about the unit while looking at it, feel free to ask the landlord or apartment manager any questions you might have that will help in your decision. Here are some possible questions you may consider asking:

- What's the monthly rent?
- Are any utilities included with the rent?
- How much is the security deposit?
- When is rent due? Do you have auto-pay?
- What's the make-up of the other tenants? Are they mainly younger students? Married couples with families? Older folks?
- What's the parking situation like? Do you pay for a parking spot?
- Do you take care of small maintenance issues or am I responsible for some of the repairs in the property?
- Am I able to re-paint the walls or make other modifications?

Again, be friendly and polite when you ask these questions.

The Application

The next step in the leasing process for an apartment is to submit a rental application for the location you want. The manager or landlord will be able to give you the application as well as anything else that they may need to have filled out. Your IOR DS Consultant will assist with this process. For a single family home there will likely be a rental application.

You will need your passport, Social Security number, Visa, and proof of employment. Some landlords may charge you an application fee which could be between \$20 to \$400 dollars, depending on the landlord. This could be a combination of an application fee and move-in fee.

Once you've done this, it can take up to a few days to hear back from the property manager. Once your application has been approved the lease approval process will begin with IOR and likely your employer.

Signing the lease

DO NOT SIGN THE LEASE until your IOR DS Consultant has reviewed it in full and given their approval.

The lease is a binding contract, so it is very important to pay attention as a leasing agent goes over it with you. It is perfectly normal for you to take your time and read all the fine print for yourself. If you are working with an IOR DS Consultant, make sure to talk with them and receive approval before signing. You will also be given a copy of the lease to take with you and keep for your records, but it is very important to know everything included in your lease from the start.

Some things to look for in a lease:

- Term of the lease and any important dates such as when the rent is due.
- Extra fees for parking spaces or storage, garbage collection, and pets.
- Information regarding utility providers and whether you or the landlord is responsible for those bills.
- Notification requirements in case of renewal.
- Requirements/responsibilities of the tenants to do routine repairs such as lawn maintenance, cleaning or notification of repairs.
- Clauses that allow the landlord to change the terms of the lease after it is signed.
- Restrictions that would prevent you from living normally or comfortably in the home.

Sometimes landlords will ask for a security deposit before you sign the lease. This is normal, but you shouldn't pay in cash. Make sure all payments are made out as a check or money order just in case.

What to expect from the lease

Most leases in the United States include the following or a variation thereof:

- Your employer requires that all leases include a Break Clause in case you are transferred for work or personal needs.
- Contracts will often be for periods of a year or more.
- Minimum stay. Typically three fourths of your lease contract time. If you choose to move out before this date, you will lose your security deposit. If you move out afterwards, you are still required to give a specified number of days notice.
- Security Deposit. Landlords will expect you to leave them with a deposit (usually about one to two month's rent) that they will hold for the duration of your lease. You will receive your security deposit back at the end of the lease provided you don't break any specific clauses in your lease, such as moving out without proper notice, not paying rent, causing damages to the property, etc.
- Landlords should not be given unchecked access to your apartment. If there isn't anything in your lease about landlord's rights to enter the leased premises, suggest the following clause:

Entry by the Landlord. Landlord or his agent will not enter Tenant's home except to deal with an emergency; to make necessary or agreed repairs; to supply necessary or agreed services; or to show the unit to potential purchasers, tenants, or repair persons. Unless there is an emergency, Landlord will give Tenant at least 24 hours' written notice of the date, time, and purpose of the intended entry and will schedule entries during normal business hours, Monday–Friday.

Most landlords will be hard-pressed to say no to such a reasonable clause. If the landlord refuses, it's a sure sign that he won't be reasonable in other respects, too. Continue on in your housing search.

Moving In

On your selected move-in date, after the lease has been signed, and deposits have been paid...you should be given your keys and more than likely a move-in form to fill out. Your IOR Consultant will assist you with an initial walk through of your apartment. Look for dings in the walls, cracked windows, or other irregularities and report them on this form. This will indicate that these things were there before you moved in and you will not be held responsible for them at the end of the lease term.

Get Renter's Insurance

Renter's insurance covers any loss to your personal property due to robbery or accidents. It also covers any damage you might cause to other tenant's property. For example, let's say your washing machine springs a leak and water seeps through the floor and ruins your neighbor's antique dresser. Renter's insurance would cover that.

Renter's insurance will cost approximately about \$15-125 a month, less if you tack it onto another policy (like auto) you have with an insurance company. A few popular options are [Allstate](#) and [StateFarm](#).

When relocating internationally, your children's education is of great concern. IOR eases this concern by exposing you to the various school options available for your child and helping you to work within the framework of options to find the best solution for your family.

I. Overview and Philosophy of the United States Educational System

In most U.S. locations you will have the choice of sending your children to either a public or private school. A public school must accept your child for enrollment if you live within its designated district. A private school may have a general curriculum similar to that of public schools, but may or may not accept your child depending on availability of space, your child's prior academic history, language ability in English, or the result of entrance exams. Private schools charge a fee, which can be quite high. If you are considering private school, be sure you have a clear understanding of your employer's policy regarding reimbursement. In the U.S. approximately 85% of the children attend public schools for ages 5 to 13, and approximately 93% of the children attend public school at the high school level. Many, though not all, private schools are parochial, or religiously affiliated schools.

A third option called 'charter school' is sometimes available. Charter Schools are similar to public schools in that they are free, non-religious, publicly funded, and are held to state and federal academic standards. Each charter school is governed by its own local school community, which often includes parents and teachers - rather than a district. This freedom allows teachers to be more innovative, and communities to shape their local school. Charter schools can set their own hours and adjust their curriculum to fit their student needs, and give teachers the opportunity to experiment with next-generation teaching models including technology and the virtual classroom. Charter schools typically admit students by random lottery and do not restrict enrollment based on location, academic achievement, or other factors private schools may consider.

Most Americans, regardless of their level of education and income, send their children to public schools. Because each town or community typically has its own school system funded by local municipal taxes and state revenues, residents in an area with a higher tax base can usually be assured of quality public education. IOR is very conscientious about placing assignees and their families in areas with good public school systems.

Private schools do not receive state revenue, although they may be entitled to assistance with transporting students and providing for special needs such as speech therapy and assistance of the learning disabled. Private schools are funded through tuition paid by the student's parents. Typically, there are additional fees for books, uniforms, and school supplies, and the parents are

usually solicited for additional charitable donations. There may also be book or activity fees at public schools.

The public education system in the U.S. is administered by local and state government, rather than by the federal government. Each state has a board of education which sets policy for all school districts and standards which all students must achieve. In addition, each local district has a board of education which sets local policy and curriculum within the parameters set forth by the state.

School districts can provide specialized programs and services for children with special needs. The general philosophy of education in the United States is to educate the entire diverse, ethnically mixed population with equal educational opportunity for all, while serving the educational needs of the individual student.

If you choose public education for your child, the particular school your child attends is determined by the school district boundaries containing your residential address. The school may or may not be within walking distance to your home. Generally, if the distance to the school is greater than one mile, the school district provides bus transportation to and from school. For those children who do not live far enough away from the school for bus service but are too far to walk comfortably, parents may have the option of paying for bus transportation, or they may choose to drive their children to and from school. Very often parents form 'car pools', sharing the responsibility of driving groups of children.

Generally private schools do not have residential boundaries for their students' families. In most cases, parents rely on car pools to ease the burden of transporting their students to and from school. In selecting your home, consider the driving distance and time to and from the private school.

Ultimately, the school your children attend is determined by your residential address, so it is a good idea to include visits to potential schools and properties in your pre-trip visit. Your pre-trip visit will consist of selected sample houses in a variety of communities, along with information, or perhaps visits, to the appropriate schools. However, there may be a limited selection of homes available within each community. It is possible you may find a school you like, but there may not be any available housing options within that school's enrollment radius. We will show you housing in school districts with proven academic standards, but be aware there are cases when certain schools are unavailable due to housing concerns.

If you are considering a private school, you may wish to visit it as well as a public school to compare. It would be advisable, however, to first determine if the private school has space available for your child. Additionally, you will want to know the amount of tuition and fees for the school, as that may be a factor in your decision.

II. Academic Standards

A. Curriculum:

The overriding objective of elementary and secondary education, public or private, is to prepare students for higher learning and future employment. Each school district or private school will have a unique curriculum which meets the above overriding goals.

Elementary School:

The elementary years (kindergarten through fifth grade) focus on fundamental academic skills, language arts, social studies, science, and mathematics in addition to introduction to technology, art, music, physical education, and sometimes foreign languages. Students' personal development is energized through emphasizing strong work habits which provide a positive feeling toward learning.

Middle School:

Middle School helps children in early adolescence (sixth through eighth grade) transition from elementary to high school and from childhood into young adulthood. The structure of the school day includes contact with several teachers who specialize in their subject matter; students usually move from one classroom to another. Curricular content focuses on expansion of skills in math, science, reading, writing and social studies. Further exploration of foreign languages, practical and fine arts, music, health, physical education and computer literacy are also provided. Middle school students are able to enhance their formal education by participation in school sponsored adult supervised competitive athletics and a variety of clubs and special interest groups.

High School:

The premise of elementary and middle schools is to prepare students for the academic, social, and physical challenges of high school. All high schools maintain defined academic requirements for graduation, however great flexibility of classes is usually available within this framework. Most schools provide more challenging academic courses entitled honors or advanced placement which award college credit to successful students. High school extracurricular and athletic activities are more competitive than those found at lower levels and often provide talented students with opportunities continue this activity in college or university.

B. Grading Systems/Assessment of Child Progress

Schools typically report students' progress to parents with written report cards, which may be either mailed or carried home by the student. Many schools also set one or two days aside each semester for parent/teacher conferences. These conferences are an opportunity for parents to meet with their children's teachers and hear the teacher's evaluations of their student's performance in school. At the elementary school level, where children usually have one primary teacher, a teacher conference may last from fifteen minutes to an hour in length. At the middle school and high school levels, you may meet with your child's teachers for a period of five or ten minutes. If you need additional time with the teacher, you may schedule a follow-up visit

allowing time for a more complete discussion. It is a good idea to participate fully in teacher conferences. Your children's teachers may be able to provide valuable insight regarding your children's academic and social adjustments. Should there be concerns, they may be able to assist you with helpful suggestions of additional resources to contact.

C. Standardized Testing

Challenged to prepare students for higher learning and future employment, all school districts and private schools utilize standardized testing to measure student progress over time and compare themselves to national standards. Such tests are prepared by national groups of parents and educators as well as business and academic leaders. Tests vary from state to state, but typically students in prescribed grade levels (for example, grades 3, 6, 8 and 10) are tested in the areas of reading, mathematics, writing science and social science. Colleges and universities use the ACT and SAT tests to measure incoming student abilities; the results of these tests are nearly as important as high school grades when students apply for entrance into US colleges and universities.

III. Definition of School Groupings

A. Pre-School or Nursery School

In the U.S., 3, 4 and some 5 year olds have the opportunity to attend a pre-school under a private system. These schools can be located in a local school, a church, or an independent free standing building. Pre-school is not publicly funded and is fee-based. Typically children are grouped by age. Most of the schools are play-based, although different philosophies of formal education can be found. Typically, 3 year olds attend 2 half days a week and 4 year olds may attend 3 half days a week. Some preschools also serve as day care centers for families in which both parents work. Typically reading is not taught in pre-school, although a few programs can be found which include reading fundamentals. Concentration of learning is on small and gross motor skills, and basic academic readiness skills. Some pre-schools offer a full-day Kindergarten option for those parents who work. The public school kindergarten programs are typically only half day programs with no before or after school care. If a Kindergarten program is offered it follows the state curriculum guidelines, and teaches pre-reading and math skills.

B. Elementary School

Elementary school provides education for children ages 5 to 11, Kindergarten and Grades 1,2,3,4 &5. While kindergarten at age 5 is not required, most families send their children to kindergarten. Elementary school is the beginning of publicly funded school. In the U.S. children are grouped by age and advanced in school by age. There are usually opportunities within the grade for different levels of learning, with opportunities for advanced learners and remedial learners. The public elementary school is usually neighborhood based and the source of playmates for your child. In the U.S., pre-reading skills are introduced in kindergarten (age 5) along with early math skills. Formal reading begins in the 1st grade (age 6). Studies have shown that while children learn to read at different ages, the difference between early and late readers is not a predictor of reading skills by about the age of 8 or 9 years old. In addition to reading

and math, elementary school also has a broad base of writing, science, social studies, art, music, computer, personal development and physical education. Only in a few schools will a 2nd language be introduced at the elementary level. English as a Second Language (ESL) is offered starting at the elementary level in the public school. Parents are allowed to visit the schools, and there are many opportunities for parents to volunteer their skills, particularly at the elementary school. Parents may approach teachers and administrators with suggestions and concerns with their child. Usually the personnel are willing to consider changes if they feel it would be in the best interests of the child. With a child coming to a new country and sometimes starting a new language, feel free to talk to the school if you think something could be done to ease your child's adjustment. The school day is from approximately 8:30a.m. to 3:00p.m. with recess (playtime break) and a lunch break at the school.

C. Middle School

Middle school provides education for children ages 11 to 14, grades 6, 7 & 8. The children attend school in a different location and in the public school system several elementary schools will combine into the same middle school. A middle school is usually 2-4 times the size of the elementary school. Middle school is considered the transition between elementary school and high school and from childhood to young adulthood. Because of this philosophy, U.S. students at this age level are all introduced to the same academic curriculum. The school day is structured differently with the children changing class rooms and teacher with each subject. There are 6-8 different class periods daily. Within the grades children may be separated by academic ability in classes, particularly math and English. Often an introduction to foreign languages is offered. For those who choose, the student may have the option to complete one year of high school foreign language during middle school. If your home country requires more advanced language development at this age, you may want to consider outside supplemental language instruction. Middle school is a time when extracurricular activities such as theatre, music, sports and clubs become important activities in adolescent life.

D. High School

High school provides education for children ages 14 to 18, grades 9, 10, 11 & 12. It is the final level of education before the university, community college, or trade school. The terms Freshman (9th), Sophomore (10th), Junior (11th) and Senior (12th) are also used to identify grade level. At the high school level the student has more specific choices of course work. Each district has a set of minimum graduation requirements, which will include courses in English, math, science, social studies, physical education and a combination of foreign language, fine arts and practical arts. Within this framework the student has various choices from more remedial levels, average levels, and more advanced levels. If a student is prepared for the material, by the 11th or 12th grade a student may have the opportunity to take a college level course for advanced credit in the U.S. university system. In high school competitive sports are offered along with theatre, orchestra, instrumental and vocal music and clubs. Your child will have an opportunity to meet more U.S. children by participating in a school extracurricular activity. Each school district has 1 or more high schools with 800-2500 students. A student's high school

performance may determine the type of university or higher education program they pursue upon graduation. During high school national tests are given to determine the student's potential to advance to various higher education levels.

If your child anticipates returning to your home country to continue higher education within your university system, you might want to consider the International Baccalaureate (IB) program. This program is recognized internationally for entrance to universities. In contrast to the typical high school college preparatory curriculum, the IB semester consists of fewer subjects, studied in greater depth and with a bilingual proficiency. Developed in Switzerland, the curriculum was intended as a secondary education program which could be utilized and accepted worldwide. Not all US schools will offer an IB curriculum.

E. Post-Secondary Education

While most families on international assignment do not bring their older children (19 years+) for education in the U.S. we include a brief description of the US university system. Some form of post-secondary education is available to those U.S. students who seek it. Each state offers a public university system which the tuition is partly subsidized by the state for state residents. Residency of at least 1 year is necessary. Some are medium to large institutions (with undergraduate and graduate level programs). Some can be quite competitive for admission while others may not be competitive at all. Student's admission to the university is in part determined by their high school academic performance and course selection and as well as the results of a national standardized test (SAT or ACT). Post-Secondary is the educational level that students in the U.S. study subjects in great depth and select their majors and career choices. Graduate level programs on the master level, professional level, and PhD level are pursued after completing the 4 years of undergraduate studies.

IV. Life in Schools

A. Atmosphere

It is valuable to visit your child's school to understand the academic and non-academic atmosphere that prevails. Administrators or counselors are happy to serve as tour guides and should always be contacted in advance. Do not be alarmed if your visit takes place during the lunch hour if the children seem a bit rambunctious. Students in American public schools generally enjoy a great deal of personal freedom in the cafeteria, on the playground, and in the halls before and after class. They are supervised by teachers or members of the school staff, but they generally are more relaxed in the lunch room and in the halls. If you are visiting on a rainy day, you may observe "indoor recess" in the gymnasium which could be noisy. Rest assured that when they are in the classroom, students do settle down and work quietly and diligently. Some classrooms are more informally arranged than others. For instance, some teachers prefer to have the children's desks in a circle rather than in rows. Teachers will sometimes assign group projects, where several students work together and are thus not seated at their desks during a part of the classroom period. Teachers are expected, however, to have good control of their classrooms. Private school policy regarding these issues of personal freedom varies. Some

private schools function as the public schools do, while others may have a more closely supervised approach. Again, it is always a good idea to visit the school so that you are comfortable with that particular school's management style.

B. Parental Involvement

In addition to participating in parent/teacher conferences, most American schools encourage parents to become involved in the volunteer activities of the school. Most schools have a "PTA" (Parent Teacher Association) or "PTO" (Parent Teacher Organization). These organizations usually work with the school administration, dealing with issues such as student safety, communication to parents, academic concerns, etc., as well as fundraising and planning special programs to enhance the school experience for the student population.

Getting involved with the PTA or PTO is a great way to become well informed about your child's school. It also provides you with an opportunity to meet and really get to know other parents. There will probably be a choice of committees on which you could work; you do not have to commit to a leadership role. Some volunteer opportunities may involve actually working in the school, volunteering in the school library on day a week or one day a month for example. Be sure to alert the school administration that you would like to get involved, and ask for the name and phone number of the head of the parent volunteer organization at the school. Parent volunteers are usually welcomed and encouraged at all levels at all schools, both public and private.

C. Extracurricular Activities

A well-rounded education requires that students learn their academic subjects as well as develop socialization skills and learn nonacademic skills. Belonging to a group can be a rewarding connection with peers and a good way to develop self-confidence. These are the reasons that schools, public and private, provide numerous extracurricular activities from which their students can choose to participate. At each level of education the opportunities and choices increase. For example at the elementary school level, all students are introduced to art, music, drama and a variety of athletic experiences. At the middle school level, students have required courses in some of the above areas but are provided opportunity to participate in after school activities of their choice. For example, competitive football, soccer, swimming, track, lacrosse, basketball etc. In addition many clubs allow students to pursue other interests, for example, computers, drama, fine arts, forensics, jazz band, photography, yearbook and student council. Almost universally, each activity or club is sponsored by adults, using specialized instruction, who demonstrate a working knowledge of the activity and a desire to teach children. An even greater variety of extracurricular experiences are available at the high school level, many of which help students identify strengths, talents and interests which may direct them to future colleges, vocations or avocations.

D. Facilities

All schools maintain facilities other than classrooms which enhance or support their educational mission.

Libraries and Media Centers

Libraries are universally available and are accessible to students throughout the day and often after hours. Libraries often contain a “media center” which maintains and makes available other types of educational materials including computers and software, audio and video tapes, slides, sound sequences, projectors and recorders of various types for use individually or in groups. The wide availability of computers and access to the internet has provided almost unlimited opportunities for students and teachers to obtain information that can enhance and facilitate learning.

Fitness Facilities/Gymnasium

Fitness facilities, or ‘gyms’ as they are typically referred to, are supplied by almost all schools in the United States. Gyms often consist of a large indoor court with various sports equipment. They are open during lunch hours and for specific hours before and after school for athletes or students who wish to exercise. Many gyms will be accompanied by a weight room and a locker room with a shower. Students are sometimes expected to use these communal showers following Physical Education classes or general use of the gym’s facilities.

SCHOOLS IN THE AREA

Preschools

Many options are available; most of the private schools offer preschool education beginning at 3 or 4 years of age. Many churches also have programs; it is not always mandatory that you be a member of that church to attend, though preference is given to parishioners.

- [Springmont: Atlanta's First Montessori School](#)
- [The Suzuki School](#)
- [The Cambridge International Preschool at Buckhead](#)

Public Schools

The Atlanta Public Schools is a school district within the City of Atlanta, run by the Atlanta Board of Education with approximately 100 schools from elementary through middle and high school levels. Districts are determined by the Board with specific geographical boundaries. Often parents will opt to move into a certain school district so as to provide a better education for their children. See their [website](#) for complete information including registration and academic requirements, bus routes and school calendars on this public school system.

County Schools

Outside of the City proper, each county (Fulton and DeKalb for Atlanta) offer equally challenging curriculums at all levels. All schools have the proper accreditation with funding provided through state and government taxes.

Required Documents

The following list is offered to provide an idea of what documents might be needed; please verify with the individual school prior to registration.

- Ear, Eye and Dental Screening (Form 3300) signed by the Health Department of a licensed Georgia physician.
- Immunization Certificate (Form 3231) available through the County Department of Health and Wellness or local physicians.
- Birth Certificate must be government issued; hospital certificates are not acceptable.
- Proof of Residency: two documents indicating residence in the attendance area (examples: home mortgage payment book, current utility bill [gas, electric or water], apartment lease, homeowner's insurance registration/card, current paycheck stub, current bank statement, copy of sales contract for a home, or receipt to have utilities connected).
- Affidavit of Residence. This form is required prior to enrolling a student for the first time in a Fulton County school and also is required for all students as they enter sixth grade and ninth grade. Affidavit forms can be downloaded from the Social Work Department's web page.
- Social Security Number. Social security numbers are voluntary. Waivers are available in local schools. Applications for social security numbers are also available in local schools

- Academic Records. If possible, please bring most recent report card, withdrawal form from previous school and/or transcripts. Students in grades 7-12 also will need copies of any discipline records.

County School Information:

[Fulton County Schools](#)

[DeKalb County Schools](#)

[General Public School Information for all counties:](#)

Private Schools

There are many excellent private schools throughout Greater Atlanta. All have strong curriculums and also place emphasis on personal development and responsibility. The following website offers a glimpse at the top ten schools in each level, with state rankings and achievement scores to help you initially navigate the selection: www.privateschoolsdirectory.com/atlanta_georgia_schools.asp.

The schools that are most widely recognized include the following (in no particular order):

- [The Atlanta International School](#)
- [The Donnellan School](#)
- [The Galloway School](#)
- [The Lovett School](#)
- [The Marist School \(Roman Catholic\)](#)
- [Pace Academy](#)
- [The Paideia School](#)
- [The Westminster Schools \(Christian\)](#)
- [Woodward Academy](#)

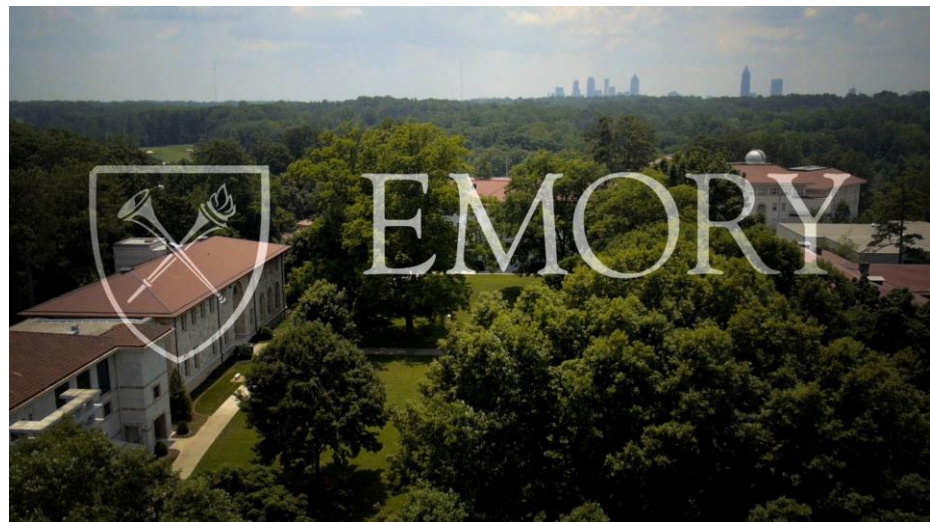
Please note that some schools offer open enrollment (registration is available throughout the school year, dependent upon space in that grade level) while others only accept new students at the beginning of the school year (typically early August).

As a final option, this website (see www.greatschools.org/georgia/atlanta/) offers a comprehensive look at both public and private schools, with reviews written by parents of actual students.

Colleges and Universities

- [American Intercontinental University](#)
- [Clark Atlanta University](#)
- [Emory University](#)
- [Georgia Institute of Technology](#)
- [Georgia State University](#)
- [Interdenominational Theological Center](#)

- [John Marshall Law School](#)
- [Mercer University \(Cecil B. Day Graduate and Professional Campus\)](#)
- [Morehouse School of Medicine](#)
- [Oglethorpe University](#)
- [Agnes Scott College](#)
- [Art Institute of Atlanta](#)
- [Bauder College](#)
- [Herzing College](#)
- [Morehouse College](#)
- [Morris Brown College](#)
- [Savannah College of Art and Design \(satellite campus\)](#)
- [Spelman College](#)



Emory University



University of Georgia

BANKING

Banks and other financial institutions, such as credit unions, offer a variety of services. These services include:

- checking and saving accounts
- credit and debit cards
- online bill pay
- loans
- insurance
- financial planning

Banks in the United States are insured by the Federal Government for deposits up to \$250,000 per depositor per bank. The bank or credit union will display the letters FDIC (Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation) as proof.

Checking and Savings Accounts

To open a checking or savings account you will need the following information:

- Two forms of picture identification including but not limited to your passport, driver's license, or work ID.
- Social security number. If you have not yet received your social security number, the bank can open an account with a W8 Temporary Tax ID form (available at the bank). You will need to call the bank with your social security number once it arrives in the mail.
- Local mailing address. You may use your office address as your mailing address, but be prepared to call your bank branch as soon as you have your permanent address.
- Letter of Employment
- Cash for the initial deposit can range from \$25-\$150 dollars.

Checks

More businesses and banks are offering online or automatic bill paying options. However, you may still need to pay some bills by mail. **NEVER SEND CASH!** You will want to order at least the minimum quantity of checks. This will cost a set fee that the bank will charge you. The checks will be pre-printed with your name, address, telephone number and account number and will be mailed to your home.

ATM or Debit Card

The most popular way of obtaining cash is by using an ATM (Automated Teller Machine) card, also referred to as a debit card. ATM's are located in most banks, malls, airports, grocery stores, and in many other public places. You will be given a PIN (Personal Identification Number) for using your card. It is important that you memorize this number and not keep written record of it with your card in order to protect your account. Most ATM's will take all cards, but many banks will charge a service fee for using

another bank's ATM. Through the ATM you may deposit, transfer, and withdraw funds. There will usually be a limit to the amount of money you can withdraw in any 24-hour period.

Credit Cards

For many international transferees, the lack of a US credit history can be a challenge. In most cases, you will not be approved for a US credit card initially. One suggestion to assist in building your US credit history is to open a **secured credit card**. With approval from the bank, you can put a certain amount of money in a savings account that will remain in the account. The secured credit card would have a credit limit equal to the amount deposited in the savings account. You will need to use your secured credit card and make the minimum monthly payments, you may also pay in full the amount due. After 9 months or so, if the bank sees that you have a good payment record, they may approve you for a regular credit card.

Security

Always pay attention to the other people around you at an ATM. Do not use the machine if you are suspicious of someone's behavior. It is safer to find another ATM or to come back later. Do not put your PIN number in with anyone close enough to see it.

Credit card theft is another increasing problem. In order to protect your card from being abused, never give your credit card or credit card number to a service provider you have not called. Another precaution is to destroy or shred copies of receipts and bills. Criminals will not hesitate to dig through the trash to find a copy of your credit card number.

Major US Banks

Below is a list of links to some of the larger US banks. Not every bank is represented in all US locations, in some cases you may find that the local bank is a better option for you than some of the larger banks. Your IOR DS Consultant can help you in selecting a bank by sharing the various options available locally, as well as the products they offer to support expatriates.

- [Bank of America](#)
- [Citibank](#)
- [CHASE](#)
- [Wells Fargo](#)
- [RBC](#)
- [SunTrust Bank](#)

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION/DRIVING

Driving

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

Three major interstate highways converge in Atlanta; I-20 runs east to west across town, I-75 runs from northwest to southeast, and I-85 runs from northeast to southwest. I-75 and I-85 combine to form the Downtown Connector through the middle of the city, carrying more than 340,000 vehicles per day, making it one of the ten most congested segments of interstate highway in the United States. The intersection of I-85 and I-285 in Doraville is nicknamed Spaghetti Junction. Metro Atlanta is also approached by Interstates 575, 675, and 985; Georgia 400, 141, and 316; and US 78; all terminate near the Perimeter.

Public Transportation

Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) is Atlanta's bus and rail system. For schedules, fares, and general information visit [MARTA's website](#).

The **Atlanta Streetcar** is part of the City's Connect Atlanta Plan to increase urban mobility, sustainable development and livability of the city of Atlanta. Phase One of the Atlanta Streetcar will make 12 stops along the alignment in between the Martin Luther King Jr., National Historic Site and Centennial Olympic Park. To learn more [click here](#).

The **Buc Shuttle** is a fast, frequent, FREE shuttle service in Buckhead that provides connections between local office buildings, transit stops and shopping destinations. For schedules and general information about the Buc Shuttle, visit their [website](#).

The **Georgia Regional Transportation Authority Xpress Bus** serves Cobb, Gwinnett, Downtown, Midtown, Buckhead, and Perimeter Circle. For schedules, fares, and general information visit their [website](#).

The [City of Atlanta government website](#) has a comprehensive and informative page dedicated to getting around the city.

Flying

Hartsfield–Jackson Atlanta International Airport, known locally as Atlanta Airport, Hartsfield, or Hartsfield–Jackson, is an international airport located seven miles (11 km) south of the central business district of Atlanta, Georgia.

Social Security Procedures

[United States Social Security Administration](#)

1-800-772-1213

Upon arrival in the United States, employees holding work visas will be required to apply, in person, for a Social Security number. The Application for a Social Security Card (SS-5) can be used by anyone who has never been issued a card, needs a replacement card or has changed his or her name. Your IOR Destination Services Consultant will assist you with this process and can answer any questions you might have.

THIS SERVICE IS FREE.

To get an original number and card, you'll need to complete an [Application for a Social Security Card](#) (Form SS-5), and show the following documents IN PERSON at the local social security office.

- Passport
- I-94 obtained from [this web site](#)
- Work Visa
- Any other documents received by US Immigration

If all of your information is confirmed, your Social Security card will arrive in the mail in approximately 2-4 weeks. Several days after you have successfully completed the application process, you may be able to take your identification with your receipt back to the Social Security office to inquire about your Social Security number before you receive your card. Your IOR Destination Services Consultant will assist you with this process.

L-2 Visa Employment Opportunity Law Changes

The L-2 visa allows the dependent spouse and minor, unmarried children of qualified L-1 visa holders to enter into the U.S.

Changes took place on July 27, 2006 that apply to spouses of L-1 Visa holders in the US on an L2 Visa. Prior to that date, spouses on L-2 Visas were not permitted to obtain a social security card and were denied the right to be employed in the US. The law change now permits L-2 Visa holders (spouses only, not dependent children) to work on a full-time basis in the U.S. with proper employment authorization from the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

The L-2 Visa holder must apply for a social security card in addition to applying for an Employment Authorization Document before they can begin employment.

Social Security Numbers

The Social Security Administration (SSA) has issued guidelines, which permit E-1, E-2, and L-2 spouses to obtain Social Security Numbers without having to first obtain employment.

Authorization Documents (EADs) from the CIS. They must show proof that their spouse is in E-1, E-2 or L-1 status, and present an original marriage certificate, in the native language. However, before they are authorized to work, they must obtain an EAD. [The new SSA guidelines are online here.](#)

Employment Authorization Document (EAD): L-2 Visa holders can apply for this document utilizing USCIS Form 1-765, Application for Employment Authorization. They must provide the following forms of identification: valid passport, 1-94 Arrival-Departure Document, Marriage Certificate from home country, two identical, and color photographs taken within 30 days of application. Currently, the process from application to EAD issue takes 3 to 4 months. The L2 Visa holder may also engage in full-time study in the US. A dependent child still may not apply for an EAD card except in cases of severe hardship. Local offices are open Monday thru Friday 9am to 4pm.

****Notice**** Social Security offices are closed on all US Federal holidays.

Driver's License

The Georgia Department of Driver Services will allow you to drive with a valid foreign driver's license or 30 days from the time you become a legal resident of the state. Given that you must also obtain a Social Security number in order to hold a Georgia license, it is important to wait for your number to arrive prior to getting your license. See www.dds.ga.gov/index.aspx for further information and test locations.

At the time you acquire your Georgia Driver's license; you must surrender your foreign driver's license and take a road signs and road rules general knowledge test.

In order to study for the general knowledge test, you may download the Driver's Manual (116 pages!) [here](#).

You may take a practice (written) test [here](#)

There is also a Vision Test and a Driving Test, both explained in more detail [here](#).

TV, Cable, Telephone and Internet

The first three companies bundle their services, with intense competition and promotional offers for first-time users. DirecTV and DishTV specialize in satellite television. Research your options thoroughly and be certain to understand your contract prior to committing to a service.

- [AT&T](#)
- [Verizon](#)
- [Comcast](#)
- [DirectTV](#)
- [Dish](#)

Mobile Phones

Five carriers are well represented throughout Atlanta. Reception can be poor in some outlying areas; residential booster antennas may provide the solution.

- [AT&T Wireless](#)
- [Verizon Wireless](#)
- [Sprint](#)
- [T-Mobile](#)
- [MetroPCS](#)

Computers, Electronics, Cameras

- [Official Mac Store](#) (several area locations)
- [Fry's](#)
- [Best Buy](#)
- [BrandsMart USA](#)

Housewares and Furniture

- [Bed Bath & Beyond](#)
- [Ikea](#)
- [Pottery Barn](#)
- [Williams-Sonoma](#)
- [Rooms to Go](#)
- [The Container Store](#)
- [Crate & Barrel](#)
- [Macy's](#)

Factory and Discount Outlets

- [Calhoun Premium Outlets](#) (Calhoun)
- [Sugarloaf Mills](#) (Lawrenceville)
- [North Georgia Premium Outlets](#) (Dawsonville)

- [Tanger Outlet Stores](#) (Commerce)
- [Tanger Outlet Stores](#) (Locust Grove)

Warehouse Clubs

These are membership only stores (annual fee required) selling a great variety of items generally sold in larger quantities at reduced prices. In addition to common supermarket items, most offer some automotive services and have a pharmacy, photo shop and gas station.

- [BJ's](#)
- [Costco](#)
- [Sam's Club](#)

Food Shopping

Most Atlantans shop at their local supermarkets, most of which have pharmacies, bakeries and floral departments too. Whole Foods (also known as Harry's Whole Foods in some areas) is a national chain, with The Fresh Market a smaller-sized version. These two markets offer a wide variety of natural and organic foods, both shelf stable and fresh produce. The DeKalb Farmer's Market is an international experience, as is the Buford Highway Farmer's Market.

- [Kroger](#)
- [Publix](#)
- [Whole Foods](#)
- [The Fresh Market](#)
- [DeKalb Farmers Market](#)
- [Buford Highway Farmers Market](#)

Asian Supermarket

An Asian supermarket called [H Mart](#) has five stores in the Greater Atlanta area. Their website is written in both Korean and English. You can find anything Asian at these stores and the fresh produce is very reasonably priced and of superior quality.

RECREATION

Professional Sports

Three professional teams call Atlanta home; during a winning season, tickets can be hard to find, so plan as far in advance as possible. They can be purchased from the individual teams or through Ticketmaster (866-448-7849 or www.ticketmaster.com); please note that fees may apply for tickets purchased through this company.

- [Atlanta Braves](#) (baseball)
- [Atlanta Hawks](#) (basketball)
- [Atlanta Falcons](#) (football)

Golf and Tennis

- www.golfatlanta.com
- www.tennisatlanta.com
- www.altatennis.org

Swimming and Theme Parks

Most hotels have swimming pools, as do many condominiums (apartment complexes) and private neighborhoods (the latter have HOA – homeowner’s association fees – paid on an annual basis that include swim and/or tennis).

[Stone Mountain Park](#) offers many ways to enjoy the day, from water-based activities to learning through adventure, culminating in fireworks at the end of the day.

Six Flags over Georgia has two theme parks in the Atlanta-area. [Six Flags White Water](#) is just that – a water park, open seasonally, where you can spend the entire day. Take sunblock! [Six Flags Over Georgia](#) is a roller-coaster based park with summer concerts, also open seasonally.

Area Parks of Interest

- [Chastain Memorial Park](#), most commonly called Chastain Park, is the largest city park in Atlanta, Georgia. It is a 268-acre (1.08 km²) park located near the northern edge of the city. Included in the park are jogging paths, playgrounds, tennis courts, a golf course, swimming pool, horse park, and amphitheater. See website for events.
- [Centennial Park](#)
- [Freedom Park](#)
- [Grant Park](#)
- [Piedmont Park](#)

EXPAT RESOURCES

Most Newcomers' groups in Atlanta usually start out with something in common: church, school, work and neighborhood (sometimes on a county level).

Atlanta Meetup International is a fairly new group with a calendar full of activities; see [their website](#) for more information.

Expat Resource Guide

- www.expatsexchange.com

Google Translator

- [Translate](#) 90 languages to and from language of choice using iTunes.

Volunteer Opportunities

- [Volunteer Match](#)
- [United Way](#)

Parent & Children Resources

- [Mom's Clubs](#) - social groups offering events and outings with mothers and their young children.

Smart Phone Apps for Travel

- [Uber](#) : Similar to a taxi service but all web based. Payment also handled online, do not pay or tip driver directly. Uber driver knows your approximate location based on your phone GPS.
- [Lyft](#) : Wherever you're headed, count on Lyft for rides in minutes. The Lyft app matches you with local drivers at the tap of a button. Just request and go.
- [Google Maps](#) : Map by direction
- [Apple Maps](#) : Map by direction
- [Map Quest](#) : Map by direction
- [Waze](#) : Community based traffic & navigation with alternate route suggestions
- [CityMaps2Go](#) : The #1 travel app lets you discover exciting new places. Beautiful photos and insider tips at the touch of a button. You will receive stories about places you like and can instantly save and find them on your maps and in your lists.

Smart Phone Apps for Communication:

- [WhatsApp](#) : Free local & international Real Time messaging
- [Line](#) : Exchange free instant messages with friends whenever and wherever with one-on-one and group chats. LINE is available on all smartphone devices (iPhone, Android, Windows Phone, Blackberry, Nokia) and even on your PC.
- [Viber](#) : Free text, calling, photo messages and location-sharing with Viber users. No registration,

alias or invitations required. Instantly integrates with your own contact list. Best-quality mobile calls using 3G or Wi-Fi.

- [Skype](#) : Stay in touch with your family and friends for free on Skype. Download Skype today to chat and call on desktop and mobile.

Smart Phone Apps for Local Information/Reviews:

- [Angie's List](#) : Referrals for doctor, dentist, child care, maid, mechanic, painter, plumber, etc.
- [Yelp!](#) : Find local businesses, restaurants, bars, clubs, events, etc. with map, lists, and reviews
- [Next Door](#) : Neighbors share community events, items for sale, recommendations for babysitters, doctors and handymen, crime reports, ideas about how to improve their neighborhood and more.
- [Meet Ups](#) : Meetups are neighbors getting together to learn something, do something or share something. Cultural groups advertise gatherings here as well.

Smart Phone Apps for Weather:

- [WTHR13](#) : Local weather and closings; includes radar and forecast
- [Weather Channel](#) : National and international time, temperature & weather
- [Tornado](#) : Set up tornado alerts & siren

U.S. IDIOMS

Idioms are words, phrases, or expressions that are not taken literally- they have meaning beyond a literal translation of the words. Idioms are generally used in casual, familiar conversation but can also come up in certain business settings. Here are some examples of commonly used American English idioms:

better off - in a more fortunate position

Big deal! - So what? That doesn't really matter.

(to) blow things out of proportion - to exaggerate; to make more of something than one should

(to) call it a night - to stop an activity for the rest of the night

dime a dozen - so plentiful as to be nothing special; common

(to) do the trick - to achieve the desired results

(to) give someone the cold shoulder - to ignore someone on purpose; to snub someone

(to) get the ball rolling - to get started

(to) go back to the drawing board - to start a task over because the last try failed; to start again from the beginning

happy camper [slang] - a happy person; a satisfied participant

(to) have a heart of gold - to be very kind and giving

(to be) head over heels in love - very much in love

(to) hit the nail on the head - to be right

(to) learn the ropes - to learn the basics

(to) lose one's touch - to no longer be able to do something well

made of money - very rich

needless to say - obviously

piece of cake - very easy

(to) pitch in - to help

(to) pull an all-nighter - to stay up all night to do work

rule of thumb - a useful principle

(as) sharp as a tack - very intelligent

(to) sit tight - to wait patiently

(to) stab someone in the back - to betray someone

(to) tell someone off - to scold; to tell someone in strong words what one really thinks

When pigs fly! [slang] - never

(to) twist someone's arm - to persuade someone; to convince someone

(to be) up in the air - not yet determined; uncertain

Many common American idioms come from sports, here are some examples:

strike out- to fail or to do poorly at something (*baseball*)

(to) call the shots- to make the decisions; to be in charge (*basketball*)

ballpark- a guess or an estimate (*baseball*)

down and out- lacking money or prospects; penniless or destitute (*boxing*)

down to the wire- to the very end or last minute (*horse racing*)

drop the ball- to make an error, to miss an opportunity (*football, baseball, rugby*)

hands down- with great ease; unconditionally; often (and originally) in the phrase “to win hands down” (*horse racing*)

(to) have someone in your corner- to have the support or help of someone (*boxing*)

(to) hit it out of the park; home run- to be wildly successful, to do a great job (*baseball*)



To learn even more idioms, visit the following links:

- [Everyday American English Idioms](#) - with example sentences.
- [Useful Idioms for Lower-Intermediate to Advanced Students \(Teacher's Resource\)](#)
- [Idiom Site A-Z](#)
- [Sports Idioms](#)
- [English Language Learning: American English Idioms](#)

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Holidays can be confusing as there are national (federal) holidays, bank holidays, state holidays. Verify those in your area with Human Resources at your place of business, especially before planning vacations or weekend get-aways!

[Federal Holidays listed through 2020](#)

[State Holidays Observed in Georgia](#)

The following are federal holidays in the United States and need to be treated as such by employers:

- New Year's Day January 1*
- Martin Luther King Day Third Monday in January
- Memorial Day Last Monday in May
- Independence Day July 4*
- Labor Day First Monday in September
- Columbus Day Second Monday in October
- Veterans' Day November 11*
- Thanksgiving Day Fourth Thursday in November
- Christmas Day December 25*

*If a holiday falls on a Sunday, the day following is observed as the legal holiday.