

## A DINING AND ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE TO DOWNTOWN ATLANTA

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Atlanta is packed with good restaurants. If you were to eat out every day at a different location, it would take you about 22 years to experience them all. In less than a week, you will not be able to enjoy the full array of available options, but you will have no trouble finding a good spot in Downtown Atlanta, where the Westin Peachtree Plaza is located.

Your starting point is 210 Peachtree Street NW. You can walk in any direction and find several options within one block or so. Restaurants in downtown Atlanta range from decent to good, with a handful of very good spots. The exception is called Hooters, and it is right in front of the Westin. The food is terrible (a friend of mine told me...), and eating there can send you right to hell. I still cannot believe a chain like that exists. My strongest recommendation goes to the Sundial restaurant on the 72nd floor of the Westin. It is very expensive, no question about that, but the view is the best Atlanta has to offer, and the ambience is superb. At the very least, you should go there to sip a cocktail or for lunch before the conference is over. Take the glass, panoramic elevator up, which is free for Westin guests.

For a listing of other restaurants and options for nightlife, see the guide below. The price code I used is (\$) for entrées under \$10, (\$\$) for entrées \$10-20, (\$\$\$) for entrées \$20-30, (\$\$\$\$) for entrées above \$30.

### *Cheap and easy*

If you like it “cheap and easy”, you have two main options for lunch. One is the **Food Court** at the Peachtree Center Mall right across the street, where you can find an assortment of airport quality Thai, Chinese, pizza, and so on. The other is **Broad Street**, about 3 blocks south of the Westin on Peachtree, where Georgia State folks go to eat. My personal favorites on Broad St. are **Mocha Delights**, **Thai Gourmet** and **Ali Baba’s**, where you can eat with \$6.

Intersecting Broad St. is Walton St., where you can find two gems open for lunch. One is **Les Fleurs De Lis Cafe** (\$/\$\$, officially on 57 Forsyth St. Suite R-8, but you enter from Walton St, four blocks, 404-230-9151), the Atlantan home of French food (and chef Lenny promised a 10% discount if you flash your ISRE badge). The other is the **Calipso Cafe** (\$, 58 Walton St, four blocks, 404-589-0024), where you can find excellent Jamaican food (try the jerk chicken) and arguably the best quality-price ratio in town.

### *Steaks*

If you like meat, you are in luck. The Westin is surrounded by steak houses. Vegetarians beware! Here are a few picks. The **Sun Dial Restaurant** (\$\$ Lunch and \$\$\$\$ Dinner, 72<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Westin Peachtree Plaza, 404-589-7506) offers high end American cuisine in an elegant ambience, and you will find much besides meat. **Morton’s of Chicago** (\$\$\$\$, Dinner, 303 Peachtree St., approximately one block, 404-577-4366) is where classic USDA prime aged cows go to die. **Durango Steakhouse** (\$\$, Lunch and Dinner, 230 Peachtree St, approximately one block, 404-222-0103) and **Steak & Ale** (\$\$,

Lunch and Dinner, 60 Andrew Young Intl. Blvd, one block, 404-577-6770) are your run-of-the-mill options for steaks and ribs.

**Ted's Montana Grill** (\$\$, Lunch and Dinner, 133 Lucky St., two blocks, 404-355-3897) is probably the best local steakhouse in the (\$\$) price range, famous for its nineteen hamburger options, bison meatloaf, and beer can chicken. If you think the guy sitting next to you looks like Ted Turner, he might just be Ted Turner. He owns the place, lives in the same building and eats there quite frequently. If you like beer to go along with your food, there is no better choice than **Max Lager's American Grill & Brewery** (\$\$, Lunch and Dinner, 320 Peachtree St., three blocks, 404-525-4400), where you can accompany your wood fired steaks with some of the best brewed beer in Atlanta.

### *Seafood*

There is no ocean in Atlanta, sadly. This has not prevented seafood restaurants from flourishing. My personal favorite is **Ray's in the City** (\$\$\$, Lunch and Dinner, 240 Peachtree St., one block, 404-524-9224), where you can find terrific seafood (sushi is served as well). If you feel like walking four blocks and cross the Centennial Olympic Park, there is another good spot for you. **McCormick & Schmicks** (\$\$/\$\$\$), Lunch and Dinner, 190 Marietta St. NW, four blocks, 404-521-1236), right next to the CNN Center, is a seafood restaurant chain, but a consistently good one. If you are into Bistro-Style Sushi/Fusion, go to **Pacific Rim Bistro** (\$\$, Lunch and Dinner, 303 Peachtree Center Ave., one block, 404-893-0018).

### *Asian/Indian/Mexican/Italian*

Lovers of Hibatchi cooking, a.k.a. "eatertainment", can find an outlet of the popular **Benihana** chain (\$\$, Lunch and Dinner, 229 Peachtree Center Ave., one block, 404-522-9627) on Peachtree Center Avenue (in Atlanta there are about 50 streets with the word "Peachtree" in their name). **Hsu's** (\$\$, Lunch and Dinner, 192 Peachtree Center Ave., one block, 404-659-2788) has won some fans for its new Cantonese gourmet cuisine. If you like it spicy and Mexican, **Mama Ninfá's** (\$/\$\$, Lunch and Dinner, 213 Peachtree St, one block, 404-521-3500) is your pick. Vegetarians can try **Haveli Indian Cuisine** (\$\$, Lunch and Dinner, 225 Spring Street, one block, 404-522-4545), where a variety of typical vegetarian Tandoori dishes are available. **Azio** (\$\$, Lunch and Dinner, 229 Peachtree St., one block, 404-222-0808) claims to offer Italian food. It is highly recommended for non-Italians.

### *American*

The American South is famous, among other things, for its artery-clogging comfort food. If you have never tried it, this is your opportunity. Right next to the Westin you can find **Pitty Pat's Porch** (\$\$/\$\$\$), Dinner, 25 International Blvd., right there, 404-525-8228). The ambience will remind you of plantations and *Gone with the Wind*, and the food is authentic Southern and really quite good. But digestion may take a while. Right across the street is the unmistakable **Hard Rock Café** (\$\$, Lunch, Dinner and Bar, 215 Peachtree St. NE, 404-688-7625), which I suppose needs no introduction. **Atlanta Grill**

(\$\$\$\$ , Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner, 181 Peachtree St., one block, 404-659-0400) offers excellent continental American food in an elegant environment, and it sports a nice terrace. If you want to impress somebody, bring them to **City Grill** (\$\$\$, Lunch and Dinner, 50 Hurt Plaza, three blocks, 404-524-2489), one of Atlanta's most opulent restaurants. **Dailey's** (\$\$\$, Lunch and Dinner, 17 International Blvd., one block, 404-681-3303) is a historic Atlantan establishment. Its remarkable dessert menu includes the (in)famous French fried ice-cream. The ground floor of the restaurant is a bar and jazz club (see below).

#### *Beyond walking*

If you are willing to take a taxi (**Checkers Taxi**, 404-351-8255), your chances to get a really good meal will increase. The options are too many to name (you can ask the Westin concierge for detailed advice). I will only give you three options, which share the virtue of being all within 1.2 miles of the hotel. **Baraonda Caffè Italiano** (\$\$, Lunch and Dinner, 710 Peachtree Street, 1 mile from the Westin, 404-879-9962) features Italian pizza that actually tastes like the real thing. **Eno Restaurant and Wine Bar** (\$\$, 800 Peachtree St, 1.2 miles from the hotel, 404-685-3191), offers excellent Mediterranean food and an outstanding wine list, with more than 100 bottles offered by the glass and 350 wine bottles total. Wine connoisseurs should definitely check it out. If you like top of the line sushi, award-winning **MF Sushi** (\$\$\$, Lunch and Dinner, 265 Ponce De Leon Ave, 1.2 miles from the hotel, 404-815-8844) is where you want to go.

#### *Nightlife*

Downtown Atlanta is not the best area of town for nightlife (Virginia Highlands, Midtown and Buckhead are), but it is not entirely devoid of options either. **Dailey's Downstairs** (17 International Blvd., one block, 404-681-3303) is a Martini and Cigar bar with live jazz music 7 days a week. It is a fairly cozy place, and the music tends to be good. The best spot for live jazz is **Churchill Grounds** (660 Peachtree St, 0.9 miles from the hotel), a very cool jazz club I recommend highly (but you will need to take a taxi or the MARTA train up to North Avenue Station). **Ted's Montana Grill** (133 Lucky St., two blocks, 404-355-3897) is worth a visit even if you just want to have a drink.

If you enjoy dancing and mingling with the hipsters, **The Mark** (79 Poplar St, four blocks, 678-904-0050) is the place for you in downtown Atlanta. Right next to it is **The SideBar** (79 Poplar St, 404-588-1850), a classic American bar with billiard tables and Cuban sandwiches. If you want to play pool, an option closer to the hotel is **Gibney's Pub** (231 Peachtree Center Ave, one block, 404-688-0928), an Irish pub with the dubious distinction of having nothing Irish on the menu. **Kenny's Alley** (50 Upper Alabama St, six blocks) in Underground Atlanta, finally, offers an assortment of sports bars, an Irish Pub, and several dance clubs if you would rather have multiple choices within a single location.