

# What Type of Coke Goes Best with Argentinosaurus?

Atlanta offers GIS attendees plenty of variety (except when it comes to soft drinks)

BY MARK LUCE

**W**hen you sit down at an Atlanta establishment, they ask you a simple question: "What kind of Coke do you want?" There's a reason, of course, since Atlanta serves as the world headquarters for Coke, so requesting Pepsi may get you a quick kick in the backside. But Atlanta offers so much more than just refreshing soft drinks, as this increasingly international metropolitan area of 4 million remains steeped in Southern hospitality and charm. As resident Nan Sewell says, "You can do whatever you're in the mood to do in Atlanta, and people still smile at you when you walk down the street."

As you head to Hot-Lanta for the Golf Industry Show, *Golfdom* happily presents a crash course to entertainment, chow, nightlife and a few surprises that will make your visit one to remember.

## Getting downtown

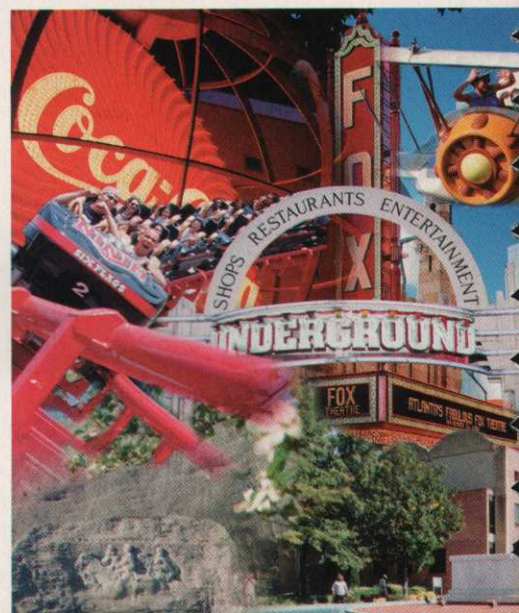
The Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport is the busiest in the world, so be ready

for crowds. To avoid Atlanta's notorious traffic (and save yourself taxi fare), hop on the city's MARTA train. The station at the airport sits at the North end, where trains wait to whisk you to the Georgia World Congress Center for a mere \$1.75.

## Attractions:

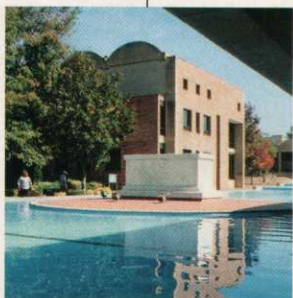
**The Georgia Aquarium**, the world's largest, opened with tremendous fanfare in November, and it's already proving to be a must-see-to-be-believed attraction. In the building's half-million square feet there are 60 different tanks, with the largest holding 6.2 million gallons of water. The aquarium features sharks,

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## Coke and Argentinosaurus



Top photo: The acclaimed High Museum of Art; middle photo: Underground Atlanta offers one heckuva shopping experience; bottom photo: the MLK Arcade.

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beluga whales and more than 500 other species. Because of public demand, if you want to swim with these fishies, you better get tickets in advance by ordering at [www.georgiaaquarium.org](http://www.georgiaaquarium.org). The aquarium (225 Baker St. NW) is just across from the convention complex. Look for the building that resembles the front of a ship.

The **Phillips Arena**, home to hockey's Atlanta Thrashers and the NBA's Hawks, also sits near the **World Congress Center**, and at 7 p.m. on Feb. 11 the arena will host a good pro hoops match-up as the youthful Hawks, led by the

Dr. NE), which features Saturday morning shows about constellations. Call 678-874-7102 for information.

For a truly relaxing and cultured evening, turn your sights to the **Atlanta Symphony Orchestra**. In the spotlight over the industry show weekend is Christopher Rex, principal cellist for the symphony, playing Dvorak's Cello Concerto and Bizet's Symphony in C Major. The symphony is located at the **Woodruff Arts Center** (1280 Peachtree St.). For ticket information, call 404-733-4800. Also at the center is the acclaimed **High Museum of Art**, a wonderful place to unwind with painting and sculpture. In February the museum will be hosting a stunning retrospective of American painter Andrew Wyeth. For ticket information, call 404-733-5000.

Fans of Coca-Cola will be in sweet heaven as they meander through the **World of Coke** (55 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive SE), a museum dedicated to the soft drink. Among the highlights are a Club Coca-Cola, where you can sip on Coke products from around the world. The tour costs \$9 and more information can be had by dialing 404-676-5151.

Near the Coke museum rests **Underground Atlanta** — a six-block-long underground shopping Mecca that's, literally, underground. In addition to a bevy of shops, the Underground houses **Kenny's Alley**, a collection of eight separate nightclubs open until 4 a.m.

Those with a bent toward history may well consider the **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. National Historical Site**, located at 450 Auburn Ave. NE. The site hosts King's boyhood home, his crypt and the Ebenezer Baptist Church, King's home church. In a similar vein, the **Jimmy Carter Presidential Center and Library** (453 Freedom Parkway) sprawls over 35 acres, and includes the Jimmy Carter Library and Museum and gorgeous lakeside gardens.

And if none of that is enough, news hounds will marvel at the opportunity to tour **CNN's World Headquarters**, right in the heart of downtown. The tour last 50 minutes, costs \$10 and afterward gives you the opportunity to purchase a tape of yourself as an anchor — not on live television, of course. For ticket information, call 404-827-2300.

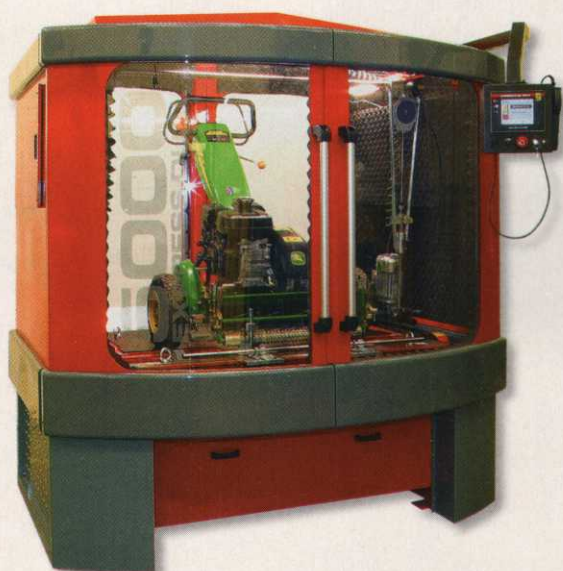
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flashy Joe Johnson, take on the also-youthful Chicago Bulls, who are marshaled by guard Kirk Hinrich. For tickets call 866-715-1500.

The **Fernbank Natural History Museum** (767 Clifton Road NE) houses one of the most impressive dinosaur displays in the world, with a 47-foot-long Giganotosaurus readying to munch a 123-foot-long Argentinosaurus, as pterosaurs fly overhead. The museum is a must for natural history lovers. On Fridays the museum features a rather swanky way to enjoy an IMAX film — with martinis. From 5:30 to 10 p.m. every Friday, the museum hosts a cocktail party, complete with music, food and film. Those looking for more galactic adventures may want to try the planetarium at the nearby **Fernbank Science Center** (156 Park



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## Coke and Argentinosaurus

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### Chow and eats:

Except for high-end dining and hotel bars, downtown tends to get a little calm after dark. So if you're looking for little jump in your jive, you may want to head to two distinctly different areas: **Buckhead**, a swanky collection of restaurants and shops; or **Little Five Points**, the place for the trendy, youthful and tragically hip.

According to Sewell, a long-time resident of the area, **McKendrick's** (505 Ashford Dunwoody Road) serves as one of Atlanta's best steakhouses. "It's a man's man's place," she says. McKendrick's serves up phenomenal cuts and humongous lobster tails, and every need is attended to by a wait staff that's second to none. It's not cheap, but it is good, and has been named one of the top 10 steakhouses in the country for the past four years. Call 770-512-8888 for reservations.

Another Atlanta steakhouse staple is **Bone's** (3130 Piedmont Road), which has been named the top steakhouse by Atlanta magazine every year since 1988. Patrons swear the lobster bisque is as good as anywhere in the country, and marvel at the service. See for yourself by making reservations at 404-237-2663.

Another place that has been getting tremendous attention lately is **2 Urban Licks** (820 Ralph McGill Blvd.), with chef Scott Serpas' fiery daily-changing menu outstanding diners nearly as much as the jaw-dropping décor. The menu features American food with a mix between Cajun flair and Southern spice. Think of Gouda grits to get the idea, or better yet, call 404-522-4622 for reservations. If more traditional fare is your bag, long-time metro resident Jay Stewart recommends you slide over to Midtown's **Veni, Vidi, Vici** (41 Fourteenth St.), a real Italian restaurant known for its excellent veal and luxurious risotto, all tucked into a stylish décor. Call 404-875-8424 for reservations.

Another spot favored by Sewell is **Sambuca Jazz Café** (3102 Piedmont) in Buckhead. This modern-day supper club features elegant food and spectacular live music seven days a week. Patrons all face the stage and all the sight lines are as good as the Mediterranean fare served up here.

Maybe you've had enough of fine dining and just want a burger. If so, check out **Vortex**, says Meredith Upchurch, a Kansas City resident who spends summers in Atlanta. The burgers, beer and single-malt scotch selection are second to none, but the service will not rank as the finest.

The Vortex doesn't take kindly to whiners or the politically correct, and, as they say, "The Vortex was not designed as a 'family restaurant.'" "We are a Bar & Grill that is meant for adults." Find the **Little Five Points** location at 438 Moreland Ave., and another in Midtown at 878 Peachtree St NE # 4.

Those who want to hit the nightlife for dancing and

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The Omni Hotel is located at CNN center in downtown Atlanta, just across the street from Centennial Olympic Park.

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people watching should hit midtown's **Vision** (1068 Peachtree St. NE), a gigantic club that hops to its own beat. It can get crowded in each of its distinct six areas quickly, so go a little early — and secure a VIP e-mail pass by visiting [www.visionatlanta.com](http://www.visionatlanta.com).

If throngs and heavy bass aren't in your repertoire, Stewart offers an old-school alternative, **Blind Willie's** (828 N. Highland Ave. NE). This Virginia Highlands joint channels

the best of Memphis, New Orleans and Chicago as it presents live, raw blues every night of the week.

While it's a bit away from downtown, locals swear by the **5 Seasons Brewery** a mi-

crobrewery with dining that matches its sumptuous beers. The Brewery (5600 Roswell Road NE) features decidedly different menu items — ostrich steak and grilled pizza. Those who love suds made with great ingredients and an artisan's touch will not be disappointed.

### Word to the wise

Enjoy your time in Atlanta. And even though the city is friendly, crime does occur. Be aware of your surroundings, know where you are going, keep your wits about you, and don't forget to use the concierge in the hotel. Oh, and if you were thinking about mentioning Gen. William Sherman in any context — think again. There's no better way to make residents angry than to invoke the name of the man who burned the town to the ground on Nov. 15, 1864.

Lucky for you, Georgians are a hearty bunch, and their rebuilding has been magnificent. Enjoy the show. ■

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