

For the Foodie- Atlanta

Culinary Escape

A quick drive down I-85 leads you to some of the country's best meals

Long gone is the time when famed fast-food joint The Varsity was the first dining recommendation you'd get in Atlanta. These days this sprawling Southern city is taking on the likes of Chicago and New York when it comes to innovative menus and celebrity chefs such as Kevin Gillespie and Richard Blais.

For fast access to delicious fare, book a room at the **St. Regis Atlanta** (from \$620 per night, stregisatlanta.com). In addition to the hotel's luxurious **Paces 88 American Bistro**, the St. Regis offers an afternoon tea featuring exquisite pastries, all served in the hotel's elegant Long Gallery.



While there are plenty of restaurants within walking distance of the St. Regis (Southwestern restaurant Nava, Chops Lobster Bar, and Seasons 52 grill and wine bar are all excellent options on the same block as the hotel), to try out the city's best, you'll have to drive. **Miller Union** (millerunion.com), a new restaurant in the up-and-coming Westside, has garnered national

attention for its menu based on that week's harvest. For dinner, head to Midtown's **Ecco** (ecco-atlanta.com), where the best way to enjoy the European-inspired menu is with lots of small-plate sharing. The cured-meat and cheese plates could make a meal alone, but whatever you do, don't skip the fried goat cheese, the restaurant's most popular item.



To bring home a few culinary souvenirs, plan an afternoon at the **Dekalb Farmers Market** (dekalbfarmersmarket.com), just east of town. There you'll find fresh local veggies, fruit, meat, and eggs, as well as baked goods and sweet jams. Plus, the massive market is filled with international foods you're unlikely to find anywhere else in the Southeast, like imported cheeses, spices, coffees, olive oils, and even beer and wine.

For the perfect end to any indulgent dining day, stop by **Holeman & Finch Public House** (holeman-finch.com), where at 10 p.m. each night the kitchen serves up just twenty-four handcrafted double-patty cheeseburgers. Sometimes these juicy burgers sell out in under a minute, though, so be there early—and be hungry.