The Red & Black

FALL/WINTER 2026

Eat & Drink

ATHENS, GA

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New Athens restaurants

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear reader,

Welcome to the 2026 fall and winter Eat & Drink Guide!

When I moved to Athens just over four years ago, I was introduced to a world of cuisines and any restaurant I could ever imagine trying after living in a small town for 19 years.

While I like to think I've tried a fair share of Athens restaurants, I haven't even scratched the surface. I'm constantly reading and hearing about new places, or finding hidden gems and "townie" favorites.

I definitely have my favorite, tried-and-true restaurants I'll always take my family and friends to when they visit — share the love, if you will.

Trying new cuisines and stepping outside of my taste palate is something my younger self would absolutely cower over; stepping outside of your comfort zone can feel intense, but I have yet to regret it.

You're going to find places you'll visit at least 100 times, and places where once was enough. But hey, at least you tried it!

Fill your plate!

McKenna Edwards, senior editor



CLASSIC CITY CLASSICS

Beloved Athens restaurants that have stood the test of time

Photo/Hannarose Schiano

ADD Drug • $

Athens Discount Drug, located on South Lumpkin Street, opened in 1961, and both the pharmacy and old-fashioned lunch counter are still serving patrons today. Swing by in the morning or early afternoon for breakfast, sandwiches, burgers, hot dogs, milkshakes and more.

Cali N Tito's • $–$$

The Five Points location is close to campus with patio seating and a BYOB policy, while the larger East Side location has a full bar, gelato counter and arcade games. Both spots are beloved by locals, students and families alike, have great atmospheres and some of the best food in town. Favorites include the empanadas, tostones and maduros.

Little Italy • $

Regularly open until 2 a.m.-3 a.m., Little Italy has been serving thick and thin crust pizza to Athens' late-night diners since 1997. Calzones, Italian subs and stromboli are also available.

DePalma's Italian Cafe • $–$$

DePalma's has been serving pizza, pasta and other Italian classics since 1988, with a different menu to try at both of its Athens locations. Pizza (pictured above!) is served at medium or large pies and the gelato flavors change daily.

The Grill • $–$$

This classic downtown diner first opened its doors in 1981 and reopened them after pandemic closures. Dine on burgers, hand-cut fries, malts and milkshakes among vintage memorabilia and the iconic red neon lights.

Big City Bread Cafe • $-$$

This cafe is open for breakfast, lunch and Friday night dinner. There's burgers, sandwiches, salads and baked goods to enjoy in the spacious dining area or on the shaded patio.

The Globe • $–$$

Traditional pub menu items like fish and chips are complemented by vegetarian options like elote corn ribs and a hummus plate. The selection of whiskeys have been a hallmark since it opened in 1989.

Strickland's Restaurant • $

Opened on Broad Street in 1960, the family-owned restaurant eventually settled on Atlanta Highway in 1995. Specializing in Southern dishes like ribs, catfish and green beans, Strickland's is open for breakfast, lunch and all your catering needs, with a rotating menu of specials that changes daily.

Last Resort Grill • $$–$$$

Founded as a music venue in 1966, Last Resort hosted acts like Jimmy Buffett and Gamble Rogers before it started serving its signature Southern fare. Steaks, cornbread-crusted trout and crab cakes are all on offer, but don't leave without a slice of white chocolate cheesecake.

Trappeze Pub • $$–$$$

Famous for its large craft and imported beer selection, this pub at the corner of North Hull and West Washington streets serves superior bar fare, catering to carnivores with dishes like the Double Pig (braised pork plus bacon), with plant-based options like the Veggie Reuben. Don't forget to try the signature raspberry ketchup.

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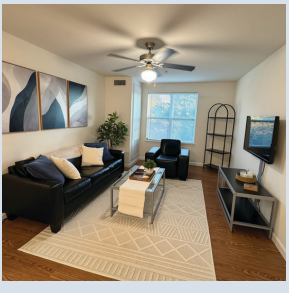
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NEW & UPCOMING EATS IN ATHENS

Adaleigh Weber

Ghavi's The Steak Place

2365 Prince Ave.

Ghavi's The Steak Place is a new fine dining establishment dedicated to creating an elevated and memorable dining experience in Athens. Its menu offers a variety of steaks, from filet mignon to spinalis, along with other items such as swordfish steak and Ghavi's street corn.

Henri's Bakery & Deli

1473 S. Lumpkin St.

Another bakery dedicated to continuing the legacy of French baker Henri Fiscus will open its doors in Five Points this fall. Henri's Bakery & Deli was originally established in Atlanta in 1929, and has since expanded to various locations in Georgia, preserving its original family recipes. Menu items include deli sandwiches, French pastries, classic cakes, seasonal items and more.

Dutch Bros Coffee

3131 Atlanta Highway

Dutch Bros Coffee is a drive-through and takeout location that offers a customizable drink selection of lattes, cold brews, protein coffees, smoothies, energy drinks and more. Popular drinks include their Golden Eagle iced latte, Cosmic Cookie Dough Freeze and Pumpkin Pie Spice.

Dovetail Market

497 Prince Ave.

Charcuterie board lovers can visit a fresh, cut-to-order, cold-cut meat and cheese market restaurant on Prince Avenue. Dovetail Market is a dedicated spot where shoppers can pick up meats, cheeses or a sandwich on the go. You can enjoy your selections at a seating area for lunch and dinner. The cut-to-order counter is open until 8 p.m. There are food pairing classes to sign up for as well.

Namak Restaurant

1155 Mitchell Bridge Road

Namak Restaurant is a new, halal Pakistani restaurant in Athens, following the success of its Alpharetta, Georgia location. Namak's menu offers an extensive selection of chicken, beef and vegetarian dishes, as well as staple curries and its signature Namak BBQ.

Oak Steakhouse

110 E. Clayton St.

Oak Steakhouse, a fine-dining restaurant located on the ground floor of the historic Holman Hotel building, features a variety of steak options and strives to use ingredients that are locally sourced and in season to support the Athens economy and agricultural community.

COFFEE, TEA OR MATCHA?

Local places to curl up with a book and sip cozy drinks

Adaleigh Weber

Paris Banh Mi

With beautiful pink-and-white umbrellas hanging from the ceiling, a cute painted mural and tables at every corner, Paris Banh Minh is located downtown and offers the perfect mix between a cozy and social environment with a variety of drinks to choose from. Coffee, boba and matcha lovers alike will have several options and can enjoy a Vietnamese meal or appetizer to accompany it if they choose.

Staff pick: Iced Vietnamese coffee

1000 Faces Coffee

Inspired by its founder's decades of international travel, this fair-trade roasting company prioritizes relationships with countries of origin and sustainable coffee consumption. The cafe on North Thomas Street has become an Athens staple, offering artisanal brews and baked goods. A variety of pretty latte art sits on top of drinks, regardless of receiving an order in a mug or to-go cup.

Staff pick: Lavender latte



Photo/Hannarose Schiano

Baladi Coffee

Located at 165 Hickory St, get the VIP experience at Baladi Coffee, with bright Arabian-style interiors and uniquely blended flavors from Palestine and Egypt. Each visit may offer something new, as a rotating menu includes new items frequently, but the classic Baladi Latte, cardamon latte and baklava pastries are always offered.

Staff pick: The Homeland

Choco Coffee

This Baxter Street cafe frequently collaborates with other Athens businesses. Its coffee is sourced from Ecuador and has a variety of unique flavor profiles and brewing methods to appeal to different tastes. Alongside its selection of Ecuadorian coffee, Choco Coffee serves Independent Baking Co. pastries and Figment Kombucha.

Staff pick: Condor Mocha

Jittery Joe's

The Classic City's staple coffee shop has various locations across Athens, from Five Points to downtown to the MLC. Jittery Joe's serves a full range of coffee, chai tea, matcha and baked goods. It also sells coffee grinds in unique collections rooted in a pride for the Athens community — Pete the Cat, The University of Georgia, local music and more.

Staff pick: Dirty chai tea latte

Foxtail Coffee

For a cozy seating environment and a variety of sweet, caffeinated drinks, Foxtail Coffee on West Hancock Avenue has quickly become a local favorite with plenty of indoor and outdoor seating. Seasonal items to welcome in the colder months include its caramel apple latte, maple banana cold brew, pumpkin cinnamon roll and more.

Staff pick: Banana bread chai tea latte

Molly's Coffee Company

This cafe on Macon Highway offers a place to linger and enjoy your coffee away from the bustle of downtown. Molly's serves coffee from 1000 Faces and pastries from Kiki's Bakeshop as well as specialty mochas, matcha and chai.

Staff pick: Iced matcha latte

Sips Espresso Café

Sips offers seasonal specialty drinks, latte art and a selection of baked goods. Order from their take-out window or enjoy your drink on their Normaltown patio.

Staff pick: Caramelo

Sunroof Coffee

Sunroof's co-founders dreamed of opening their own business as roommates at UGA, and now they serve coffee, chai tea and more out of their downtown location on College Avenue in addition to their original walk-up window in the Mill District.

Staff pick: Iced shaken espresso

Walker's Pub & Coffee

A popular bar across from the Arch on College Avenue, Walker's doubles as a coffee shop during the day. It has a selection of coffee, tea and baked goods, as well as a covered patio. Lunch is also sold here, with handheld items such as burgers, grilled cheese and more.

Staff pick: White chocolate mocha

Daydreamer Cafe

Located in The Rambler Athens off of West Broad Street, Daydreamer Cafe offers a variety of specialty drinks from iced lattes to matcha. With an airy, bright environment, this is a cheery location for daydreaming with your besties.

Staff picks: Sugar graham latte



MALTSHAKES AND MEMORIES

ADD Drug lunch counter fosters old-fashioned community in Athens

Mia Tanner

Photos/Jesse Corso

On any given afternoon, the long-standing stools at the Athens Discount Drug lunch counter are filled by customers old and new. With the smell of coffee in the air and burger patties sizzle on the grill, Athenians look to ADD for a cheap meal — and old-fashioned connections.

"There's a lot of charm in this place, from the gift shop all the way down to the pharmacy," Mary Woodson, who has worked at the counter since March, said.

For over 60 years, ADD has been at the heart of the Five Points neighborhood. While the pharmacy fills prescriptions, the lunch counter delivers consistent, affordable food and quality customer service.

Decorated with red-vinyl seats, classic signage and a 1930s milkshake mixer that still functions, the lunch counter feels frozen in time.

Old-fashioned service

While restaurants come and go in Five Points, the unique operational culture of ADD has created a timeless individuality for the business.

It's not everywhere you can get a cheeseburger for $3.75 or a malted milkshake for $4.25.

The menu has undergone limited changes since the pharmacy opened. All-day breakfast and lunch, hand-spun milkshakes and unbeatable prices add to the characteristic charm. Overall, items do not exceed $8.75.

"We want to keep as much as we can classic," Woodson said.

She also says delivery service is not available, and emphasizes the trademark appeal of the lunch counter comes from in-person dining. Customers come to engage in the full dining experience, grab a quick bite or just a drink.

Vanessa Owings, who has worked at the pharmacy for five years, says some customers come in simply to enjoy the company. As regulars file through the door, Owings is the first to greet them, while Woodson fires up the grill to prepare an order she knows by heart.

"People come here because we know their name," Owings said.

Every Friday, the lunch counter closes to adults at 2:45 p.m., and gives elementary school students the chance to enjoy a meal of their own. Students don't need to bring money, thanks to individual house accounts that parents can pay off monthly.

The atmosphere is frantic and loud, but Woodson admires the greater generational pattern.

"We have parents that come in here, and they're like, 'When I was 11, I used to come up here,'" Woodson said.

Connections beyond the counter

Many customers return to the lunch counter for the food, but what really makes the lunch counter shine is its signature family-feel.

Connection exists far beyond the people that walk through the door every day. Woodson says former college students who have since moved away still return to the pharmacy when they're back in town for game days. Others come back after years away for the familiarity of a place that has remained a part of their lives.

Woodson and Owings emphasize that ADD prioritizes the cycle of loyalty between customers and employees, something that has been cultivated for years. Customer birthdays are celebrated with party hats and themed plates and baked goods are delivered to employees and when challenges arise. The ADD family looks out for each other.

"Nobody asks us to do that," Owings said. "They expect us to do that. We do it, you know, and it's appreciated."

This year, ADD lost one of its most familiar faces. On Sept. 18, 2026 Amy Lee Gibson passed away. She worked at the lunch counter for over 12 years.

"She was the heart of pretty much the entire store," Owings said. "Everybody just loved her."

After Gibson passed, the community decided to support Gibson's family in the same way she supported her customers. Within three days, enough donations were received to cover the cost of her funeral service.

Legacy and the future

ADD was founded by Wayne Edwards and Sam Horton in 1961 and established a pharmacy rooted in community and customer service.

In 2012, the Horton family passed ownership of the pharmacy to Kevin Florence. Woodson said the Hortons chose Florence to lead the business because they trust him to preserve its tradition to treat customers like family.

Woodson has seen that commitment firsthand. She recalled Florence paid for a customer's medication out of his own pocket when the person couldn't afford it and personally delivered prescriptions when a driver was unable to. Those small acts, she said, reflect the kind of care that has helped the pharmacy continue to be a pillar in the community.

The staff hopes the legacy of ADD will continue for generations.

"We would love to see this reach 100 years," Woodson said. "We just hope to continue to be a part of the Five Points community."



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GOURMET GOODS

Specialty grocery stores in Athens

Photo/Evelyn Kim

Achachi International Market

Milledge Avenue

Achachi International Market is located on Milledge Avenue and stocks a wide variety of products from Indonesia, Pakistan, West Africa and Asia. Check out the variety of fresh produce, seafood and halal meats.

Redstone Market & Butcher

Brock Road

Red Stone is a gourmet one-stop shop for those planning a backyard barbecue, with high-quality meats on Brock Road. Redstone Smokehouse Kitchen has grab-n-go, create-a-plate and breakfast items to choose from as well with cooked burgers, pulled pork, ribs and more.

Costa de Jalisco

Barber Street

This Barber Street store stocks a wide range of packaged and canned products from Mexico and Central America as well as exquisitely displayed produce. The real highlight is the meat, seafood and poultry counter.

Athens Cooks

Prince Avenue

This community table space offers a place to sit down and eat at after a long day of shopping around Athens. Athens Cooks sells locally sourced, sustainably-focused products, including honey, pickled products, condor chocolates and more. There are also wine tasting and cooking class events every week.

Daily Groceries Co-Op

Prince Avenue

This beloved community-owned grocery store that opened in 1992 on Prince Avenue stocks organic foods and produce from over 60 local farms and businesses. In 2023, the Co-Op moved to a new location in the Prince Park shopping center, now occupying the iconic space age circular building.

Fooks Foods

Milledge Avenue

Karen Fooks' shop on South Milledge Avenue stocks a wide range of essentials from various Asian cuisines. Fooks sources harder-to-find Asian produce and packaged goods from around the world alongside local goods like eggs from Creekline Farms and pastries from Claire's Filipino Kitchen and Basquia Bakery.

Orient Mart

East Side

Offering a selection of foods from China, Japan, Korea and Southeast Asia, Orient Mart prioritizes sustainable sourcing and high-quality products. Find fresh produce, canned goods, candy, frozen foods and more.

Piedmont Provisions

Barber Street

Like a modern-day apothecary, Piedmont Provisions features a wall of spices and herbs available to purchase by the ounce, surrounded by shelves full of house-made preserves, condiments and teas. Cocktail and mocktail ingredients are also available, while the cooler houses fresh meats and cheeses.

Prince Market

Prince Avenue

This locally-owned one-stop shop opened in November 2023. Prince Market offers a huge assortment of grocery staples, local foods and fresh produce. It also has a deli serving sandwiches and pizza, an ice cream counter and Starbucks coffee.

Supermarket El Camino Real

North Avenue

Located on North Avenue, this grocery store offers a wide selection of groceries, produce and freshly baked goods. If you get hungry while shopping, it doubles as a Mexican restaurant with an extensive yet affordable menu.

La Duranguense

West Side

Located off West Broad Street, La Duranguense offers a variety of meats, vegetables and bread baked daily. You can find an extensive selection of Mexican, Venezuelan, Honduran and Salvadoran products inside the storefront.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER

The Athens native behind Silly Goose Sips

Story & photo by McKenna Edwards

In the Classic City, everyone is bound to have their favorite place to get a nice cup of Joe — or matcha — and for some, that place isn't a cafe. It may come from a long time friend, who makes coffee in the comfort of her own home.

Nayely Perez is a self proclaimed coffee enthusiast. It's a drink that gets her through the day. She began to notice how much of it she would buy, and how frequent it became.

Perez said she began to experiment with different coffee recipes at home, such as the inclusion of protein in her drinks in attempts to make it healthier than if she were to buy coffee elsewhere.

As Perez began to perfect her craft, she would offer her creations to friends who would hype her up and come back to ask her to make more drinks for them.

Perez notes that her favorite thing since she began to make coffee at Silly Goose Sips is seeing people's reactions to her drinks.

"Seeing [customers] reactions and [receiving] so much love and the feedback from it, I think that's my favorite part," Perez said.

While Perez has experimented with different coffee and matcha recipes for a few years, it wasn't until after she graduated from Athens Technical College in May that the namesake Silly Goose Sips was formally introduced.

The name came almost naturally to Perez. She recalls sitting at Ben Burton Park near the lake with her boyfriend as he encouraged her to take the leap and try out her coffee business.

"Every time [my boyfriend and I] are together, I don't know why, there's always geese flying around everywhere," Perez said. "That day we were at the lake, a lot of geese flew by as soon as we had finished that conversation."

Silly Goose Sips doesn't have a set storefront. Instead, Perez operates out of her house, offering pickups for close friends and family, or delivery and meetups for her customers.

She also does private events and pop-ups



for emrge collective Athens, Club Pilates Athens and a mat class at Bishop Park, where she sets up on a table with all of her machines and equipment behind her as she makes her drinks in front of her customers.

She hopes to expand her setup in the future through a coffee cart, which she currently has ideas and designs for.

"I'm in the middle of designing a coffee cart," Perez said. "So [my interior design degree] also helps me with this because I kind of know what to pick and choose, what I like, [for] ADA purposes, stuff like that."

Perez sources ingredients for her syrups locally, and ships beans for her coffee from Arizona which originate from Guatemala. She settled on these beans through a subscription that let her test and find the blend that she felt fit her business and taste best.

While Perez has offered coffee and matcha from the very start, for the current fall season, she has rolled out chai and horchata — which she includes in chai and matcha recipes.

"Having something different and also [Mexican] inspired, because I'm Mexican," Perez said. "So Mexican inspired drinks like with the horchata, it sounds really good, so I was like, 'Yeah, let's do it,' especially for fall.

In a community full of Athenians and students from around the world, Perez said what makes mobile local businesses like hers stand apart and keeps customers satiated is to have confidence in yourself and your products.



Athens Farmers Market

Every Saturday it's in season, more than 40 vendors set up shop on the tennis courts at Bishop Park to sell seasonal produce, meats and cheeses, baked goods, fresh flowers and handmade crafts. The weekend market runs all year, but Creature Comforts hosts a smaller market downtown on Wednesday nights through November.

Firefly Farmstop

Located in Winterville right off the Firefly Trail, every Monday through Saturday year-round, you can shop local produce, meat, milk, eggs, bread, pantry staples and flowers. SNAP is accepted and produce is half off through a partnership with Wholesome Wave Georgia.

Marigold Farmers Market

Head to Pittard Park in Winterville on Saturday mornings to shop for fresh food, produce, eggs, honey and more from nearby farms. You'll also find coffee, baked goods, jewelry and homemade decor. The market is hosted by The Marigold Collective, a group of farmers, small business owners and local leaders serving the Winterville and East Athens communities.





Photo/Melanie Velasquez

EATING GREEN

Vegan and vegetarian food in Athens

Big City Bread Cafe

With a cozy dining room and shaded patio, Big City Bread has a huge selection of veggie options. The brunch menu includes quiche, omelets, french toast and a tofu vegetable saute. For lunch or dinner, try a veggie burger or black bean sandwich.

Cali N Tito's

Both Cali N Tito's locations offer vegetarian versions of most of their mains, like veggie cubanos, burritos, tacos and quesadillas. Favorites include the veggie tamales and empanadas with a side of tostones or maduros.

JINYA Ramen Bar

A ramen chain with a menu ranging from noodle dishes to mini tacos, JINYA has a solid selection of plant-based menu items. The Flying Vegan Harvest includes Impossible meat and tofu in a vegan miso broth, while the Spicy Creamy Vegan comes with tofu and chili oil in a vegetable broth. Both are packed with veggies too.

Maepole

The crown jewel of Athens' ever-growing roster of customizable bowl restaurants, Maepole (pictured above!) offers an almost entirely vegetarian menu. Start with a base like sweet potato or seasoned quinoa, then add sides like mac and cheese and roasted vegetables. Top it with sauce and tofu, which is marinated in tamari and tossed in nutritional yeast to create a savory, smokey flavor.

Mannaweenta

Praised as one of the best international restaurants in town, this Ethiopian and Eritrean spot serves vegan plates that come with Atakilt Alicha (seasoned carrots, cabbage, onions, tomatoes and potatoes), Ater Alicha (yellow split pea soup with onions, fresh tomatoes and jalapeno peppers) and Okra Wot (okra stew). Mannaweenta also serves Lentil Soup, Injera and vegan cookies.

Taste of India

This East Side restaurant offers over a dozen vegan and vegetarian entrees, appetizers and sides. Try Vegetable Samosas or Pakoras, curry with veggies or tofu, or plant-based specialties like Amritsari Chana and stewed Punjabi-style chickpeas cooked in tomato sauce. Taste of India also has an entirely vegan menu available upon request.

Taqueria Tsunami

This Latin Asian fusion restaurant serves vegetarian tacos, bowls and small plates. Start with Korean Fried Cauliflower, Avocado Cilantro Egg Rolls or Fried Yucca, then try the Far East Bowl, South of the Border Bowl or a selection of their three meat-free tacos.

White Tiger

This barbecue restaurant with locations in Boulevard and Watkinsville caters to the vegetarian crowd with mains like a grilled tofu sandwich, portabella cheeseburger and grilled pimento cheese. The Tofu Q Sandwich is a favorite, featuring grilled tofu, coleslaw, red barbecue sauce and field greens. You can customize it with an egg or pimento cheese, make it vegan or add sides like mac and cheese, a cup of soup or banana pudding.

ON-CAMPUS OPTIONS

UGA dining halls

Elizabeth McGill

Bolton

Bolton Dining Commons is located at the intersection of South Lumpkin and Baxter Street and is the largest of the dining commons on campus. It is most notable for its food selection, seating capacity and its proximity to central campus. Bolton is a hub for student socialization and dining with its variety of dining stations: The Wok, which serves stir-fry and daily specials, Baxter Street Bakery, which serves various desserts, Buon Appetito, which serves breakfast favorites and rotating pasta menus for lunch and dinner, and many more. It is open Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Hillside

Hillside Dining Commons is the newest on-campus dining location. It is located on the second and third floors of the Dining, Learning, and Well-being Center on West Campus. Hillside has recently gained traction for its Dole Whip and soft serve machines which have choices of strawberry and pineapple and vanilla and chocolate, respectively. Hillside also offers Asian cuisine at Pacific Rim and Mediterranean options as well. Hillside is open Monday through Thursday from 7 a.m. to 2 a.m., Friday from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Sunday 8:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Oglethorpe

Oglethorpe Dining Commons, also known as O-House, is located directly next to the Oglethorpe House residence hall. O-House's main attraction is O'Hacienda, the taquería-inspired dining station that has been named best dining station for four years in a row through UGA Dining Service's March Mayhem dining station bracket. Aside from the delicious custom nacho, burrito, quesadilla and taco options at O'Hacienda, O-House also provides a rotation of Southern classic foods at Deliciously Southern, a selection of ramen and rice bowls with rotating protein choices at Oishii, and much more. O-House is open Monday through Thursday from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m., Friday from 7 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and Sunday from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Snelling

Snelling Dining Commons is conveniently located in the heart of South Campus where guests can enjoy an array of dining options such as rotating flavors of pizza pies at Giorgio's Pizza, hamburgers, grilled cheese sandwiches and the like at Sanford Grill, variable menus of entrees and breakfast items at Snelling Selects, and customizable, nutrient-dense power bowls at The Bowl. Snelling is open Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The Niche

The Niche Dining Commons is exactly as the name suggests: niche. The Niche is the smallest dining hall by far and is home to the Grill, the Hearth, and the Market where guests can enjoy sandwiches, pizza and calzones, and other entrees, salads, and sides respectively. It also offers rotating soup and dessert options and a more low-key atmosphere than the hustle and bustle of the main five dining halls. It is located on UGA's Health Sciences Campus and is only open to the public for breakfast and lunch service while dinner services can be enjoyed by health science campus residents. The Niche is open to the public Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., and open to health science campus residents from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Village Summit

Affectionately known by UGA students as Joe Frank, the Village Summit Dining Commons is located on the second floor of Joe Frank Harris Commons. It is a second home to most East Campus Village residents and Ramsey Student Center frequenters. Village Summit has a variety of selections, including famous smoothies, fluffy-crusted pizza, and extensive deli options. It also offers superb study spots, such as the multiple sunrooms and large open areas on the lower floor, and an overall vibrant ambiance. It is open Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m., as well as 8:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, making it the only dining hall that is open every day of the week.

CAMPUS CAFES

Where to eat between classes

Bulldog Bistro

This restaurant inside the University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education & Hotel is open to hotel guests and visitors alike, with offerings ranging from coffee and ready-made salads and wraps to a full lunch and dinner menu updated each week.

Campus Market Express

Across campus, 11 self-serve micro markets stock grab 'n go meals, snacks, drinks and drugstore essentials. Certain locations also offer frozen foods and treats, and they're open any time the academic buildings are.

Einstein Bros. Bagels

Einstein Bros. has a variety of bagels and breakfast sandwiches ranging from bacon, egg and cheese to avocado toast. They also offer coffee, tea, pastries and sides like chips and fresh fruit. There's a location in the Main Library and another in the Science Learning Center.

FujiSan

While FujiSan sushi grab-and-go options are available in various campus markets, the main location in Tate Student Center offers the full range of rolls, poke bowls and gyoza. It's also the only place to get boba tea on campus.

Tate Student Center

The Tate food court features familiar chains like Starbucks, Panda Express and Chick-fil-A. Local favorite Baddies Burgers is scheduled to open in the Tate food court for the spring semester. Head to the Market at Tate on the other side of the building to get burritos, tacos, quesadillas and salads from Barberitos.

Rothenberger Café

An on-campus eatery, located inside Amos Hall in the Terry College of Business, the Rothenberger Café serves sandwiches, salads and grab 'n go snacks. They also serve items from Dunkin' Donuts and Newk's Eatery.





Photo/Jessica Lin

LATE-NIGHT BITES DOWNTOWN

Got the munchies after midnight? These downtown Athens staples are open until the early morning hours to satisfy all your cravings.

D.P. Dough

180 W. Broad St.

This calzone chain restaurant is a college student's heaven after late nights out downtown or studying all night. While customers can build their own calzone, the menu has a wide variety of curated calzones, like the "Chick-N-Bacon Zone" and the "Buffer Zone," a take on Buffalo-style chicken with blue cheese.

Not feeling a zone? The restaurant also sells wings, D.P. Tots and different flavors of sweet and savory bread "Stixs." Make sure to hit up this restaurant before the 2 a.m. rush hour of people leaving the bars!

Eddie's Calzones and Drafts

227 E. Clayton St.

When you're looking for a place to eat, but your friends can't agree on one thing, Eddie's might be the place to go. The restaurant not only has a wide variety of calzones (including dessert options), but also thin-crust and deep-dish pizzas. The restaurant boasts wings and tenders, with a collection of Ben & Jerry's ice cream pints.

Little Italy

125 N. Lumpkin St.

This New York-style thin-crust (pictured above!) dive bar restaurant has been a local staple for years. The restaurant also serves calzones, sandwiches and alcoholic beverages.

Cheba Hut "Toasted" Subs

135 W. Washington St.

This sandwich chain restaurant evokes an artsy, laid-back style with its quirky wall art and clear themes of a counterculture, with sandwiches named "G-13" and "Kali Mist." This sub sandwich shop also has snacks like garlic cheese bread and krispy bars.

The Hot Dog Carts

College Avenue

While certain hot dog carts have been a part of the downtown scene for a few years, anyone walking through College Avenue is bound to see at least two carts lining the street. The vendors are usually out Thursday through Saturday into the early hours of the morning, serving hot dogs with a variety of toppings.

Chick-fil-A

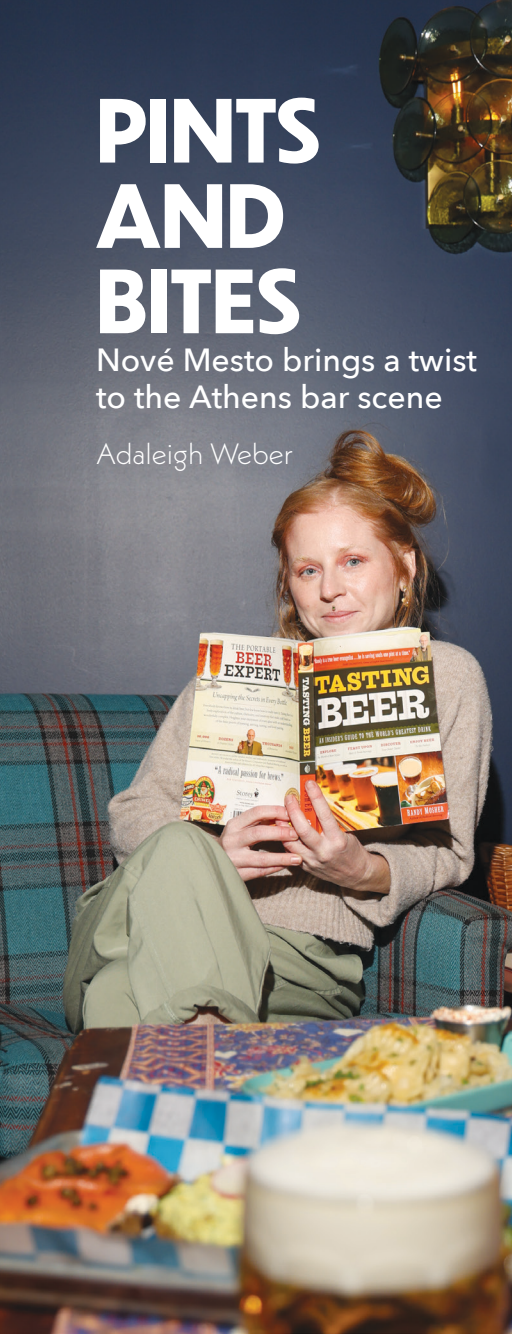
101 College Ave.

Everyone loves some chicken nuggets or a warm chicken sandwich. Now, downtown goers can stop by the Chick-fil-A on the corner of College Avenue on Friday evenings to grab food from this popular fast food restaurant.

PINTS AND BITES

Nové Mesto brings a twist to the Athens bar scene

Adaleigh Weber



In a sea of pizza restaurants and taco shops, Nové Mesto Lagerhaus brings Eastern European flavors and drafts to Athens in an open-spaced bar establishment that opened in April 2026.

Located at 625 Barber St., the environment is warm and welcoming with large glistening window panels cut out of every wall. A view of train tracks can be seen from inside, and the space was designed to mimic the gas-station-turned-restaurant appearance, with a large glass garage door that can be opened up to let fresh air inside.

The decor consists of knicknacks collected around Athens, estate sales and other restaurants the owners have worked at. To the right of the entrance is a large Czech Republic flag and various knicknacks align the shelf above it. The unique light fixtures in the dining area were designed by Athens local STATE the Label.

The large wall across from the entrance has a large projector that can be pulled down to watch sports on. Over the summer, they played the World Cup.

"The World Cup was so fun this year too," beer program director Jon Andrews said. "That was like our first taste of having a packed house and seeing what this place could be."

The food and beverage options are as comforting as the environment. The cuisine mostly consists of bread, dough, potatoes and deli items. Fresh ingredients are sourced locally, while deli items and sausages are sourced from a butcher shop in New York called Schaller & Weber.





Photos/Caroline Newbern

Popular menu items include the pierogies, schnitzel sandwiches and an open-faced Danish sandwich called smørrebrød.

"It's just kind of like, almost this hodgepodge of whatever you got-proteins, garnishes. You know, it's your entire meal, basically," chef and menu curator Katie Gasperec said. "So I've been having a lot of fun with that, and that's actually taken off pretty well here."

Popular drinks are German and Czech lagers or pilsners. To fit into the scope of central European flavors, the owners have been looking into non-traditional countries for wine, such as Slovenia, Croatia and Germany.

"We get a lot of Europeans in here too, so I think they want their home beer, not the American version of it," Andrews said. "Drinks-wise, we're definitely leaning into a lot of more bitter drinks, less sweet stuff."

Nové Mesto was originally intended to be a brewery, but the food was surprisingly popular and has now become more of a restaurant space.

"We do have our own [brewery] equipment that's sitting in a storage unit right now, waiting to be used. But yeah, someday we'll just have to find a way to [put it to use]," Gasperec said.

The idea for Nové Mesto blossomed when Gesperec was experimenting with a multicultural food menu at Hi-Lo Lounge. Although Hi-Lo has late night worldly food and drink items to order from, the owners felt they needed a new place specifically for their Eastern European dishes and drafts, so Nové Mesto was born.

Although the restaurant's name is in Czech, it is not primarily a Czech restaurant, and dishes and drafts served are inspired by locations across Eastern Europe.

"I kind of want to make sure everyone knows that we're not just Czech, but we're Czech, Austrian, German, Polish, Hungarian, Danish," Gesperec said. "Probably might be a little Italian some days, and might get a little French, a little Swiss, a little Swedish, a little Finnish."

The four owners have been in the industry for over 20 years, working in various bars and restaurants across Athens. The owners include Gasperec and Andrews, along with Lauren Owens, the cocktail manager and T Silva, the front of house manager.

"I feel like we're like a trusted group of people bringing a unique menu to the town," Gesperec said.

Going forward, the owners are looking into brewing offsite and making beers at other breweries through collaboration or contract brewing.

In the near future, Christmas themed plans are brewing, with a German Christmas Market, and seasonal drink and menu items such as gluhwein and Belgian Christmas beers.

"I'm looking forward to Christmas. I think this is going to be a nice, like seasonal kind of place to be out [at]," Andrews said.

Hillside Dining Commons photo courtesy David Kresses © May Architecture

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DINNER ON A BUDGET

Local restaurants that won't break the bank

Keely Heffelfinger


Photo/Samantha Hurley

Eating out in Athens does not have to break the bank. From longtime local favorites to casual downtown spots, several restaurants around town offer delicious meals at budget-friendly prices.

Ahi Hibachi & Poke

Ahi Hibachi & Poke offers a cheaper and more casual alternative to a traditional hibachi restaurant. Located in downtown Athens and known for its affordable prices and large portions, Ahi is a go-to for many University of Georgia students.

Customers can build their poke bowl by choosing a base of rice or greens and add proteins such as tuna, salmon or shrimp. A variety of toppings and sauces are also available for a few extra cents. For those who want something warm, hibachi plates come with grilled meat, rice and vegetables. The portions are generous, so one hibachi plate can easily stretch into leftovers. Their most popular menu items are poke bowls and hibachi entrees, which are both priced under $15.

Ted's Most Best

Ted's Most Best, located on West Washington Street in downtown Athens, is a casual pizza spot that offers a variety of affordable dinner options. They are most known for their artisan-style pizzas, which start at $8.95 before toppings. Ted's offers classics like Margherita and specialty pies like the White Rabbit or La Carne.

If you're not craving pizza, Ted's menu has plenty of other options. Ted's serves appetizers like garlic knots and meatballs, along with pastas, sandwiches, calzones and salads. Ted's also has happy hour from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. every day, where customers can order meatball, chicken or caprese sliders for only $3. With a relaxed atmosphere and both indoor and outdoor seating, Ted's Most Best is the perfect stop for casual diners with friends or a quick bite before a night out.

Cali N Tito's

Cali N Tito's is a classic Athens spot that serves affordable Cuban and Latin-American food. The restaurant has locations on Cedar Shoals Drive and on Lumpkin Street, which is a quick walk from campus. Menu highlights include the fish tacos, burritos and the restaurant's well-known Cubano sandwich, all priced under $13.

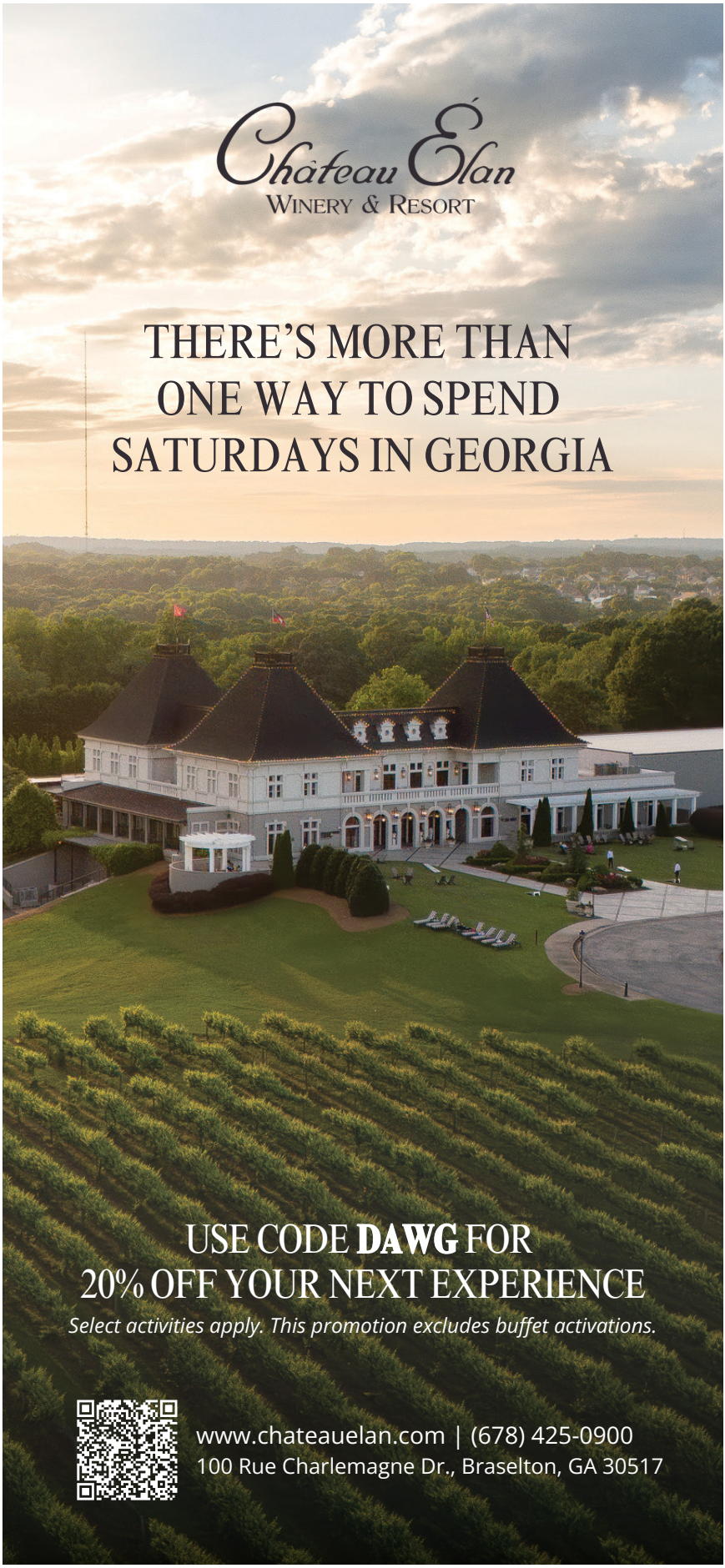
Cali N Tito's also offers side items such as empanadas, fried plantains and yucca fries, allowing customers to try a variety of flavors without spending much. Diners can also bring their own drinks; the Lumpkin location has a BYOB policy. The indoor-outdoor dining space and laid-back atmosphere make Cali-N-Tito's a go-to spot for a filling and affordable meal.

Clocked!

Clocked! is a retro-style diner on West Washington Street known for its creative burgers. The downtown spot has become a favorite for diners looking for a casual dinner without sacrificing flavor.

The menu has options ranging from classic cheeseburgers to more unconventional combinations. Standout items include the Ring of Fire Burger, which has habanero jack cheese, candied jalapeños and chipotle mayo, and the Peanut Butter & Bacon Burger.

If traditional burger patties aren't your thing, Clocked! can substitute a veggie patty for any burger on their menu. Most burgers average $14, making the restaurant a satisfying and affordable choice.


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GOING ALL OUT

Fine dining in Athens

Hollis Turner

Photo/Jaxon Meeks

I'm a firm believer that a good dinner is an occasion in itself. There's something exciting about looking forward to a reservation, browsing a menu full of delicious options and knowing there's no need to rush through the evening. These four restaurants are at the top of my list when I want to splurge on a night out in Athens.

Oak Steakhouse

Oak Steakhouse opened its doors on East Clayton Street in September, bringing another upscale dining option to downtown Athens. With its elegant atmosphere, extensive wine selection and menu of premium steaks, it's quickly earned a spot on my list of restaurants for a night worth splurging on.

I would start with the crab cake or "deviled" crab dip before moving onto the filet mignon. I also wouldn't skip the smoked cheddar and cornbread crunch mac & cheese or potato purée for the table.

For cocktails, my picks are The Butcher and Beyond The Hedges. And if you have room for dessert, order the chocolate soufflé with banana foster sauce and banana ice cream.

The National

Located on West Hancock Avenue, The National offers Mediterranean-inspired cuisine and a menu that changes with the seasons.

The burrata mozzarella and patatas bravas are two appetizers I would recommend ordering for the table. For entrees, I would go with the rainbow trout, which is served with an Asian pear salad and a preserved lemon butter sauce, or the hanger steak with fingerling potatoes and salsa verde.

The Minkie's Kiss, made with chai liqueur, amontillado sherry, blanco vermouth, satsuma vodka and orange bitters, is my cocktail recommendation. To finish the night, I would order the chocolate budino with sesame brittle, labneh and sea salt.

Five & Ten

Housed in the historic Hawthorne House on South Milledge Avenue, Five & Ten offers a fine dining experience with Southern charm. Its warm interior and inviting atmosphere make it an easy addition to my list.

The Pimento Cheese with green tomato caramel and buttermilk crackers and the Cast Iron Cornbread with honey butter and fennel pollen are two of my non-negotiable items on their snack menu.

For the main course, my recommendations are pan roasted halibut with kabocha squash, roasted carrots and crispy potatoes or the grilled bone-in pork chop with honeycrisp apple chutney and bacon braised cabbage. I would pair either with the Rhinestone Cowboy, a tequila cocktail featuring watermelon, tart cherry and lime.

Osteria Olio

Located inside the Rivet House hotel on Oneta Street, Osteria Olio brings modern Italian dining to Athens. Between its stylish atmosphere and menu full of pasta, pizza and other Italian favorites, it's another one of my top picks.

I would definitely start with the house focaccia, served with ricotta, fennel pollen and honey, and the Prosciutto di Parma. The Tonnarelli Cacio e Pepe and Mafaldine alla Bolognese are my pasta recommendations, but I also wouldn't pass up the Cane Americano pizza with spicy pepperoni, parmigiano, honey and basil.

The tiramisu with mascarpone mousse, dark chocolate ganache and espresso-soaked ladyfingers is a menu item that cannot be passed up.

BEST BREAKFAST

Where to start your day in Athens

Cara Eldridge

Mama's Boy

Situated with a view of greenery in Dudley Park, award-winning Mama's Boy breakfast is first-come, first-served and fast. Biscuits with your choice of gravy or raspberry jam are fan favorites. Mama's Boy offers packaged biscuit mix, raspberry jam, coffee and their signature hot sauce for sale. Other fun breakfast options include the bacon, egg and cheese scrambler, French toast plate, breakfast burrito and salmon cakes Benedict.

Big City Bread Cafe

This is the perfect addition to a Milledge walk or Prince Avenue shopping. Big City Bread is located on a quiet street with a beautiful patio area and is open seven days a week, starting at 8 a.m. Their menu contains all the classics and à la carte options and unique choices, including the Big City Quiche with new daily flavors, the Bird's Nest, a fried egg inside of toast with Gruyere cheese and seasonal flavored lattes.

Cafe Racer

Originally a food truck, Cafe Racer is located on West Broad Street with a drive-through and patio area. In March of 2026, a third location and second storefront in Athens was established on Oak Street, with covered and outdoor seating options.

Don't be scared off by the line of cars; rain or shine, the staff takes your order at your car window and moves with purpose. They are known for their atypically named biscuits, tacos and burritos. With eight flavors of donuts, you can never get bored, but if you want to try them all, they sell variety cups of to-go donut holes.



Athens Bagel Company

ABC prides itself on being the only New York-style bagel in downtown Athens. The bagels are baked fresh daily and can be bought by the dozen or turned into breakfast or lunch sandwiches. A popular menu item is the meat, egg and cheese bagel. Right in the thick of downtown on North Jackson Street, ABC also serves draft mimosas and locally made Sip 'Em Hard Seltzer.

The Farm Cart

What started as weekly biscuits for farmers at the Athens Farmers' Market grew to nine curated biscuit sandwiches and a variety of breakfast plates and bowls. To keep to their roots, The Farm Cart decorates each table with a small plant and serves drinks in mason jars, such as coffees, teas and the "boozy menu" for an alcoholic beverage.



Photo/Laney Martin

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WHERE TO EAT

Unique and classic restaurants around Athens

Maepole • $$

At the laid back Maepole, brainchild of Peter Dale, the chef/owner behind the likes of Seabear Oyster Bar and The National — diners select from bases, sides and proteins to create new twists on meat-and-three standards.

Taste of India • $–$$

This East Side restaurant has been serving authentic Indian food since 2005. Entrees include korma, saag, curry, tikka masala and biryani with your choice of protein served with basmati rice. Their menu also features a huge selection of starters, sides, vegetarian and specialty dishes.

Ghavi's The Steak Place • $$$

Located on Prince Avenue, this steakhouse features premium steaks, fresh seafood, creative sides and decadent desserts, alongside a full-service bar. Ghavi's offers unique dining spaces and private rooms.

The National • $$–$$$

This Mediterranean-influenced restaurant on West Hancock Avenue was co-founded by Hugh Acheson and Peter Dale. With serene decor and stellar service, it's ideal for lunch meetings and family celebrations. Check out the expanded patio.

Chuck's Fish • $$$

Operating in a renovated former Greyhound station, this upscale restaurant features seafood fresh from the owner's Destin, Florida, dockside wholesale market. Along with daily specials, Chuck's serves sushi and classics like seared scallops and stuffed shrimp.

The Expat • $$$

This venture from Jerry and Krista Slater, housed in a cozy Five Points cottage, emphasizes inventive cocktails and an Italian cafe-inspired menu, with dishes like cacio e pepe and salads full of seasonal produce.

Five & Ten • $$$

Before "Top Chef," Hugh Acheson made his name here with innovative takes on Southern fare (think fried catfish with saffron beurre blanc and cornbread with fennel pollen). Located in a historic home on South Milledge Avenue, and now owned by Athens local Peter Dale, this is a popular spot for special occasions. It's also available to book for private events.

Seabear Oyster Bar • $$

Go for the namesake shellfish; stay for the fried clam strips, lobster roll and fish po'boy. Sit at the bar or the outdoor patio; a drinks ledge allows you to set your cocktail down while you wait for a table.

Cafe Racer • $–$$

The West Broad Street location has a drive-thru and walk-up window, while the Oak Street location has ample outdoor and covered seating for guests. Cafe Racer serves Counter Culture Coffee alongside their signature potato donuts and a variety of breakfast food alongside a dinner menu, which includes burgers, fries, chicken tenders and more.

Ideal Bagel Co. • $

Operated by Luna Baking Co., Ideal Bagel serves a variety of bagels loaded with house-made cream cheese spreads. Add-ons like eggs, lox and bacon are also available.

Mama's Boy • $–$$

Consistently voted Best Brunch in Athens by The Red & Black readers, Mama's Boy serves indulgent breakfast fare like salmon cakes Benedict and Georgia peach French toast. There are two locations in Athens and one in Watkinsville now, too.

Dawg Gone Good BBQ • $

Serving recipes passed down from his grandmother, owner William "B.J." Hardy keeps things simple but tasty at his restaurant on West Hancock Avenue. Chow down on classics like pulled pork, mac and cheese and brisket.

Hot or Not Chicken Co. • $–$$

Located in the old Weaver D's building, Hot or Not Chicken Co. serves hand-breaded tenders, hot seasoned fries, fresh slaw, sweet cornbread, house-made sauces and fluffy pudding. With plenty of gluten-free options and bold flavors, there's something for everyone.

Shokitini • $-$$

This downtown sushi restaurant is a popular spot for parties. It has a huge menu, full bar and several private karaoke rooms.

Tlaloc El Mexicano • $

This beloved family-owned restaurant serves Mexican and Salvadoran food in a bright orange building on North Chase Street. Keep an eye out for drink specials and taco Tuesdays.

Clocked! • $

This American diner on Washington Street has been in business for over 25 years. Eclectic decor and retro branding adorn the dining room and patio, while the menu ranges from burgers and hot dogs to fried pickles and blackberry milkshakes. Plus: they can make almost anything vegetarian.

FIVE Athens • $$-$$$

FIVE Athens is perfect for indecisive diners. Their menu offers five entrées, wines and cocktails to choose from, with a focus on local ingredients and generous portions. Dinner options include a 12 oz. ribeye, panéed chicken and a gourmet cheeseburger, while brunch ranges from shrimp and grits to breakfast burritos. Don't forget to greet The Beatles mural on your way in.

Thai Spoon • $-$$

Voted best family-owned international restaurant by our readers, Thai Spoon is nearing two decades in business between Little Italy and The Globe. Their extensive menu features dozens of authentic Thai rice, noodle, soup and curry dishes.

South Kitchen + Bar • $$-$$$

This Washington Street spot was once the Hotel Georgian, which hosted visitors to Athens from 1909 to 1975. South Kitchen now occupies the ground floor, while the original ballroom has been converted into a private event space. The menu features modernized Southern comfort food like Nashville hot chicken and biscuits and gravy as well as beer, wine and cocktails.

Pretty Boy • $$-$$$

Chef Kenny Nguyen opened this modern Vietnamese restaurant on Prince Avenue following a series of pop-ups and an appearance on "Top Chef." Sharing plates range from mushroom rice paper pizza and Vietnamese street corn to coconut-braised ribs and chicken salad. There's four kinds of customizable pho, unique desserts and Vietnamese coffee.



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Dinner 4-9pm

CRAVING SOMETHING DIFFERENT?

Multicultural restaurants in Athens

McKenna Edwards

Mannaweenta

1055 Gaines School Road, Suite 108

Owned and operated by Haregu Bahtu, this restaurant serves authentic Ethiopian dishes, including a variety of wot, as well as Ethiopian coffee. Mannaweenta's menu offers meat and vegetable plates, available in small or large sizes. The meat plates come with rice and two sides of vegetables.

Puma Yu's

355 Oneta St., Suite D400A

Puma Yu's offers a unique food experience. With a menu with items such as mushroom pad see ew, radicchio salad, and fried whole branzino, guests can be immersed in Thai culture. Puma Yu's also offers elevated specialty cocktails and zero-proof drinks to complement the dining experience.

Taste of India

1040 Gaines School Road, Suite 119

If you're looking for traditional Indian entrees, such as biryani, tikka masala or vegetarian and vegan-friendly specialties featuring paneer or lentils, the restaurant has a vast array of options. These entrees can be paired with various breads, chutneys, desserts and more.

Cali N Tito's

1427 South Lumpkin St. and 1245 Cedar Shoals Drive

Cali N Tito's menu is inspired by Cuban and Peruvian cuisine, with entrees including Cuban sandwiches and sides including maduros and yuca frita. The Lumpkin Street location is more popular amongst students with its proximity to campus and its $2 BYOB deal.

Kelly's Authentic Jamaican Food

1583 S. Lumpkin St.

True to its name, this restaurant brings authentic Caribbean cooking to Athens. All entrees are served with meat and two sides; tea and cornbread are also included with every meal. Daily specials include jerk chicken, jerk pork and a veggie plate. Kelly's also serves specials on select days like curry goat, grilled salmon and oxtail.



NOT DRINKING? Non-alcoholic options to enjoy

Figment Kombucha

If you're looking for some non-alcoholic brews, head to Figment on Baxter Street. Opened by Jason and Jessica Dean in 2018, Athens' only kombucha brand uses local ingredients and prioritizes innovative flavors and sustainability—drinks come in aluminium cans instead of glass bottles. Another sustainable initiative Figment partakes in is composting. They work with Athens-based service Compostia to ensure that fruit scraps, food waste and paper products are properly processed. While they partner with local farmers for their drinks, they partner with Athens businesses to stock The People's Pantry, the gourmet grocery section of Figment's tasting room.

Their signature flavors include "Magic Hour" Orange Blossom, "Bright Side" Strawberry Lemon, "Sun Seeker" Mango Ginger and "Midnight Garden" Blueberry Lavender. Stop by their tasting room to pick up a can, taste seasonal flavors, like "Crisp" Ginger Apple Spice, on tap and shop for local goods at The People's Pantry.

New Creation Soda Works

What started as a family business at the Oconee Farmers' Market in Watkinsville, Georgia has grown into a beloved brand available in hundreds of locations nationwide.

Paul Kooistra found nostalgia in a good soda. His grandfather used to make root beer for his mother growing up and always had his root cellar stocked with soda from The Pop Shoppe when he and his family would travel from Mississippi to Minnesota for Christmas every year to visit relatives.

Find Root 42 Old Time Root Beer Soda, Hopscotch Dry-Hopped Ginger Ale, Jack'd Strawberry Habanero Soda, Krümkake Butter Pecan Cream Soda and PECHES Georgia Peach Soda (named for the beloved fruit stand near Eatonton) in local businesses and grocery stores.





Photo/Hannarose Schiano

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Cutters Pub

This downtown bar has TVs, skee-ball, pool, a photo booth and a huge selection of craft beer and bourbon. If the main floor is crowded, head upstairs to the Tiki bar. On Thursdays, Cutters dollar beer night is as fun as it is affordable.

Paloma Park

Happy hour deals and daily menu discounts make this stylish Tex-Mex restaurant and tequila bar on Washington Street a popular spot for date nights and group outings, while its outdoor beer garden is a great place for live music and watch parties.

The Royal Peasant

Watch the week's top Premier League matches while dining on bangers and mash or "proper plates" like fish and chips at this Five Points British pub with an extensive beer list.



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Photo/Hannarose Schiano

Blue Sky Bar

With a (sort of) secret entrance, this bar has a speakeasy vibe and boasts more than 100 beers and a substantial whiskey list. If you bring a vinyl on Wednesday nights, they'll play it for you and take a dollar off your drink.

Sister Louisa's Church

Sister Louisa's Church has become an integral part of the downtown Athens bar scene. With ping pong tables and photobooths, there's something for everyone and is a great place to dance the night away. Bonus: Don't leave on a Saturday night before the drag show begins in the basement.

Tropical Bar

Patrons can enjoy drinks, dancing, karaoke and more at this downtown Latin bar. Stay posted for regular events with drink specials and DJs.

Hidden Gem

This Barber Street spot is magical. The drink menu features curated beers, wines, and house cocktails for the sophisticated sipper. Ambience created by hanging plants, multicolor lighting and eclectic antiques make this a perfect spot for a chill night out or listening to IDM in public.

Wonderbar Athens

The only video game bar in Athens, Wonderbar offers classic arcade games, multiplayer games, board games and some of the most creative shooters in town. The games are free to play, and the drinks are based off of classic video game characters.

The Rook & Pawn

Have a house cocktail and a snack while you compete with friends at this downtown board game cafe. Their impressive selection of over 600 games range from classics like Scrabble and Clue to strategy challenges like Catan and Ticket to Ride. Cranium and The Chameleon are favorites for larger parties.

Little Kings Shuffle Club

Catered to the local crowd, this bar has plenty of craft beers and a spacious outdoor area. Keep an eye out for special events like craft markets and dance parties.

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Normal Bar
A mellow bar catered to Normaltown locals, this spot has an enormous main room and a small outdoor area perfect for date night. Don't miss trivia every Wednesday at 7 p.m. Insider Tip: order from Automatic Pizza next door for in-bar delivery.

Nighthawks Lounge
This art deco bar opened in 2023 and offers cocktails, wine, beer and old-fashioned snacks like pimento cheese and tinned sardines.

The Old Pal
Wood-paneled and serious about mixology, this Normaltown bar has a nice selection of whiskeys. Always wanted to try Absinthe or Pastis? This is the place for it.

Bar Bruno
This Five Points spot describes itself as a "choose your own adventure bar" led by wine expert Greg Smolik and the team behind ZZ & Simone's. Menu items include Italian wines, cocktails and tapas-style dishes.

Hi-Lo Lounge
This Normaltown spot is a neighborhood favorite thanks to a cozy vibe, sizable beer list and creative cocktails. Plus, they have a full lunch and dinner menu.

The Pine Bar
This upscale Five Points bar offers a substantial selection of wine, as well as tapas, charcuterie and entrees like wood-fired oysters.

The World Famous
Located in the Hot Corner District, this bar and restaurant offers great American cuisine that is sure to satiate any craving. Known for their fun cocktails, stellar french-fries, and eclectic ambience the World Famous has something for everyone.







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Breweries, wine shops and distilleries in Athens

BEER WINE SPIRITS

Photo/Evan Frilingos

Athentic Brewing Company

Located in Normaltown and offering a variety of beers, from Irish stouts to tropical IPAs, Athentic also features indoor and patio seating and sells cans of beer to take home. They regularly host trivia nights, food trucks and local restaurant pop-ups.

Creature Comforts Brewing Co.

Creature Comforts is a local favorite with over a decade of success behind them. Their downtown taproom is located in the old Snow Tire Co. factory, where you can find year-round favorites like Tropicália and Classic City Lager, or try seasonal flavors like Festbier Lager and Cold Red IPA. In July of 2025, Creature Comforts opened Cura, a cocktail lounge behind the taproom, between Epiphany and Rook & Pawn. Open Thursday through Saturday, Cura serves craft spirits distilled on site and hosts private events.

Normaltown Brewing Co.

This small-batch brewery offers a constantly changing selection of beer on tap and the occasional live set from a local artist. It was the fifth brewery to open in Athens and the first in the Normaltown neighborhood. They also occasionally host local chef pop-ups, so keep an eye out for the chance to grab drinks and dinner.

Terrapin Beer Co.

Since opening in 2002, Terrapin has become Athens' most widely distributed beer. Its large-scale brewing operations have shifted to other facilities, but the tap room at the Newton Bridge Road location remains open. Popular beers include Hopsecutioner and Luau Krunkles.

The Lark Winespace

Both a tasting room and a wine shop, this Prince Avenue store from Krista Slater specializes in sustainable wine and cocktail ingredients. Its rotating menu showcases a variety of foreign and domestic wines, while appetizers like charcuterie boards and tinned fish help round out any cocktail party.

Tapped Athens

With a futuristic twist on your typical wine bar, Tapped allows you to buy wine by the ounce from soda fountain-style dispensers. They stock over 200 labels to choose from with a rotating selection of 24 wines on tap to try before you buy. Recurring events include Wine 101 (a tasting class for beginners) and mimosas and biscuits on the first Saturday of every month.

Five Points Bottle Shop

No crybabies! This liquor store has been a neighborhood staple for over 30 years, with a huge selection of beer, wine, spirits and local drinks. It's an Athens tradition to swing by on your 21st birthday to get a free T-shirt.

Oak House Distillery

Founded in 2020 by UGA food scientists, Oak House is the first legal distillery in Athens since the 1860s. Located in the historic Henry Bishop House on Macon Highway, they produce botanical gins and Jamaican-style rums with a speakeasy-style cocktail bar and lounge. Classes on distilling and mixology are also offered.

MEXICAN RESTAURANTS OF ATHENS

Caroline Newbern

Whether you're looking for Tex-Mex or an authentic meal, there is a wide variety of Mexican restaurants in the Classic City. Here are some of our staff picks!

Cielito Lindo

496 Baxter St.

One of the newer Mexican restaurants in Athens, Cielito Lindo, the name meaning "Beautiful Sky," opened in October 2025.

Fan favorites: birria tacos, quesabirria and carnitas.

Taqueria Tsunami

320 E. Clayton St. and 1791 Oconee Connector, Ste 755

With two locations, Taqueria Tsunami is known for its Latin-Asian fusion menu. Guests can enjoy Asian-style appetizers and then feast on Latin dishes.

Fan favorites: mini poke tacos, Asian nachos and tuna poke bowl.

Paloma Park

235 W. Washington St.

In the heart of downtown Athens, Paloma Park offers Tex-Mex-inspired flavors and a social dining experience and a high-energy atmosphere in one of the largest indoor/outdoor spaces in town.

Fan favorites: smoked brisket tacos, fiesta fries and nachos grande.

El Camino Real Taqueria

401 North Ave., Suite 2

Attached to a supermarket, El Camino Real Taqueria serves a variety of Mexican foods from homemade corn tortilla tacos to baked goods and ice cream. Taco Tuesday also offers $1.50 tacos.

Fan favorites: nachos, guacamole and asada tacos.

Tlaloc El Mexicano

1225 North Chase St.

From August 2009 to present day, the Ramirez family has served the Athens community with a menu inspired by their family's roots in Mexico City.

Fan favorites: enchiladas, botana 4 and combo 13.

La Parilla Mexican Restaurant

196 Alps Road

La Parilla has 23 locations across Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina. The Athens location in Beechwood Shopping Center opened in October 2024.

Fan favorites: tableside guacamole, sopa de pollo and enchiladas verdes.

Willy's Mexicana Grill

196 Alps Road

Located in the Beechwood Shopping Center, Willy's flavors are inspired by San Francisco's district. Willy's also has a variety of eco-friendly initiatives, including recycled-box containers for quesadillas and nachos and self-programming thermostats.

Fan favorites: Baja burrito, build-your-own bowl and nachos.

Tres Amigos Mexican Restaurant

350 E. Broad St.

Rooted in Athens, Tres Amigos offers daily handmade dishes that blend "family recipes with a lively cantina spirit."

Fan favorites: steak torta, birria tacos and arroz con pollo.

Poquitos

195 Prince Ave.

Birria, carnitas, pozole and more are available in the former Go Bar space from the former owners of The Grit and Pedro de Paz of Ted's Most Best. Bonus: A sunny corner patio.

Fan favorites: carnitas pambazo, pozole and al pastor torta.

Agua Linda Mexican Restaurant

1376 Prince Ave.

Agua Linda has served authentic Mexican cuisine since 1999, offering lunch specials and a variety of drinks.

Fan favorites: fajita nachos, birria ramen and tostadas de camarón.


Photo/Katie Tucker

Sr. Sol Mexican Restaurant

175 Tallassee Road

Beloved by students, Sr. Sol is known for generous portions of classic Mexican dishes in a laid-back, casual environment.

Fan favorites: the burrito especial, Texas fajitas and gorditas.

La Montaña Mexican Grill

4115 Lexington Road

Celebrating the essence of Mexican culture, La Montaña Mexican Grill offers an immersive dining experience filled with traditional decor, music and authentic flavors.

Fan favorites: house flautas, enchiladas verdes and taco Americano dinner.

Taqueria Del Sol

334 Prince Ave.

Taqueria Del Sol is known for its blend of Southern, Mexican and Southwestern flavors, creating a cross-cultural flair that keeps patrons coming back for more.

Fan favorites: fried chicken tacos, carnitas pork enchiladas and shrimp corn chowder.

San Angel Cocina & Cantina

2226 W. Broad St.

With flavors inspired by the Polanco district in Mexico City, San Angel Cocina & Cantina provides a modern twist on traditional dishes and flavors.

Fan favorites: house margarita, street tamales and the ribeye polanco.

Señor Birds Tacos & Tequila Bar

255 W. Washington St.

Next to the historic Morton Theatre, Señor Birds — formerly El Paso Tacos & Tequila — offers a blend of authentic Mexican food and Tex-Mex in a lively atmosphere. Bonus: indoor and outdoor seating, live music and a tequila bar.

Fan favorites: burrito loco, empanadas de res molida and nachos con pollo asado.

Dos Palmas Mexican Grill

3523 Atlanta Highway

A family-owned Athens tradition since 2007, Dos Palmas Mexican Grill is a go-to spot for authentic Mexican dishes and a wide selection of over 40 types of tequila.

Fan favorites: brisket chimichanga, burrito loco and carnitas plate.

Tacos Los Plebes

675 Danielsville Road

Tacos Los Plebes draws a dedicated line of customers, a local favorite known for serving some of the best and most authentic street tacos in Athens.

Fan favorites: chorizo, campechano tacos and nachos.

El Bajio

400 Hawthorne Ave., Suite 12

Focused on the preservation of traditional Mexican cooking, El Bajio serves authentic dishes from the central states of Mexico, including Veracruz, Puebla and Michoacán.

Fan favorites: costilla de puerco en salsa verde, 7 mares soup and camarones a la diabla.

Cantaritos Café & Bar

2467 Jefferson Road

Cantaritos Café specializes in freshly made-from-scratch dishes like arepas, pupusas, and empanadas. The café provides a unique dining experience with authentic Venezuelan influence, featuring everything from hearty breakfast skillets to distinctive specialty lattes

Fan favorites: costillas en salsa verde, camarones al ajillo and the Cali burrito.

el Barrio Tacos & Tequila

1331 S. Milledge Ave.

With happy hour specials from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. every day and daily deals el Barrio Tacos & Tequila offers a vibrant spot for affordable, high-quality Mexican food.

Fan favorites: crispy fish tacos, cheesy chicken rice bowl and chocolate churros.

Barberitos

680 N. Highway 29, Unit 250, 259 E. Clayton St., 1860 Barnett Shoals Road, 1880 Epps Bridge Parkway, 1739 S. Lumpkin St., 1180 Prince Ave. and 45 Baxter St.

Founded in downtown Athens in 2000, Barberitos is a Southwestern-style, quick-serve restaurant focused on fresh, healthy ingredients made to order.

Fan favorites: chicken-bacon-chipotle ranch quesadilla, traditional taco salad and Philly cheesesteak burrito.

Taco Mama

265 N. Lumpkin St.

Taco Mama operates from a scratch kitchen and prepares fresh, whole foods alongside hand-shaken margaritas.

Fan favorites: arroz con pollo and cheese dip, tamales plate and fajitas Guadalajara.

DATE NIGHT PICKS

Cara Eldridge

It's time for a date night! Did your partner say the date night spot is "up to you?" Uh oh. Don't worry, Athens is filled with can't-go-wrong, popular picks and hidden gems they'll be impressed by. Some date nights are intimate with nice food and some are intended for a casual time and entertainment. Here is a list of a few date night picks around town across the spectrum.

ZZ & Simone's

1540 S. Lumpkin St., Ste 4

ZZ & Simone's is perfect for couples who like to share food. Ordering a pizza and pasta gets both parties the best of both worlds. The menu consists of classic Italian dishes like Margherita pizza, rigatoni alla vodka and Tagliatelle Bolognese along with more unique picks including Amalfi-style lemon pizza and beef carpaccio. The cocktails might just top the menu with garnished cocktails and a variety of spritz: Aperol, Hugo, Americano and more.

To finish off your meal, their dessert menu is not one to miss. ZZ & Simone's offers tiramisu and cheesecake, but if you are looking for something lighter, the gelato is a clear choice.

They take both reservations and walk-ins, so don't stress if you didn't prepare. Arrive just before they open at 5 p.m. and you are likely guaranteed a seat even on the busiest Saturday. ZZ & Simone's is located in Five Points, so if your night is not over yet, it is walkable to surrounding bars like Bar Bruno and The Root.

Chuck's Fish

220 W. Broad St.Y

ou don't need this list to know that Chuck's Fish is a popular spot in Athens. From Thursday night to Saturday night, this seafood and sushi restaurant can have up to a three hour wait for a table. But, for a date night on a calm weekend or a week night this is a fabulous spot, and Monday to Friday from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Chuck's offers half-off beer, well drinks and wine glasses.

Their menu includes multiple entrées of fish and shrimp along with a variety of rolls. A fan favorite is the sunset roll, which consists of yellowtail, salmon, avocado, chili paste and more. If your date is picky there are non-fish options as well. Chuck's offers chicken scaloppine over gnocchi, an 8 ounce filet of beef, panko-fried sweet and spicy chicken and salads.

Pro Tip: As a party of two, do not count out sitting at the bar to cut your wait time. Sushi chefs will craft handmade rolls right in front of you.

The Rook & Pawn

294 W. Washington St., Ste 300

An activity always makes a date go a little smoother, particularly a first date. The Rook & Pawn is a board game cafe with hundreds of games to choose from. They have classics, trivia games, card games, strategy games and more. Try a popular game or learn a new one together and see how your date responds to some competition.

While named a cafe, The Rook & Pawn should not be counted out as a dinner option. They are open until 9 p.m. most nights and midnight on the weekends. They serve eight beers on draft, Georgia brews like Creature Comforts, Southern Brewing Company and more are highlighted. In terms of food, The Rook & Pawns offers more than 16 types of sandwiches, along with salads and sharable plates. Their coffee bar has a variety of roasts and espresso drinks, and they serve spirits, cocktails and wine on a seasonal rotation.

Hendershot's

237 Prince Ave.

Choosing a unique live show that interests your partner is a really thoughtful way to spend the night, and Hendershot's has a wide variety. There are comedy shows, performances from emerging musicians, dance nights, jazz nights, art gallery openings and more. Pick something smart and your taste will impress them, or pick a comedy and you will have jokes to recall for dates to come. Check out their live events page to see what is coming for your night out.

While it may not be a traditional dinner date, Hendershot's has a full bar of coffees, teas, cocktails, beer and more. In terms of food, they serve quick bites like bagels, quiche slices, breakfast burritos, pesto and pasta salads, banana bread and more.

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SHARING CULTURE THROUGH CUISINE

Immigrant-owned restaurants cultivate community

Hosanna Worku

Beyond Georgia football and being a beloved college town with a vibrant music scene, Athens is known for its restaurants, bars and more. It is home to traditional and unique restaurants alike; there is something for every taste palate here in the Classic City. Multicultural dishes provide people the opportunity to try something new, and to connect to a new culture. A few restaurants in particular have cultivated a sense of belonging and community through food. Chief Photojournalist Hosanna Worku took some environmental portraits on film of some immigrant-owned restaurants in Athens.



Kelbourne "Kelly" Codling laughs while holding a baby at Kelly's Jamaican Food in Athens, Georgia on Friday, April 10, 2026. The baby was handed to Codling from a customer for him to hold. It is common to find Codling connecting with his customers. "When people come and buy my food, I appreciate them a lot, because that tells me that I'm doing something good for them to come back," he said.



Much of the food is made using a meat smoker located in the back of their restaurant. To him, Jamaican food means love. "My grandmother, she taught me how to cook and she never measures. She always tells me 'Whenever you cook it, make sure you cook from your heart,'" he said. "It's always said the love come from your heart, come into you and in the palm of your hands, down to your fingers. We cook with a lot of love."



Wenqian "Wendy" Kong poses for a portrait inside her shop Orient Mart in Athens, Georgia on Thursday, April 30, 2026. Wendy was born and raised in China. In 2010, Kong came to America as a graduate student at the University of Georgia studying in the department of crop and soil sciences. After about 16 years in research, Kong pivoted her career into owning the Orient Mart. After the previous owners decided to retire, she saw it as a good opportunity. "Oh, it's kind of cool, because you're your own boss. . . Yeah, that's the best part," Kong said. Her family members also help her run the store

Over the years, Wendy described a shift in customers that walk through her door. What initially started off as consistently visiting scientists and Chinese students changed to predominantly Americans. "A lot of people are starting to try Asian food, or a lot of people have Asian parents and they know what to get," said Kong.



Adam Mousa, the manager of Mediterranean Grill, poses for a portrait outside his family's restaurant in Athens, Georgia on Wednesday, April 15, 2026. Mousa was raised in the food business for as long as he can remember. His father, who originally started the restaurant, immigrated to America in the 70's from Palestine.

"...There actually is a sense of community here and that really ties in well with our business," Mousa said. Family was a part of the origin of the restaurant. "My grandfather, rest in peace, told him [my father] here is 100 bucks. Don't forget I exist," Mousa said

Mousa's father took that to heart. Having worked at restaurants from the 1970s through the early 2000s, Mousa's father took his time crafting a menu and opening the restaurant. Moua believes having a father in the restaurant business is a blessing.





Jorge Vazquez, right, poses for a portrait alongside his grandfather Pedro Ruiz inside Tacos Los Plebes in Athens, Georgia on Friday, Oct. 6, 2026. Both are managers at the restaurant. Tacos Los Plebes first opened in Athens in 2018. What was originally a goal of Vazquez's grandmother, to open a restaurant in Mexico, transformed into an American dream turned reality. Vazquez began working around the age of 13 when his father, who is the owner, proposed the idea. After high school, Vazquez decided to work at the restaurant full time.

Vazquez finds value in the family business aspect of the restaurant, and what his family's food means to him. "We take a lot of pride into our work. You know we work really hard to make sure everything's done the right way. For me specifically, you know I think that's kind of always you know transferred onto me as I'm growing up."



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