

NEW YORK TRAVEL

WEEKEND TRAVEL

More Destinations

The Five-Point Weekend Escape Plan

See the Sophisticated Side of Athens

The quaint college town that birthed R.E.M. has an increasingly cosmopolitan side, with world-class restaurants, a lively arts community, and an invigorating DIY spirit.

By Blaine Bachelor Published Mar 6, 2015

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1. Where to Stay



Kick back like an extremely stylish coed at [Graduate Athens](#).
(Photo: Courtesy of Graduate Athens)

Relive your college days in style at [Graduate Athens](#) (from \$109), fresh off a pop-chic renovation. The lobby, a cheery mishmash of canary-yellow leather couches and pink armchairs, gives way to graphic rooms with quirky accents like lamps featuring the University of Georgia's bulldog mascot and blackboards scribbled with the chemical formula for sweet tea. Make a night of it at [the Foundry](#), an onsite performance venue, bar, and restaurant serving up creative takes on southern favorites like "sorta" pimento cheese with chiles and strawberry-pepper jelly (\$8).

Unwind in ecofriendly fashion at the [Hotel Indigo](#) (from \$140). The serene interiors nod subtly to the hotel's gold LEED status: a sweeping wall in the lobby made of reclaimed wood, saw blades used in the hotel's construction hung on the lounge's walls. Unwind beside the outdoor fire pit with a Georgia peach Manhattan, made with house-infused peach bourbon (\$9) from the hotel's Madison Bar & Bistro, and be sure to stop by the on-site gallery to check out contemporary works from local artists.

Experience Athens like a local in this [Airbnb studio](#) (from \$120) owned by a graphic designer. Damien Schaefer built the detached, 350-square-foot space in the hip Normaltown neighborhood, with an exterior featuring corrugated steel and wood touches, anchored by a snappy red door, plus a jasmine-covered patio. Inside, reupholstered leather chairs and planters made from downed oak trees, plus a cushy Tempur-Pedic mattress and a well-stocked coffee bar, make the space feel like home.

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