

TRAVELER



■ SMART TRAVELER

CHECKING IN

Off-Campus Housing

College town hotels that make the grade

Georgia's Graduate Athens hotel offers a retro vibe.



STONE PORCH BY THE LAKE EVANSTON, ILLINOIS

Campus tour: Thirty minutes from downtown Chicago, this restored 1889 Tudor mansion across from Lake Michigan is the first boutique lodging in Northwestern University's hometown. **Top grades:** The inn features geothermal power and guest rooms outfitted with organic mattresses, linens, and sea-inspired toiletries. **Extracurriculars:** Rent a sailboat or paddleboard at the university's new Wildcat sailing center for an alternative to the many cultural offerings on campus. **Tuition:** From \$275.

HOTEL CASA 425 CLAREMONT, CALIFORNIA

Campus tour: Soak in the Southern California lifestyle at this modern hacienda-style hotel (35 miles east of L.A.) built around a courtyard in artsy Claremont, home to the Claremont Colleges (aka 7Cs) three blocks away. **Top grades:** The 28 spacious rooms, with soaking tubs and outdoor patios, echo the overall glossy white theme. **Extracurriculars:** Complimentary bicycles and "Vino & Vinyasa" yoga and wine tastings on select Sunday afternoons in the Casa courtyard. **Tuition:** From \$195.

GRADUATE ATHENS ATHENS, GEORGIA

Campus tour: Homey charm is enhanced with touches like University of Georgia bulldog desk lamps and chalkboards in each of the 122 rooms. **Top grades:** Guests mingle in the hotel's living-room reception area, fueled by locally roasted coffee and complimentary jelly beans. **Extracurriculars:** Athens was founded on cotton wealth; today, it's a haven for music lovers. Music historian Paul Butchart leads tours highlighting hangouts of groups with roots here like R.E.M. and the B-52s. **Tuition:** From \$100.