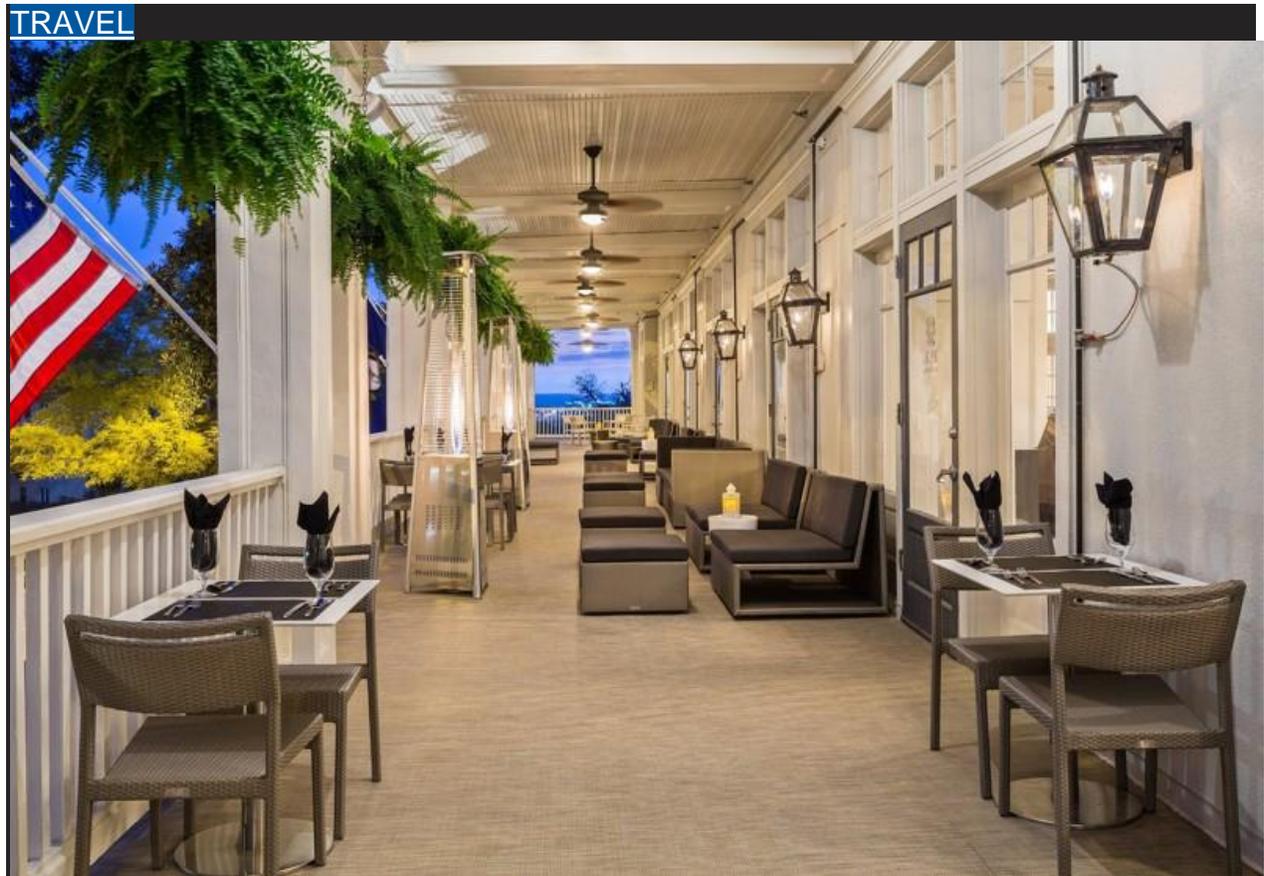


Sure, there's golf, but Augusta has a lot more to see and do

- H.M. Cauley

For the AJC
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The historic Partridge Inn is one of the most popular spots in town to stay, dine and relax with a cocktail on the wide porch. CONTRIBUTED BY: the Augusta Convention & Visitors Bureau.

So you didn't score a greens-side ticket to the Masters again this year? Even if you can't be in the elite crowd that gets to stand a few feet from some of golf's greatest athletes as they vie for the honor of wearing the Green Jacket, the buzz that the annual tournament generates makes Augusta a lively place to be from April 6 through 9.

Start first with what might be the most important part of the trip, finding a place to stay. The city's hotels, inns and private homes fill up quickly with players, their entourages, media and fans (referred to as "patrons"). One of the most sought-after spots to stay is the historic Partridge Inn, high on a hill close to the Augusta National course and noted for its elegant verandas, dining room and city views. Can't snag a room with that view? Head to the rooftop bar for a cocktail and check out the sweeping vistas. A reservation for breakfast, lunch, brunch or dinner at the P.I. Bar and Grill will also get you in the door, where you can dine on Southern fare such as shrimp and grits or chicken-fried steak with lobster mac and cheese.

Other lodging options to explore include one of several bed-and-breakfast inns. The Queen Anne Inn, tucked into the Olde Town historic district, is within walking distance of the Riverwalk area and downtown restaurants. The Rosemary Inn, a few miles north of the city across the state line, is a throwback to Antebellum style, with its towering white columns and sweeping porches. The Olde Town Inn offers just four rooms, each with a fireplace, and regularly draws a crowd to its Fox Lair's lounge in the brick-and-wood basement. Another option: Airbandb. No matter where you stay, don't be surprised to find rates are significantly higher during tournament week than the rest of the year.

What visitors will be pleased to find is that Augusta affords plenty of things to do outside of the Masters event. Along with scouting out famous faces at the gates to the course, plan on being at one of the special musical events the city stages that week. On April 4, grab a lawn chair or blanket and head to Evans Towne Center Park (7016 Evans Town Center Blvd., Evans; 706-650-5005, evanstownecenterpark.com) for Rock Fore! Dough, a charity concert featuring Lady Antebellum, Kip Moore and Bethany Davis and the Southside Boys. Tickets are \$30 in advance or \$40 at the gate. A family-oriented dance party for all ages happens April 5 at the Augusta Common, 836 Reynolds St., with ParTee on the Green (respectdowntown.wordpress.com/parteeaugusta). Admission is \$3, free for children 3 and younger. Another musical blast is April 6 when The Major Rager takes over the Augusta Common with a number of headliners. Tickets are \$40 for general admission, \$110 for VIP and \$15 for the after-party with two bands (themajorrager.com).

Before the concerts, the city has other activities to pursue. History lovers will want to start at the Augusta Museum of History (560 Reynolds St., 706-722-8454, augustamuseum.org) where the James Brown exhibit commemorates the city's native son and musical legend with personal artifacts. The museum also houses displays around golf, the city's development through the decades and the importance of transportation, told through a 1914 steam engine, a trolley car and a Model T. Admission is \$4 adults, \$3 seniors, \$2 children and free for those under 5.

Another spot of history worth noting is the childhood home of President Woodrow Wilson (419 7th St., 706-722-9828, wilsonboyhoodhome.org), now a national historic site. The 28th commander-in-chief grew up there during the Civil War, and docents recount stories of the young boy watching defeated soldiers stagger off the train cars at a nearby station. Tours of the two-story 1860 home are offered Thursdays through

Saturday; \$5 for adults, \$4 seniors, \$4 students, free for 5 and younger. Nearby, the First Presbyterian Church (642 Telfair St.) where Wilson's father was the pastor is one of 14 historic houses of worship visitors can explore in the downtown district (706-826-4700, historicaugusta.org).

Take in the city's natural beauty with a leisurely stroll along the Riverwalk that winds beside the Savannah River, or hike along the Canal Heritage Area's towpath, a popular trail that parallels the city's canal. The free Phinizy Swamp Nature Park (1858 Lock and Dam Rd., 706-828-2109, phinizycenter.org) brings visitors within picture-taking distance of the inhabitants, including otters and alligators. If cruising is more to your liking, check out the options offered by the Petersburg Boat Tours along the canal (1450 Greene St., 706-823-0440, augustacanal.com). Trips focus on the historical (ruins of Confederate munitions factories), wildlife, music or stunning sunsets.

Those who want to get in a few rounds of golf and experience a bit of the sport's history at the same time will find both available at the Forest Hills Golf Club, one of the top public courses in the area (1500 Comfort Road, 706-733-0001, theforesthillsgolfcourse.com). Owned by Augusta University, the 18-hole course was built in 1926 and is noted as the place where golf legend Bobby Jones began his 1930 Grand Slam tour. Golf greats Phil Mickelson and Davis Love II have also played on the greens, designed by Donald Ross and renovated in 2004 by the Arnold Palmer Company. During Masters week, the club offers \$160 packages that include a boxed lunch, cart and balls, as well as a second round of play for an additional \$50. Reservations are a must!

Where to Stay

Olde Town Inn, 349 Telfair St., Augusta 30901

706-828-5600, oldetowninnaugusta.com

The Partridge Inn

2110 Walton Way, Augusta 30904

706-737-8888, curiocollection3.hilton.com/en/hotels/georgia/the-partridge-inn

Queen Anne Inn, 406 Greene St., Augusta 30901

706-723-0045, queenanneaugusta.com

Rosemary Inn, 804 Carolina Ave., North Augusta, S.C. 29841

803-426-1546, rosemaryinnbb.com

Where to Dine

Boll Weevil Café: Casual Southern specialties and more than 30 desserts served in an 1870s cotton warehouse.

10 9th St., 706-722-7772, thebollweevil.com

Craft and Vine: Plates to share, wood-fired pizzas and an impressive wine selection.

204 Broad St., 706-496-8442, craftandvine.com

Finch & 5th: Craft cocktails and American classics.

379 Highland Ave., 706-364-5300, finchandfifth.com

Southbound Smokehouse: Southern barbecue with a Tex-Mex twist and live music.

855 Central Ave., 706-733-5464, southboundsmokehouse.com

River Watch Brewery: An old warehouse houses the city's first brewery since Prohibition.

1175 4th St., 706-421-7177, riverwatchbrewery.com



Boat rides along the Savannah River cruise past historic ruins and an array of wildlife.
CONTRIBUTED BY: the Augusta Convention & Visitors Bureau.



The history of golf is told through a collection of artifacts at the Augusta Museum of History. CONTRIBUTED BY: the Augusta Convention & Visitors Bureau.



The Savannah River provides places to row, walk, jog and take in views of the city. CONTRIBUTED BY: the Augusta Convention & Visitors Bureau.



The go-to place to stay in Augusta is the historic Partridge Inn. CONTRIBUTED BY: the Augusta Convention & Visitors Bureau.



Tour the Victorian house where Woodrow Wilson grew up. CONTRIBUTED BY: the Augusta Convention & Visitors Bureau.

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