



THE LOCAL PLAYBOOK

# RELOCATING TO ATHENS, GEORGIA

A practical guide to neighborhoods, lifestyle, and  
buying a home in Athens, GA

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# Welcome to Athens

Athens is one of those places people often move to for work or school and end up staying for years. With its vibrant college-town energy, thriving local food scene, and strong sense of community, Athens offers a lifestyle that's hard to find anywhere else.

Home to the University of Georgia, Athens blends the culture and creativity of a university town with the comfort of a smaller Southern city. You'll find live music, local restaurants, historic neighborhoods, and beautiful outdoor spaces all within a short drive.

Whether you're relocating for a new job, a lifestyle change, or simply exploring your options, this guide will help you get familiar with the Athens area and what it's like to live here.

## Where Athens Is Located

Athens is located in northeast Georgia and offers the perfect balance of small-city living with easy access to larger destinations.

The city sits about 70 miles northeast of Atlanta, making it convenient for travel, with major airports and additional job opportunities.

Approximate driving times:

Athens → Atlanta: 1 hour 15 minutes

Athens → Greenville, SC: 1 hour 45 minutes

Athens → North Georgia Mountains: about 2 hours

Athens → Lake Hartwell: about 1 hour

Athens is close enough to major cities and outdoor destinations while still maintaining its unique local character.



# Why People Move to Athens

People relocate to Athens for many reasons, but a few themes consistently come up.

## Career Opportunities

Many professionals relocate for positions with universities, healthcare systems, or regional businesses.

## Quality of Life

Athens offers a slower pace of life while still providing culture, dining, and entertainment.

## Education

The presence of the university brings intellectual energy and opportunities to the community.

## Community Feel

Athens has a strong local culture where people support local businesses, festivals, and community events.

For many people, Athens becomes more than a place to live – it becomes home.



# The Athens Lifestyle

Athens offers a lifestyle that blends culture, outdoor recreation, and community.

On any given weekend, you might find yourself:

- Exploring the farmers' market
- Visiting a local brewery
- Listening to live music downtown
- Walking through a botanical garden
- Cheering on the Georgia Bulldogs

Popular local spots include:

- State Botanical Garden of Georgia
- Bear Hollow Zoo
- Sanford Stadium

Football Saturdays in the fall are a major tradition, bringing incredible energy to the entire town.



# Understanding the Athens Area

When people say they're moving to Athens, they may actually end up living in one of several nearby counties.

Athens itself is located in Clarke County, but many buyers also explore surrounding communities depending on lifestyle, schools, and budget.

Nearby counties include:

Oconee County  
Jackson County  
Madison County  
Barrow County

Each area offers a slightly different lifestyle – from walkable in-town neighborhoods to larger suburban communities and rural properties with more land.

## Athens Quick Facts

Population: ~127,000 (Athens-Clarke County)  
Distance to Atlanta: ~70 miles  
Drive time to Atlanta: ~1 hour 15 minutes  
Founded: 1801

Home to: University of Georgia

Local highlights:

- Vibrant live music scene
- Walkable downtown district
- College town culture
- Strong local restaurant scene

Nickname: The Classic City



# Popular Neighborhoods In Athens

Athens has several well-known neighborhoods, each with its own personality.

- Five Points  
Historic homes, walkable charm, close to campus.
- Normaltown  
Medical district, restaurants, coffee shops, strong community feel.
- Boulevard  
Historic homes and artsy vibe near downtown.
- Eastside Athens  
Affordable neighborhoods and newer subdivisions.
- Downtown  
Walkability and easy access to restaurants, nightlife, and events.

Each neighborhood offers a different lifestyle depending on what buyers are looking for.

## Commute Snapshot

Average drive times to Downtown Athens

- Watkinsville → 10–15 minutes
- Hull → 15 minutes
- Jefferson → 25 minutes
- Bogart → 15 minutes
- Winterville → 10 minutes

Times vary depending on traffic.





## Suburban Communities Nearby

Many families relocating to Athens explore nearby towns that offer newer homes, more space, and suburban neighborhoods.

- Watkinsville (Oconee County)**  
Located just south of Athens, Watkinsville is one of the most popular areas for families moving to the region. It's known for its strong school system, newer neighborhoods, and convenient access to Athens.
- Jefferson (Jackson County)**  
Jefferson is a growing community north of Athens with a mix of newer construction and established neighborhoods. It offers easy access to both Athens and I-85 for commuting.
- Bogart (Oconee/Clarke County)**  
Located west of Athens, Bogart provides convenient access to Athens while offering suburban neighborhoods and newer homes.
- Winterville (Clarke County)**  
Just minutes from Athens, Winterville has a small-town feel with local charm and community events while still being very close to downtown Athens.
- Hull (Madison County)**  
Just northeast of Athens, Hull offers a more rural setting while still being only about 15 minutes from downtown. Buyers often find larger lots, quiet neighborhoods, and a slower pace of life.

These areas often offer larger lots and newer construction than in-town neighborhoods.



## Schools in the Area

For many families relocating to the Athens area, school districts are an important factor when choosing where to live. The Athens region is served by several public school systems, each covering different communities surrounding the city.

Below are the primary districts buyers often consider when relocating to the area.

### Clarke County School District

Clarke County includes the city of Athens itself. Many of the in-town neighborhoods, historic areas, and homes closest to downtown and the university fall within this district.

### Oconee County School District

Located just south of Athens, Oconee County is one of the fastest-growing areas near the city. Many families relocating to the region choose this area for its suburban neighborhoods and convenient access to Athens.

### Jackson County School District

Jackson County is located north of Athens and includes communities such as Jefferson. The area has experienced significant growth in recent years and offers a mix of newer neighborhoods and more rural properties.

### Madison County School District

Northeast of Athens, Madison County includes communities such as Hull and Danielsville. The area offers a quieter, more rural setting while still being within a reasonable commute to Athens.

### Barrow County School District

Located west of Athens, Barrow County includes towns such as Winder and Statham. The area offers a range of housing options and convenient access to both Athens and the Atlanta metro area.

Because school zones and programs can change over time, buyers are encouraged to research schools directly and confirm zoning with the appropriate district.



# Cost of Living & Housing

Athens offers a relatively affordable lifestyle compared to larger metropolitan areas.

Many people relocating from bigger cities find that they can enjoy:

- More space
- Lower housing costs
- A slower pace of life

Property taxes and housing costs vary depending on the county and neighborhood, but overall, Athens offers strong value compared to many similar college towns.

Athens offers a wide variety of home styles depending on the area.

Buyers can often find homes that match their preferred lifestyle, whether that means walkability, newer construction, or more space.

## The Athens Real Estate Market

The Athens real estate market can move quickly, especially in popular neighborhoods.

Some homes receive multiple offers, while others provide opportunities for negotiation depending on market conditions.

Working with a local agent who understands neighborhood dynamics, pricing trends, and offer strategies can make a significant difference during the home-buying process.





# Common Mistakes Relocating Buyers Make

Relocating to a new city can be exciting, but there are a few common mistakes buyers sometimes make.

Examples include:

- Not exploring surrounding counties
- Underestimating football weekend traffic
- Waiting too long to see homes in competitive neighborhoods
- Not understanding differences between school districts

Having local guidance can help avoid these issues and make the relocation process smoother.

## Buying a Home in Athens from Out of Town

Many buyers relocating to Athens begin their home search while living in another city.

The process often includes:

- Initial consultation to discuss goals and timeline
- Identifying the best neighborhoods to focus on
- Virtual or video home tours
- Planning showing trips to view homes in person
- Coordinating inspections and closing

With the right strategy, many relocation buyers successfully purchase homes even if they are not in town for every step.





# About Leah Leggett

Relocating to a new city can feel overwhelming, but having a knowledgeable local guide can make the process much easier.

Leah Leggett has been helping buyers and sellers navigate the Athens real estate market for more than 20 years. She specializes in helping clients understand neighborhoods, evaluate homes, and confidently navigate the buying and selling process.

Whether you're relocating from across the state or across the country, Leah works closely with clients to help them explore the Athens area, identify the communities that best fit their lifestyle, and find the right home.

Thinking About Moving to Athens?

If you're considering relocating to Athens or Northeast Georgia, Leah would be happy to help you learn more about neighborhoods, schools, and the home-buying process.

Even if you're just starting to explore the idea of moving, a quick conversation can help you clarify your options and the local market.

Schedule a Relocation Consultation or reach out directly.

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Athens, GA Realtor

Serving Athens & Northeast Georgia



Athens isn't just a place to live.  
It's a place to feel at home.



Relocating to Athens, Georgia – The Local Playbook  
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