



MAGIC

The Gathering

GRAND PRIX ATLANTA

Welcome to Atlanta! This guide will help judges new to Atlanta with information on how to get around, where to eat and what to do when you finally tire of playing Commander all the time (Ha! How rich!).

If you see anything incorrect about this guide or have questions, feel free to email me, The Creator, at cjshrader@gmail.com.

Transportation

Public Transportation

MARTA is Atlanta's public transportation system with both bus and rail service. To ride MARTA, you'll need a Breeze card, which costs \$1.00 and can be bought at any rail station. You can load money on it and use it for both rail and bus service.

Fares are not based on distance, but rather trips. A one-way trip (for example, from the airport to the venue) is \$2.50. Transfers are free.

For more information on MARTA (and operating hours if you're coming in late), visit itsmarta.com.

From the Airport

Taking MARTA: Take a Gold or Red train north to the Five Points station. From here, you can either transfer to a westbound Green/Blue train for one stop, or walk. If you're transferring, get off at the Dome/GWCC/Philips Arena/CNN Center stop and follow the signs to the World Congress Center.

If you'd rather walk (it'll be about half a mile), head northeast on Broad Street Plaza, make a left onto Marietta Street and then a left onto Andrew Young International Boulevard. The venue will be on your right. If you're coming in late at night and have a fear of homeless people, you might want to transfer instead.

Taking a cab: If you enjoy paying more when you could do it for only \$3.50 taking MARTA, an estimated cab fare from the airport to the venue is \$26.49.

Driving/Parking

Ok, so if you're coming from Nashville you want to ... oh, wait. This is 2014. Put that in your GPS; you'll be fine.

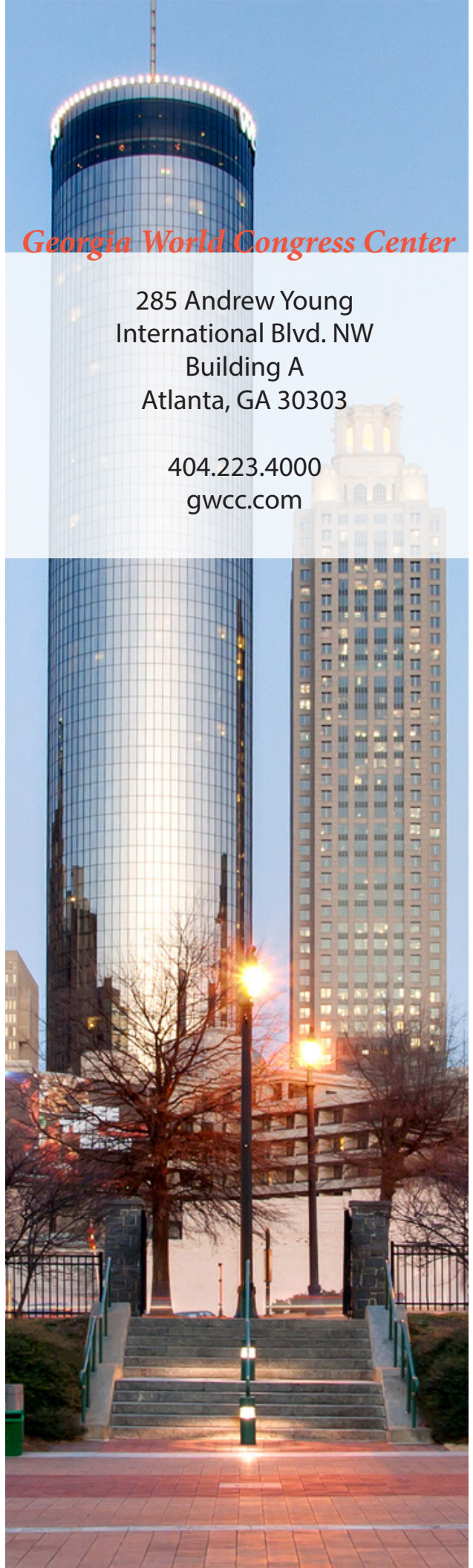
Parking is available at the venue in the Red/International deck for \$10 a day, though the website says it can be \$15 to \$50 during "major events." You can even buy a parking permit online at gwcc.com.

There are many parking lots in Atlanta, so if this doesn't work for you, you can certainly find one by driving in any direction around the venue.

Georgia World Congress Center

285 Andrew Young
International Blvd. NW
Building A
Atlanta, GA 30303

404.223.4000
gwcc.com



Within Walking Distance

There are tons of restaurants within walking distance of the venue. The best place for those 30-minute judge breaks is the CNN Center just across Andrew Young International Boulevard. It has a large food court with plenty of options.

If you venture inside Centennial Olympic Park, you'll see Googie Burger. This is a pretty good burger place right next to Centennial's Fountain of Rings. You'll know the park because it's the area with grass and trees next to the venue.

There are STILL MORE options around the venue. Check Google Maps; I can't even list them all.

Worth Traveling To

The Vortex

438 Moreland Ave., 404.688.1828, thevortexbarandgrill.com

If you can only go to one Atlanta restaurant, this is the one I recommend. It has a burger called the Double Coronary Bypass that has grilled cheese sandwiches instead of buns! You can't eat better than that.

(Note: There are two Vortexes, and one is closer than the one I list here. However, I think the Moreland Avenue one is simply better. It's in a weird/cool part of town called Little Five Points, and the entrance is a giant skull!)

The Real Chow Baby

1016 Howell Mill Road, 404.815.4900, therealchowbaby.com

This place is pretty cool. You pick out all your own ingredients for stir fry and they make it for you and bring it out to you. It's also all you can eat, and we know judges have big appetites!

Like the Vortex, there are two Atlanta locations, but I recommend the Howell Mill one.



The Varsity

61 North Ave., 404.881.1706, thevarsity.com

The Varsity bills itself as the “world’s largest drive-in restaurant.” I don’t know who is really trying to take the title, but this place is an Atlanta staple. It’s the kind of place where you get to go in, get yelled at to order, and then get some food that isn’t all that great. But it is greasy, and that’s what’s important.

The atmosphere and sheer size of the Varsity make it well worth a visit. And since it is effectively just fast food, the prices are very cheap.

Mary Mac’s Tea Room

224 Ponce de Leon Ave., 404.876.1800, marymacs.com

As a connoisseur of sweet tea, when I say Mary Mac’s has the best sweet tea I’ve ever had, it means a lot. This stuff is the greatest. You can feel the grains of sugar entering your mouth; it is magical.

Mary Mac’s Tea Room is a pure Southern dining experience, and the food is amazing, from the fried chicken to the ribs. As a bonus, a creepy lady sometimes comes by and rubs your shoulders. (Seriously, it’s her job; her official title is “Goodwill Ambassador.”)

Fat Matt’s Rib Shack

1811 Piedmont Ave., 404.607.1622, fatmattsribshack.com

Fat Matt’s is a very cool little place where you can get some delicious, cheap barbecue. They serve ribs, chopped pork and chicken. Fair warning: If you get the rib sandwich, it is literally a rib in some bread. The bone is still in there!

The cool thing about this place is they have blues bands nightly. It’s not exactly blues, but last time I was there with a bunch of judges we had a sweet little rendition of “Sweet Caroline.” Check their website for information on upcoming bands!

Fun fact: Fat Matt’s was even featured on the Travel Channel during the too-brief run of “Best Daym Takeout.”





World of Coca-Cola

World of Coca-Cola

121 Baker St., 404.676.5151,
worldofcoca-cola.com, Admission: \$16

Atlanta is famous for being the birthplace of Coke, and at the World of Coca-Cola you can learn all about the history and legacy of the company and the man who invented it.

But that's booooring. The real draw is the Taste It! room where you can try Coke's products from all around the world. Be sure to try the one called Beverly; it literally tastes like you threw up in your mouth!

Bonus: You get a commemorative Coke of your own to take home! Value!

Centennial Olympic Park

Just look across Marietta Street. You can't miss it.

In 1996 Atlanta held the Olympics and they built a bunch of stuff for it, including this park. They also still talk about it a lot; it's weird.

Centennial Olympic Park is a family-friendly attraction surrounded by restaurants and homeless people. It's within walking distance from the venue. It also has an Olympic Ring fountain that shoots water in these neat jets. I tried to run through it once without getting wet. I failed.

(Editor's note: It was hilarious.)

SkyView Atlanta

168 Luckie St., 678.949.9023,
skyviewatlanta.com, Admission: \$13.50

This is the newest in every city's trend of building a giant ferris wheel. If you want to get a great view of Atlanta while subliminally thinking "Is the floor supposed to be shaking?" then this is the place for you. You can even upgrade to a VIP gondola with leather seats and a glass floor if you're feeling extra fancy! VIP tickets are \$50, and up to five people can ride in a VIP gondola.

It doesn't hurt that it's right outside Centennial Olympic Park, so it's also extremely close to the venue.



Georgia Aquarium

Georgia Aquarium

225 Baker St., 404.581.4000,
georgiaaquarium.org, Admission: \$35

It's an aquarium. There are a bunch of fish and weird-looking Beluga whales, and that tunnel thing where you walk through and fish are swimming all around you. And a dolphin show where dolphins do trained things while preparing to take over the world.

Listen. If you like fish, this is the place for you. It even has a seafood restaurant, which seems morbid to me, but whatever, people like it.

Georgia Aquarium is also in easy walking distance from the venue!

Little Five Points

Intersection of Moreland, Euclid and
McLendon avenues

Little Five Points (Don't confuse it with Five Points!) is difficult to describe. Do people still use the word "hip"? Hip might be the word. Everyone who hangs out there wears real tight pants and has at least three tattoos.

Little Five Points is full of cool bars, unique shops (Junkman's Daughter is a big one), interesting restaurants (Vortex!) and sometimes a dude who will panhandle free-verse poetry. Honestly, I've never seen another area quite like it. If you can find the time to visit, then I recommend it.

Atlanta Braves at Turner Field

755 Hank Aaron Drive, 404.522.7630,
atlanta.braves.mlb.com

Into sports? You're a Magic judge, aren't you? Good news: The Atlanta Braves are playing three games Grand Prix weekend against the Colorado Rockies!

Games are Friday night (7:35), Saturday afternoon (4:10) and Sunday evening (5:10). Tickets prices are all over the place, but the general ballpark (see what I did there?) is \$15 to \$70.

If you go, get a Holeman & Finch double cheeseburger. You won't regret it. (And cheer extra loud for Freddie Freeman because he's the best.)