

THINGS TO DO HOLIDAY

# Stay or go for Labor Day?



## Day trips offer chance to escape city during holiday weekend.

By Archith Seshadri  
For the AJC

Labor Day marks the end of the dog days of summer, though the heat will likely linger. If you haven't had a chance to take a quick escape this summer, why not power through the summer sizzle and take the opportunity to take a road trip. Here are a few options in and around Atlanta.

### Lake Lanier Islands

Lake Lanier Islands is one of the closest getaway spots for Atlantans. You can feel like you're a world away with the spectacular lake views and the beach, water slides and zip lines of the new Margaritaville entertainment complex. The water park includes a long list of water slides and thrill rides, including Black-out, which plunges you through total darkness. If you just want to chill out, the resort offers 1,500 scenic acres of natural beauty. The resort and hotel offers packages for the holiday weekend.

Daily admission to the water park is \$21.99-\$45.99. Lanier Islands, 7000 Lanier Islands Parkway, Buford. 770-945-8787, www.lanierislands.com.

### Sky High Hot Air Balloon Festival

Sometimes a bird's eye view is all you need to escape the traffic and hustle and bustle of city life. Take a ride into the sky at Callaway Resort & Gardens and gaze upon the colorful hot air balloons at this festival while hanging out at Robin Lake Beach. This annual event also boasts a car show, live music, a birds of prey show and disc dogs. Once night falls, dozens of balloons will illuminate the sky. "Our 21st annual Hot Air Balloon Festival is a huge hit with the metro-Atlanta market," said Pam Bauer, Director of Brand Development and Marketing for the Callaway Resort & Gardens.

Aug. 30-Sept. 1. Single day tickets are \$14.95-\$34.95; two- and three-day passes are \$39.95-\$69.95. Callaway Resort & Gardens, 17800 U.S. 27, Pine Mountain. 844-512-3826, www.callawaygardens.com.

### Macon

Head south from Atlanta, and after less than 100 miles you'll find yourself in Macon. You'll also find the Tubman Museum (310 Cherry

St.), the Southeast's largest institution dedicated to the art, history and culture of African Americans. The city has a rich musical tradition, too, from Little Richard to Otis Redding to the Allman Brothers. The best way to explore that aspect of Macon is with the Macon Music Trail (maconmusictrail.com), an online resource that will guide you through Macon's local music history and hot spots. But don't miss the Allman Brothers Band Museum at The Big House (2321 Vineville Ave.). Macon is also home to the Georgia Sports Hall of Fame and Museum (301 Cherry St.), which bills itself as the nation's largest state sports hall of fame. Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park (1207 Emery Highway) is an essential stop for history buffs and archaeology fans. Macon has seen an influx of new restaurants and gastros, but don't forget classics such as Nu-Way Weiners and H&H Soul Food.

Find more information on Macon's attractions and dining options at maconga.org.

### Augusta

With its manicured lawns and abundance of azaleas, Augusta is known as the Garden City. About two hours east of Atlanta, the city sits along the Savannah River. The Augusta Riverwalk is the perfect place for a stroll, and it includes a children's playground and gardens. The Morris Museum of Art (110th St.) and the Augusta Museum of History (560 Reynolds St.) are located just off the walkway along with the Jessye Norman Amphitheater and several restaurants. On Saturdays, March through November, explore the Augusta Market for arts, crafts, baked goods and regional produce. It happens at the 8th Street entrance to the Riverwalk. Just up the road a bit from downtown is the 33-acre Savannah Rapids Park (3300 Evans to Locks Road), where you'll find the Savannah Rapids Pavilion and the Historic Augusta Canal Headgates.

For more information on all of Augusta's attractions, go to visitaugusta.com.

### Columbus

On the other side of the state from Augusta, you'll find yourself on the banks of the Chatta-

Go continued on D2

## The metro area has an array of events happening to satisfy all types of curiosities.

By Archith Seshadri  
For the AJC

As we wind down the dog days of summer, celebrate the end of the hot months with friends and family in Atlanta. Labor Day weekend has something in store for everyone including parades, book festivals, sporting events and live music. So if you're ready to explore some of the festivals and concerts in Atlanta, we've picked a few fun Labor Day events happening around town.

### AJC Decatur Book Festival

The nation's largest independent book festival takes over downtown Decatur on Labor Day weekend. The AJC Decatur Book Festival brings 258 authors to 14 stages around Decatur, beginning with the DBF Book Award Celebration on Thursday, Aug. 29, at Charis Books. Over the following three days, book lovers can attend a variety of panel discussions, meet authors and shop the street fair. Almost all genres are represented including fiction, nonfiction, children's and young adult, poetry, politics and culinary, to name a few. The Saturday and Sunday children's parades are a must-see each morning. Several ticketed events are in high demand, including sessions with Justice Sonia Sotomayor (already sold out) and Philippa Gregory. The rest of the events are first-come, first-served seating.

5-10 p.m. Aug. 30; 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Aug. 31; noon-6 p.m. Sept. 1. In and around downtown Decatur, 101 E. Court Square, Decatur. decaturbookfestival.com.

### Dragon Con 2019

Once again Dragon Con dares sci-fi fans to show off creative costumes and fantasy-inspired characters at the annual festival. During the colorful, quirky parade on Peachtree Street, costumed characters will unabashedly march up and down the streets of Atlanta. Dragon Con - held annually for more than 30 years - is more than



From a treetop obstacle course (above) to a scenic railroad tour, Labor Day weekend features all of your favorites at Stone Mountain.

Left, Atlanta's Black Pride celebration kicks off Wednesday and continues through Sept. 2. CONTRIBUTED BY STONE MOUNTAIN; CURTIS COMPTON / CCOMPTON@AJC.COM

eye-catching costumes, with the conference holding acting, writing, tai chi and even belly dancing workshops. Featured guests include George Takei ("Star Trek" and "The Terror: Infamy"), Georgia-born actor Wes Chatham ("The Expanse"), "The Hunger Games: Mockingjay", Freema Agyeman ("Doctor Who," "Sense8," "Torchwood") and "Star Trek" royalty William Shatner. Comic book lovers and avid gamers abound, and Dragon Con is ideal for Instagram-worthy scenery. Dragon Con is the king of all science fiction events in Atlanta, drawing more than 80,000 pop culture fans to the downtown area, according to the Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau. Find more details regarding how to navigate all the workshops, panels and dance parties on AJC.com, with tips for traffic in and around the area.

Aug. 29-Sept. 2. \$140-\$160; daily memberships \$15-\$50. Atlanta Marriott Marquis, 265 Peachtree Center Ave. NE, Atlanta. dragoncon.org.

### Black Pride Parade

Another Labor Day tradition in Atlanta, the Atlanta Black Pride weekend kicks off on Wednesday, Aug. 28, and continues through Monday, Sept. 2. Started in 1996, Atlanta Black Pride is one of two officially recognized festivals for the African American LGBT community. It started when a group of LGBT African Americans organized a picnic. That has now skyrocketed into a weekend filled with festivities and entertainment. Educational workshops and vendors will be on display at the Georgian Terrace, which is this year's host hotel. From dance parties to community empowerment seminars, the event welcomes people from around the

world. You can enjoy one of the largest black gay pride parade events in the world at Piedmont Park with stalls, vendors, music, food and entertainment. Thursday kicks off with a fashion show at Revel (1778 Ellsworth Industrial Blvd.) and a comedy program. Some of the featured artists this year include Nema Williams, Sweet Baby Kita and Simone. The weekend continues at Compound (1008 Brady Ave. NW) on Saturday, Aug. 31, with a block party with the Legendary Traxx Girls Big Bang Event. Sunday will bring in thousands of people to attend the club parties, poetry slams, comedy shows and the Pure Heat Community Festival in Piedmont Park with a jazz brunch. It all wraps up on Monday with a cruise to Lake Lanier Islands followed by a party that evening at Revel.

Various venues around Atlanta. Check atlantaprideweekend.com for complete schedule.

### Stone Mountain Park

If you are looking for a day of adventure, it's as close as Stone Mountain Park. Situated on the outskirts of Atlanta, this spot is a perfect day trip with family or friends. The park is located 15 miles east of Atlanta on 3,200 acres of natural beauty.

Stone Mountain offers vast scenic parks, golf courses, lodging and a cable-car ride to a historic peak. There's no dearth of family-friendly activities and recreational beauty. This year, Stone Mountain is offering live entertainment including Jump! The Ultimate Dog Show - which is only in town for Labor Day weekend. There's even a farm petting

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Dozens of balloons will illuminate the sky during the Sky High Hot Air Balloon Festival at Callaway Gardens. CONTRIBUTED BY CALLAWAY GARDENS

TOP CONSUMER STORY LUNCH CONTAINERS

# Eco-friendly containers to save you from Sad Desk Lunch



There are plenty of eco-friendly containers to save you from Sad Desk Lunch syndrome. STACY ZARIN GOLDBERG FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

By Kristen Hartke  
Special To The Washington Post

Just say no to the Sad Desk Lunch.

Maybe you don't feel the need to bring in a set designer to dress your desk for lunch, but if you do bring food to work with you each day, it helps if the containers provide a little more pizzazz than a cheap plastic deli container. But you'll also want containers that are functional, eco-friendly and speak to your individual needs, from salads to soups to sandwiches.

First, determine your luncher profile. No two lunchers are the same, so their containers

shouldn't be, either. If you're carrying lunch to work each day, myriad considerations go into your choice of vessel; you don't want a container that will leak balsamic vinaigrette all over your yoga pants, and you don't want to find a crushed sandwich trapped beneath your e-reader. Other considerations: container size and weight, material and ability to keep food hot or cold. Once you identify your profile, you'll find a container to match it.

### The portion-control freak

We see you, measuring out exactly 11 pretzel sticks to go with 2 ounces of hummus. Whether you count calories or points, or

have been dabbling in intermittent fasting, you deserve a petite container that matches your meal plan.

**The OmieBox (\$39.50):** Like other bento boxes, it provides precision and variety in a packed lunch; unlike most, it also offers both hot and cold storage. A 3/4-cup thermal insert holds just enough soup or pasta to whet your appetite - as well as flexible storage areas for snacks, fruit and vegetables. If you aren't in the mood for a hot entree, simply remove the insert, and there's plenty of room for a sandwich. **Pros:** BPA-free plastic with a leak-

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