

May 2019

ISSUE 62 • FREE

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[FEATURED CONTRIBUTOR]



Amanda Morris

Amanda Morris is a freelance writer who focuses on culinary travel and seeing the world through art and architecture. Highlights of her journeys include rappelling the Blue Mountains of Australia; climbing the 462 steps to the top of Brunelleschi's dome in Florence, Italy; and riding an elephant through ancient ruins in Ayutthaya, Thailand. In this issue, she writes about a staycation in her favorite Atlanta suburb, Marietta. When she's not writing, she loves spending time with her husband and daughter and looking for their next favorite restaurant or coffee shop. As a family, they travel throughout the U.S. and around the world. You can follow Morris' excursions at sushiandgelato.com.

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Above: The newly opened Marietta Square Market offers multicultural cuisine such as Cuban sandwiches and Indian street food.

Below: Glover Park Brewery serves handcrafted suds brewed on-site.



Courtesy Marietta Visitors Bureau



Photos: Amanda Morris

Above: *Peace and Love Fountain* is one of Marietta's many murals.

Marvelous Marietta Square

Marietta's historic downtown makes for an ideal day-trip

STORY: Amanda Morris

A newly opened food hall, walking/biking trail and craft brewery give Buckhead residents a fresh reason to visit nearby Marietta's historic downtown square. The blocks-long site is best explored on foot, so once you park the car, you'll be free of traffic hassles for the day.

Start your morning with a latte and pastry from Cool Beans Coffee Roasters. The croissants here are made by nearby French bakery Douceur de France. While you wait for the barista to make your drink, check out the big red coffee roaster and the paintings by local artists hanging on the walls. Marietta has strong community support for its artists, and along with four galleries around the square and the Marietta/Cobb Museum of Art, you'll notice local artists' works hung in restaurants and in the form of street art throughout town. Out Cool Beans' back door is one of the city's most popular murals, *Peace*

and *Love Fountain*, by McKenzie Snow. Look closely for the word "love" concealed in the painting.

After breakfast, head east to Glover Park and its iconic fountain, the star of the mural you just admired. More than 50 shops, from clothing boutiques to record stores, sit on the oak-lined streets bordering the park. A kid's favorite, Lizards & Lollipopz, offers toys, games and candy. At Marietta Spice Mill, you'll find tasty tea blends, spices and oils, but the most popular thing in the store is its official greeter, Darby, an über-friendly labradoodle.

For lunch, head over to the newly opened Marietta Square Market. Eighteen different eateries and retail shops are housed in the revitalized warehouse space. The building's design is reminiscent of a train depot, complete with "rail platforms" that serve as patios. You'll immediately notice the trolley car housed at the front of the building. It's the same

type of trolley that ran between Atlanta and Marietta back in the day.

As you walk into the bright and bustling food hall, the scents of multicultural cuisines greet you. Try, for example, the Bangkok-style street food or hand-held sushi at Shai-Karr Eatery. Or order an authentic margherita pizza from Forno Vero (Italian for "True Oven") that comes with San Marzano tomatoes and *fior di latte* cheese. Cap off the afternoon with a classic Italian cocktail from Forno Vero's mixologist or a tequila from Street Taco. If you'd rather end with dessert, head to Four Fat Cows for rich, made-from-scratch ice cream or to Bread + Butter Bakery for a Pecan Bar (a Flavor of Georgia finalist).

Once your belly is full, it's time to hit the trail. And luckily, the newly opened Mountain to River (M2R) Trail is adjacent to the Marietta Square Market. The 13.5-mile system stretches from Kennesaw Mountain to the Chatta-

hoochee River. Walk along the 2 miles that pass through the square, and you'll see more street art, thanks to last year's M2R Trailfest, a celebration of the trail opening. This immersive arts festival will be held again on May 11 and will feature art performances, live music and art installations.

End the night with a beer and live music at the first craft brewery on the square, Glover Park Brewery. Its dog-friendly back patio is a favorite gathering spot, and a rotating schedule of food trucks will satisfy your late-night cravings.

There's more to do in Marietta Square than you may want to cram into one day, but fortunately it's only 30 minutes away, so a return visit is always an option. ■

MARIETTA SQUARE

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