Atlanta, Your Next Getaway Is Just 35 Minutes Away. Meet Serenbe.

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FEEL WELL

WEEKEND EXCURSIONS

IMAGE: MORT GUFFMAN (HTTPS://WWW.FLICKR.COM/PHOTOS/COMMITMENT-TO-MEDIOCRITY/3692593752) (CREATIVE COMMONS)
Sometimes, you've just gotta get away — even if you're short on time and vacation days. Luckily, Serenbe (http://serenbe.com) is just 35 minutes southeast of downtown Atlanta, and it’s the perfect getaway, whether you’ve got a few hours to spare or a few days to unplug and really reconnect with nature.

Steve and Marie Nygren founded Serenbe to **preserve the Chattahoochee Hill Country** and create healthy, creative spaces where people can thrive. Modeled after an English countryside town, the unique community features four hamlets focused on the elements of a well-lived life: arts (for inspiration), agriculture (for nourishment), health (for well-being), and education (for awareness). Here are just a few ways to spend a day the place the *New York Times* called “a utopian experiment in New Urbanism molded out of red Georgia clay.”

If you’re in the mood for a **hike** or **jog**, you won’t find a better spot. Serenbe is set among acres of preserved forests and meadows with miles of nature trails, most of which are relatively flat or gently hilly. Alternately, Peachtree Bikes (http://www.peachtreebikes.com) will **rent you a bike** so that you can cruise around for the day or weekend in style.

Feeling more adventurous? Head over to the stables and book a **trail ride**, and while you’re in that area, be sure to visit the Inn at Serenbe (http://www.serenbeinn.com). You’ll find sheep, goats, chickens, and cows tucked off to the side. In the spring, it’s not uncommon to find **baby goats** (beware: you can be sucked in for hours, watching them play in the pastures or snuggle up under heat lanterns).

The **Blue Eyed Daisy Bakeshop** is the town’s stop for breakfast or lunch (as well as the nation’s smallest Silver LEED-certified building). There, you’ll find visitors and some of the community's 400 or so residents enjoying fresh baked goods, homemade soups, and sandwiches. It’s not uncommon to run into founder Steve Nygren, hard at work over a cup of coffee.

For a bit of contemplative time after lunch, take a quite walk through the **stone labyrinth**. You’ll find it just to the side of the lake behind the farmhouse.

The idyllic 1,000-acre swath of countryside is also home to a **25-acre organic farm** that provides more than 300 varieties of veggies, herbs, flowers, and fruits to Serenbe’s farm-to-table restaurants. Market season is over

Image: Nate Steiner (https://www.flickr.com/photos/nate/4715271827)
for the year, except for a Harvest Market on November 22 at the General Store, but next spring, head back to check out the Saturday farmers market. In the meantime, there’s no shortage of events. Serenbe hosts trail runs, unique theatrical performances at the Serenbe Playhouse (http://www.serenbeplayhouse.com/about-serenbe-playhouse), live music performances, wine tastings, films and lectures, and other special events (http://serenbe.com/events#comm-directory) throughout the year.

Wander through Serenbe’s boutique shops for a little retail therapy. Greenhouse (https://squareup.com/market/greenhouse) specializes in vintage pieces for the home and organic, eco-friendly, fair-trade items. Honeycomb Consignment is an upscale consignment boutique of women’s clothing. Newington Gallery (http://www.newingtonphotography.com) features fine art photography from Serenbe resident Greg Newington. Resource has home and lifestyle goods ranging from wine glasses to jewelry, books, and art and also offers services like closet design, household organization, and interior home finishes. And Twig showcases home decor from local and regional artisans and crafts people.

If shopping is not your thing, treat yourself to a little pampering at the peaceful retreat that is The Spa at Serenbe (http://spaatserenbe.com). The products they use are organic and natural and if you’re staying overnight, they also provide in-room services at the Inn at Serenbe.

Dinner at the critically acclaimed Farmhouse (http://serenbefarmhouse.com) inside the Serenbe Inn is a delicious way to round out a relaxing day. Every dish is made of organic, locally sourced food, and accommodations can be made for any dietary restrictions.
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