

GAINESVILLE VISITOR'S GUIDE

GETTING AROUND

- **Transportation from the Gainesville Regional Airport (GNV) to the AC Hotel:** The AC currently provides no shuttle service between the airport and the hotel. See below for Uber, Lyft, and taxi options.
- **Bus:** Gainesville is served by the Gainesville Regional Transit System (RTS) bus service. The bus system can be limited, but there is good service from the AC area to the UF campus, Downtown, and the Butler Plaza retail complex (restaurants, shopping, etc.). The RTS webpage has a trip planner feature that can help riders figure out the quickest way to get from point A to point B: <https://go-rt.com/>

RTS also has a mobile app that shows real-time bus location and ETA. The app is available for free on the Apple and Google apps stores. To find out more about the app, please see this link: <http://go-rt.com/here-are-some-how-to-links-for-the-new-gnvriderts-app-2/>

- **Rideshare:** Both **Lyft** and **Uber** are active in Gainesville.
- **Taxi:** There are limited taxi services in Gainesville. These should be called well ahead of need, as they typically have few available drivers.
 - Gainesville Cab:** Phone: +1 (352) 371-1515
Webpage: www.gainesvillemarooncab.com
 - G Taxi:** Phone: +1 (352) 777-9488
Webpage: www.gtaxiservices.com
- **Electric Scooter and Bike Rental:** A number of companies offer electric bike and scooter rentals, usually via a downloadable app. See webpages for more info.

Bird Bikeshare: <https://www.bird.co/#bird-bikeshare>

Spin: <https://www.spin.app/>

Veo: <https://www.veoride.com/gainesville/>

ORIENTATION

For the purposes of this guide, we've divided Gainesville into three sections (see **Figure 1**, below):

The **HILTON / BUTLER PLAZA** area surrounds the Hilton Hotel and Conference Center and is home to Butler Plaza, a sprawling commercial area that has most every big box store and fast food/chain restaurant you'd expect in an American urban area.

East of this is the **CAMPUS / MIDTOWN** area (AC Hotel), which, as the name indicates, centers around the University of Florida campus. Many of the food and nightlife options here cater to the undergraduate student crowd.

Finally, **DOWNTOWN** is the heart of Gainesville and the area to gravitate to for a taste of local cuisine and nightlife.

A car trip from the **AC** to the center of **Downtown** will take 5–10 minutes. A bus ride can take half an hour or more, depending on schedules.

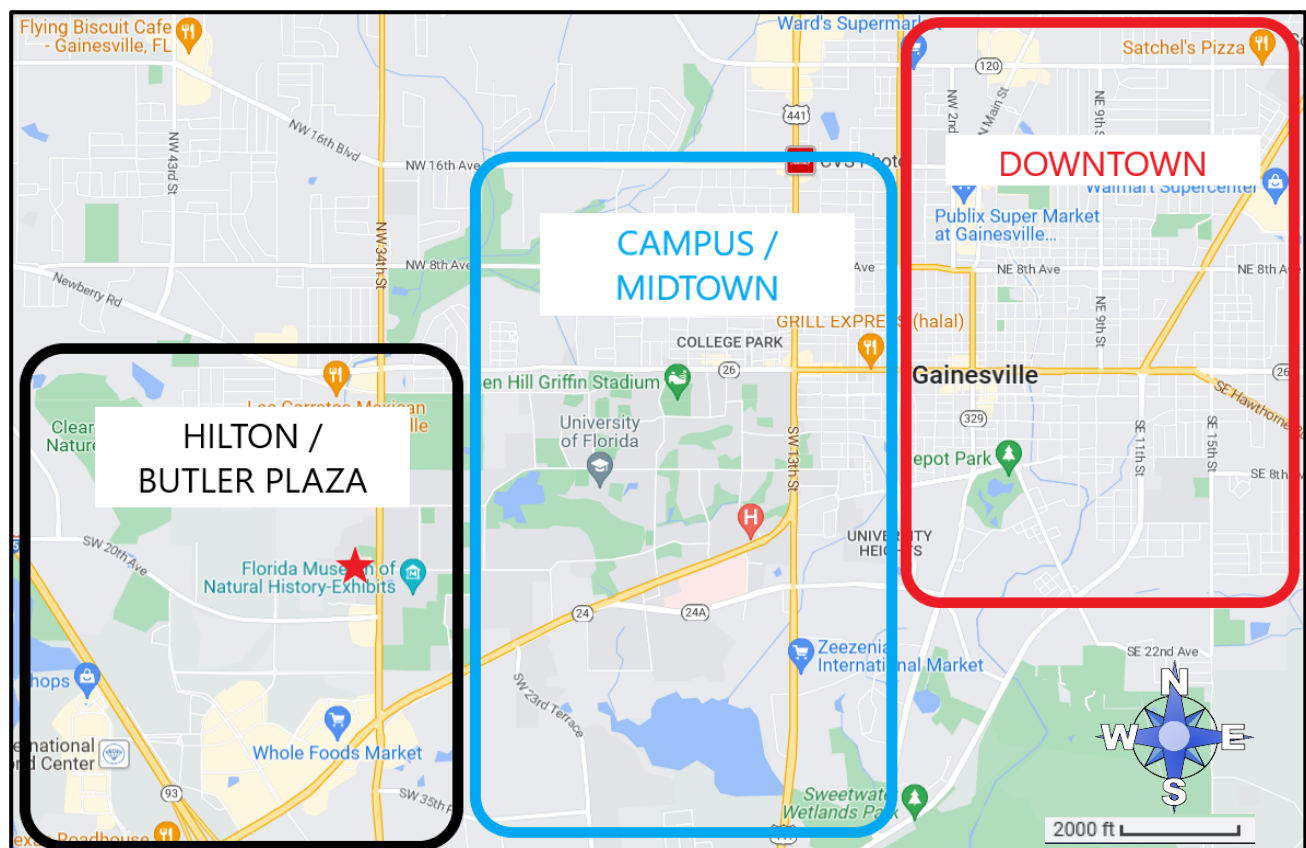


Figure 1: Map of Gainesville showing geographic sections used in this guide. Red star (★) indicates location of Hilton Conference Center. (Map source: Google Maps)

FOOD & DRINK: Here are some recommendations for each area of town. Call or visit restaurant websites for hours of operation and more info on dietary restrictions.

HILTON/BUTLER PLAZA:

- **Embers Wood Grill Prime Steaks:** Upscale option for steaks and cuisine. Call ahead for reservations. Adjacent gastropub **Spark** has cocktails, a similar menu, and open seating.
Address: 3545 SW 34th St A, Gainesville, FL 32608 Phone: (352) 380-0901
- **Gumby's Pizza:** Lowkey pizza place with a bar.
Address: 2028 SW 34th St, Gainesville, FL 32608 Phone: (352) 374-8629
- **Indian Street Food - Veg & Non-Veg:** Name is accurate, serves a wide variety of South Asian snacks and dishes. Another Indian restaurant, **Indian Cuisine**, shares the same strip mall.
Address: 3550 SW 34th St Suite M, Gainesville, FL 32608 Phone: (352) 225-5008
- **Metro Diner:** American breakfast & lunch spot.
Address: 2130 SW 34th St, Gainesville, FL 32608 Phone: (352) 353-2889
- **Mi Apá Latin Café of Gainesville:** Casual diner for Cuban classics, *jugos*, and *batidos*. Seal the deal with a Cuban coffee or *cortadito*.
Address: 114 SW 34th St, Gainesville, FL 32607 Phone: (352) 376-7020
- **New Deal Café:** Relaxed eatery offering great takes on American lunch and dinner items. The same owners run **Mildred's Big City Food** next door, a fancier spot for dinner.
Address: 3443 W University Ave, Gainesville, FL 32607 Phone: (352) 371-4418
- **Nine Spices Fondue:** Hot pot restaurant with other Asian options available.
Address: 3333 SW 34th St, Gainesville, FL 32608 Phone: (352) 792-6622
- **Swamp Head Brewery:** Local craft brews with swamp views and a shifting food truck.
Address: 3650 SW 42nd Ave, Gainesville, FL 32608 Phone: (352) 505-3035
- **World of Beer:** Chain with a worldwide beer selection and bar food staples.
Address: 3265 SW 34th St, Gainesville, FL 32608 Phone: (352) 559-8775
- **Yummy House Gainesville:** Wide variety of Chinese dishes and other Asian options. The daily Dim Sum from 11:00 AM-2:30 PM is a highlight.
Address: 3102 SW 34th St, Gainesville, FL 32608 Phone: (352) 333-7688

CAMPUS/MIDTOWN:

- **Birdie Box Sandos:** Fried chicken sandwiches and fries served in a colorfully converted garage. Dine in a double-decker bus!
Address: 2216 SW 13th St, Gainesville, FL 32608 Phone: (352) 214-6006
- **Blue Gill Quality Food:** Southern takes on seafood, sides, and diner classics.
Address: 1310 SW 13th St, Gainesville, FL 32608 Phone: (352) 872-5181
- **Karma Cream:** VEGAN ice creamery and café with coffee, baked goods, and sandwiches.
Address: 607 W University Ave, Gainesville, FL 32601 Menu: karmacream.com
- **La Tienda Mexican Restaurant:** Arguably the best Mexican food in Gainesville, served in a festive but unprepossessing dining room. There is a small Latin market attached.
Address: 2204 SW 13th St, Gainesville, FL 32608 Phone: (352) 367-0022
- **Midpoint Park and Eatery:** VEGAN options at **Plantology**, Mexican at **Nopal Dos**, and pizza-plus at **Scuola**. Across the street, **Opus Coffee** has your caffeine fix and an open area for studying or talking with colleagues.
Address: 931 SW 2nd Ave, Gainesville, FL 32601 Menu: midpointeatery.com
- **Seoul Pocha Korean Pub/Grill:** Lively, out-of-the-way spot for Korean fried chicken, seafood, and noodle dishes. Sing along to your favorite K-pop as you dine.
Address: 3610 SW 13th St, Gainesville, FL 32608 Phone: (352) 451-4117
- **Tikka Express Gainesville:** Indian and South Asian curries and accoutrements.
Address: 1011 W University Ave, Gainesville, FL 32601 Phone: (352) 672-6078

DOWNTOWN:

- **4th Avenue Food Park:** Lunch options for most any taste: **Dick Mondell's Burgers & Fries**, **Fehrenbacher's Artisan Sausage**, **Satch Squared Pizza**, **Baker Baker** pastries, **Sublime Tacos**, **Opus Coffee**, and more are at this location.
Address: 409 SW 4th Ave, Gainesville, FL 32601
- **Afternoon:** Hip spot for breakfast and brunch done well. VEGAN selections available.
Address: 231 NW 10th Ave, Gainesville, FL 32601 Phone: (352) 727-7604
- **Bingo Deli & Pub:** Restaurant and bar in the refurbished South Main Station.
Address: 619 S Main St Unit 1A, Gainesville, FL 32601 Phone: (352) 451-4470

- **Boca Fiesta:** “Mexican-inspired” favorites; makes this list mostly because of **VEGAN** options and the tasty margaritas. Outdoor seating area adjoins **The Backyard** (live music, dancing, karaoke) and **Palomino Pool Hall** (billiards & beverages).
Address: 232 SE 1st St, Gainesville, FL 32601 Phone: (352) 336-8226
- **Crybaby’s:** Yummy libations and decent bar food in a happening corner location in the heart of downtown. Next door, **Baby J’s** has retro art-deco vibes and occasional live jazz.
Address: 1 W University Ave, Gainesville, FL 32601 Phone: (352) 505-5026
- **Curia On The Drag:** Cozy spot serving coffee, tea, and other beverages; **VEGAN** food options are available. Located in the hipster haven **Auk Market** complex, it’s a cool spot to take in the local vibe. Gainesville fave **Ward’s Market** is located a short walk away.
Address: 2029 NW 6th St, Gainesville, FL 32609 Phone: (352) 792-6444
- **Cypress & Grove Brewing Company:** Local suds served up in a repurposed icehouse. On-site food truck, occasional live music and other events.
Address: 1001 NW 4th St, Gainesville, FL 32601 Phone: (352) 376-4993
- **Dragonfly Sushi & Sake Company:** Semi-swank spot for Japanese seafood and classy cocktails. Reservations recommended, especially for larger groups.
Address: 201 SE 2nd Ave #104, Gainesville, FL 32601 Phone: (352) 371-3359
- **First Magnitude Brewing Company:** Beloved warehouse-chic microbrewery with indoor and outdoor seating, food truck, and occasional live music and events.
Address: 1220 SE Veitch St, Gainesville, FL 32601 Phone: (352) 727-4677
- **Flaco’s Cuban Bakery:** Funky counter-service spot serving Cuban sandwiches, guava pastries, stuffed arepas, burritos and tacos. Open late night. Next door, **Vecino’s Bar and Restaurant** has similar food and tropical cocktails served in a colorful bar space.
Address: 200 W University Ave, Gainesville, FL 32601 Phone: (352) 371-2000
- **Goldie’s Burgers:** Unflashy burgers and fries with a parkside view in the former Gainesville train depot. At the other end of the building is **The Boxcar**, a bar space with breezy outdoor seating.
Address: 201 SE Depot Ave, Gainesville, FL 32601 Phone: (352) 792-6685
- **HOWL (House of Waking Life):** Low-key teahouse for journaling, contemplating poetry, discussing the meaning of life, and enjoying a brewed beverage, hot or iced.
Address: 109 SE 4th Ave, Gainesville, FL 32601 Phone: (352) 363-1989
- **Satchel’s Pizza:** Adored local pizza spot with quirky maximalist aesthetic, **VEGAN** choices and live entertainment. Home of Gainesville’s *original* “eat in a bus” experience.
Address: 1800 NE 23rd Ave, Gainesville, FL 32609 Phone: (352) 335-7272

- **Tinker Latin Restaurant:** Pan-Latin dishes and juicy beverages whipped up in an expansive, echoing space. Happy hour is recommended!
Address: 502 S Main St, Gainesville, FL 32601 Phone: (352) 225-3563
- **The Top Restaurant:** A hip mainstay of Gainesville’s food scene. Indoor and outdoor seating, multiple bars, and crafty cocktail concoctions. Serves late night / **VEGAN** eats.
Address: 30 N Main St, Gainesville, FL 32601 Phone: (352) 337-1188

THINGS TO DO

For being a smaller city, Gainesville has numerous options for entertainment and activities. Live music and events occur at venues throughout the town; checking out an event calendar such as <https://www.visitgainesville.com/events/> can be a good option for finding some fun.

BUTLER PLAZA / HILTON:

- **UF CULTURAL PLAZA-** The following three attractions are all located on the SW corner of the University of Florida Campus. It will take about 10 minutes (maybe less) to walk to the Cultural Plaza from the Hilton Conference Center.
 - **Florida Museum of Natural History**
Address: 3215 Hull Rd, Gainesville, FL 32611
Phone: (352) 846-2000
Website: www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu
Description: “Florida's official state-sponsored and chartered natural-history museum”. Holds an impressive collection of fossils and interpretation on Florida’s natural history, indigenous peoples, ecosystems, and other subjects. Access to the permanent collections is free; tickets to the very worthwhile Butterfly Rainforest and Special Exhibits are available for a fee.
 - **Harn Museum of Art**
Address: 3259 Hull Rd, Gainesville, FL 32608
Phone: (352) 392-9826
Website: <https://harn.ufl.edu/>
Description: One of the largest University-affiliated art museums in the Southern US, the Harn has a permanent collection of over 11,000 items. Focused displays on African, Asian, Modern, and Contemporary art, as well as photography, can be found in its halls and atria. You might be surprised at what you find!

- Phillips Center for the Performing Arts**
 Address: 3201 Hull Rd, Gainesville, FL 32611
 Phone: (352) 392-2787
 Website: <https://performingarts.ufl.edu/>
Description: A 1,700 seat performing arts theater hosting a variety of national and international musical groups, dance troupes, and theater. See website for showtimes and ticket availability.
- Kanapaha Botanical Gardens**
 Address: 4700 SW 58th Dr, Gainesville, FL 32608
 Website: <https://kanapaha.org/>
Description: 68-acre botanical garden with notable collections of camellias, azaleas, giant water lilies, herb garden, and a bamboo forest. Peaceful spot for a stroll and to see what's blooming!

CAMPUS/MIDTOWN:

- UF Bat Houses**
 Address (approx.): 2656 Museum Rd, Gainesville, FL 32607
 Website: <https://www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu/bats/>
Description: The “world’s largest occupied bat houses”, giving shelter to an estimated 500,000 bats. Visit at dusk (right around sundown) to see the bats emerge *en masse* for their nightly feeding flight. Across the road, the paths along **Lake Alice** make for a lovely stroll and are a good spot to look for alligators.
- University of Florida Historic Campus**
 Address: 1507 W University Ave, Gainesville, FL 32611
 Website: <https://facilities.ufl.edu/campus-planning/historic-campus/>
Description: Bask in the brainy red-brick glory of the historic core of the sprawling UF campus. Many of the collegiate-gothic style buildings contain architectural surprises in concrete and stone on their facades. **Ben Hill Griffen Stadium**, aka “**The Swamp**”, is the home of Gators football and is open for photo ops and free stair workouts.

DOWNTOWN:

- Cade Museum for Creativity & Invention**
 Address: 811 S Main St, Gainesville, FL 32601

Website: <https://www.cademuseum.org/>

Description: Science and technology museum with hands-on exhibits for kids and younger people. Housed in an impressive modern building adjacent to **Depot Park**.

- **Hippodrome Theatre**

Address: 25 SE 2nd Pl, Gainesville, FL 32601

Website: <https://thehipp.org/>

Description: Whether it's obscure foreign films, cult classics, or live drama and performance, there is always something happening at "The Hipp". This art theater housed in a beautiful Greek Revival building is a downtown landmark.

- **Heartwood Soundstage**

Address: 619 S Main St, Gainesville, FL 32601

Website: <https://heartwoodsoundstage.com/>

Description: Live music venue with local and big-name artists. A focus on production quality means things just sound a little better here. Thursday evenings they host a **Farmers Market** with live music, prepared food, and crafts.

- **Matheson History Museum**

Address: 513 E University Ave, Gainesville, FL 32601

Website: <https://mathesonmuseum.org/>

Description: Learn about the history of Gainesville and Alachua (uh-LA-choo-uh) county at this museum housed in an 1867 historical home. Stroll the streets of the nearby **Bed & Breakfast District** for moss-draped Southern Gothic scenes.

WILDLIFE, NATURAL AREAS, AND WALKING TRAILS

Opportunities for taking a walk and seeing wildlife abound in Gainesville. Below is a sample of the area's natural riches.

- **Depot Park**

Address: 874 SE 4th St, Gainesville, FL 32601

Website: <http://www.depotpark.org/>

Description: Roomy greenspace anchoring the south end of the Downtown area, with walking trails, lakes and ponds, wildlife, covered picnic areas and playgrounds for the kids.

- **Devil's Millhopper Geological State Park**

Website: <https://www.floridastateparks.org/parks-and-trails/devils-millhopper-geological-state-park>

Description: While technically it's just a big hole in the ground, Devil's Millhopper is so much more! Beautiful spot to learn about local geology and maybe see a waterfall, a rarity in so-very-flat Florida.

- **Gainesville-Hawthorne State Trail**

Website: <https://www.floridastateparks.org/parks-and-trails/gainesville-hawthorne-state-trail>

Description: A 16-mile paved multi-use trail following a historic railbed. Great biking opportunities. Connects to paved trails that head north through the downtown area, and offers access to **Paynes Prairie State Park's La Chua Trailhead**.

- **Natural Area Teaching Laboratory (NATL)**

Address: Natural Area Dr, Gainesville, FL 32611

Website: <https://natl.ifas.ufl.edu/>

Description: A fifty-acre greenspace and teaching area located directly behind the **UF Cultural Plaza**, NATL can be accessed from near the **Florida Museum**. It contains a variety of ecosystems including hardwood and pine forests, meadows, and wetlands. Interpretive signage will help you identify the plentiful wildlife and plant species that call NATL home.

- **Paynes Prairie State Park**

Address: 4270 SE 15th St, Gainesville, FL 32641 (La Chua Trailhead)

100 Savannah Blvd, Micanopy, FL 32667 (Headquarters)

Website: <https://www.floridastateparks.org/parks-and-trails/paynes-prairie-preserve-state-park>

Description: 21,000 acre park protecting an expansive semi-flooded savannah and other environments. Great wildlife viewing opportunities: alligators, deer, wild horses, buffalo, wild pigs, birds, reptiles, and more! **La Chua Trail** is easy access (ADA accessible) and has a boardwalk over the swamp.

- **Sweetwater Wetlands Park**

Address: 325 SW Williston Rd, Gainesville, FL 32601

Website: <https://www.sweetwaterwetlands.org/>

Description: Engineered wetlands that help process the city's stormwater naturally. A haven for birders- bring the binoculars and be on the lookout for Florida specialties such as Limpkins, Snail Kites, and Wood Storks! Also a great

spot to see alligators and other reptiles. Be sure to wear sunscreen, a hat, and avoid a midday visit, as there's not much shade.

This guide was compiled by Richard W. Tate (UF Center for European Studies Graduate Assistant), March 2023. For questions, comments, or issues with the guide, please email rwate@ufl.edu.