

Dunwoody, Georgia

By Ann Cipperly

Northwest of the hustle and bustle of Atlanta, Ga., Dunwoody offers a variety of excellent restaurants, art galleries and outdoor activities in a slower pace with neighborhoods tucked behind the tree-lined streets. Whether you're looking for a day trip or weekend getaway, Dunwoody has a number of seasonal events and festivals.



Photos provided by Dunwoody Convention and Visitor's Bureau and Vino Venue

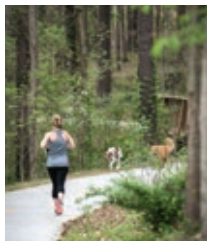




Photo by Ann Cipperly



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While Dunwoody's roots go back hundreds of years, it was a center of commerce in its early days. A Cherokee Indian tribe inhabited the area with its proximity to the Chattahoochee River. It was the largest and busiest trading center.

The town is named after Charles Dunwoody, who was a founder of two cotton mills, the largest cotton factory complex in North Georgia. Today, visitors can tour historic houses, including the city's oldest building, Ebenezer Primitive Baptist Church built in 1829.

Once you arrive in Dunwoody, start the day with a relaxing visit to the new Woodhouse Day Spa to look and feel your best, leaving the stress of hectic schedules behind. Offering over 70 treatments, using organic skincare products, the spa is locally owned by the Perlman family, who live in Dunwoody.

Woodhouse Spas began in an old Victorian wooden house in Texas and have expanded across the country. Located at Perimeter Mall, the spa is open daily and focuses on the experience and services that work. The tranquil

environment is an ideal setting for pampering treatments for women and men.

Once you are refreshed, try nearby Novo Cucina for lunch, dinner or brunch on weekends. The setting is casual with bright red booths and Italian tile. A spacious sun-porch has open doors when weather is pleasant.

Every dish at the restaurant is prepared from scratch, including pasta, sauces, pizza dough and other items. A chef comes in every morning to prepare 18 flavors of gelato.

As we settled in a booth on the porch, we selected the risotto and sausage croquettes with marinara sauce, which were enough to share. The croquettes were crispy with soft risotto filling and chunks of sausage.

We also shared the salad, which was a standout with greens tossed in vinaigrette with warm almond-crust goat cheese patties and roasted red pepper strips.

The pasta dishes and pizzas baked in a brick oven all sounded good. We ordered one of each and shared.

Freshly made pasta with wild mushrooms



Dunwoody Attractions

Spruill Center for the Arts hosts exhibitions, special events, workshops and classes for children and adults at the Southeast's largest community education center. Gallery and gift-show showcases local art. Visit the website www.spruillarts.org for class schedule and events. 770.394.3447, 5339 Chamblee Dunwoody Road.

Dunwoody Nature Center is open seven days a week from sunup to sundown free of charge. Visitors can enjoy the beautiful surroundings of the park or sign up for special classes and events. Explore wetlands, a teepee, hiking trails, and the woodland playground before visiting the hammock garden to relax. 770-394-3322. 5343 Roberts Drive. Visit website www.dunwoodynature.org

Concerts in the Park are June 11, 25, July 9, 23, 2016): Bring your own chair, blanket or beach towel and enjoy musical talent from throughout the region.

Tree Top Quest is a self-guided activity course comprised of treetop obstacles and zip-lines. Courses range in difficulty from easy to very challenging. Tree Top Quest is open in June and July daily from 10 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. and will follow regular hours during weekends in August. www.treetopquest.com

Fourth of July Celebration-Dunwoody has the largest Independence Day parade in the state of Georgia! Patriotic ceremonies include the traditional pledge of allegiance and national anthem and a concert hosted by the 116th National Army Guard.

Butterfly Festival-On Aug. 20 venture inside two enormous tents overflowing with hundreds of free-roaming butterflies. Other live animal encounters, such as reptile showcase and Birds of Prey show will be featured. For details see CVBDunwoody.com

For further information on attractions, events and festivals go to CVBDunwoody.com. For more information on Dunwoody's annual events, visit <http://www.cvbdunwoody.com/things-to-do/annual-events/>.



in a cream sauce was a pleasing combination and comfort food. Margherita pizza also received a thumbs-up.

The house-made gelato sounded too good to pass. We shared a velvety smooth salted caramel gelato that was perfect.

Novo offers freshly made food for a good value. Just opening in spring 2015, it was named Best Family Restaurant.

If you have a desire to become more knowledgeable about wines and to sample an assortment of wines at a variety of prices, then Vino Venue is not to be missed.

The unique concept allows for customers to sample wines in 1 oz., 2 1/2 oz. and 5 oz. sizes from various priced bottles in an Italian wine dispenser machine. If you like the wine, bottles can be purchased. Snacks, medium and large plates and desserts are also served.

Along with wine tasting and food, cooking and wine classes are offered for corporate or private parties. About 200 classes are held a year.

Private wine tasting and group tasting can be arranged.

Whether you want breakfast, lunch, supper or baked goods, Alon's Bakery and Market offers a huge selection. Traditional breakfast favorites are ordered in the rear of the shop. When the weather is nice, sit in the large patio area.

After breakfast browse the market, stopping at the bakery for fragrant breads and a fancy dessert to take home.

A soothing fountain welcomes customers at Season 52 Fresh Grill. With dark woods, soft lighting and lamps, upholstered booths and an open kitchen, the restaurant provides soothing ambiance.

Dishes showcase fresh, seasonal ingredients.

At lunch we ordered a lobster and sweet pepper flatbread and a crab cake sandwich

with a side of chargrilled fresh vegetables, which came in a small mason jar. Both orders were first-rate.

Be sure to check the chef's suggestions on the side of the menu. When dining here, take time to linger over the meal and savor the food and enjoy the setting.

For a quick lunch, try locally owned Village Burger for an Angus beef burger or a really good turkey burger with select toppings. A whole wheat bun is an option. If the weather is nice, sit on the deck.

If staying for the weekend, Le Meridien is conveniently located across from Perimeter Center and Alon's. The hotel was remodeled in 2013 in a modern style. It is pet friendly and has onsite childcare service.

High above the trees, club level on the 12th floor features spacious suites and a lounge with beverages throughout the day as well as breakfast and afternoon appetizers. Suites are spacious with sofas, table and chairs, desk

and separate bedrooms and bath.

Appetizers include platters of cheese and fruit, crudites, hummus and a hot dish such as pecan-coated chicken strips and yummy chocolates. If you dined out at lunch, it would be enough for a light supper.

Breakfast service in the club lounge includes eggs, sausage, bacon and other dishes. It is convenient to rooms if you prefer not to be out and about early.

Dunwoody offers many of the city's best in a compact area without a long drive from one destination to the other. Dunwoody also has easy access to other metro-Atlanta attractions, sporting events and festivals.

Woodhouse Day Spa, 4400 Ashford Dunwoody Road, 770.337.3505; Novo Cucina, 5592 Chamblee Dunwoody Road, 470.275.3000; Alon's Bakery and Market, 4505 Ashford Dunwoody Road 678.397.1781; Vino Venue, 4478 Chamblee Dunwoody Rd., 770.668.0435; Le Meridien, 111 Perimeter Center, Dunwoody. 800.916.4339; Season 52, 90 Perimeter Center, 770.671.0052.

