

Let the Good Times Roll

By Carla Caldwell

Who hasn't heard a joke with a Southern state as the punch line?

Take this one for example - "Have you seen the Alabama quarter? It's two dimes and a nickel taped together." That jewel was lobbed my way when quarters to represent the states were first produced. As an Alabama native, I've heard them all.

Truth is, folks in other parts of the country are just jealous. Here in the south, the weather is great most of the year. The beaches rival any in the world. And, the food is legendary.

Plus, there are enough wacky people to keep you amused and, hopefully, laughing. Maybe it's the heat. Maybe it's the humidity.

We've boiled the Southeast's bountiful offerings down to a small sampling. You'll soon have your own favorites to add.



Cafe du Monde Beignets and Coffee Photo by David Richmond, courtesy www.NewOrleansOnline.com

GEORGIA

Georgia is so many different things. There are lovely antebellum homes in various parts of the state like those depicted in the famous novel *Gone With the Wind*. And, there are numerous Civil War sites to explore.

There are also sites important to the struggle for civil rights including, in Atlanta, the birthplace of Martin Luther King Jr. and his famous church, Ebenezer Baptist Church. The church has an active congregation and recently was renovated.

In addition, the state has miles of beaches on the Atlantic Ocean and islands crowned by lighthouses.

Several of the state's cities and things to do while there, include:

Atlanta—The state's capitol city is fast-paced and offers world-class art, shopping, food and entertainment. Be sure to head downtown where within just a few blocks you can take in the Georgia Aquarium (one of the largest aquariums in the world with more than 100,000 animals from 500 different species in more

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ALABAMA

The state's slogan—"Alabama the Beautiful"—is on target. The northernmost part of the state features the lovely foothills of the Appalachian Mountain chain. To the south, there are the white-sand beaches of the Gulf. And everywhere in between there are lush, green landscapes—and plenty of friendly people with whom to enjoy them. And, if golf is your thing, the state offers a large network of state-operated public courses—The Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail.

Several of the state's cities and things to do while there, include:

Huntsville—The north Alabama city is home to the Huntsville U.S. Space and Rocket Center. The site includes a world-famous space camp for children and adults, and the world's largest space museum featuring more than 1,500 NASA items.

Birmingham—This once-industrial city cloaked by pollution from numerous steel mills has evolved into to a medical community drawing specialists from all over

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