



VISIT GUIDE 2026

Georgia Aquarium

Atlanta · From 53,45€

<https://georgiaaquarium.visit-tickets.com/en/> · Skip-the-line tickets & rates

A large underwater scene with people's silhouettes in the foreground looking at various fish, including a large shark and a smaller fish, in a deep blue tank.

History & experience

ORIGIN & HISTORY

Bernard Marcus's Founding Gift

GOOGLE **4.7** ★★★★★ 92 331 reviews

TIQETS **4.6** ★★★★★ 3 481 reviews

The story of the Georgia Aquarium begins in **2001**, when Bernard Marcus, the founder of Home Depot, decides to make a monumental gift to the city of Atlanta. Noting the lack of major attractions in the region, he proposes to personally fund a world-class project to boost the local economy and enrich the cultural heritage of Georgia's capital.

To bring this ambitious vision to life, Marcus and his wife Billi undertake an extraordinary reconnaissance trip. They visit **56 aquariums** across 13 different countries to study best practices in architecture and biology. This immersion allows them to design a unique structure that will combine technological innovation with animal welfare, laying the foundation for a future giant of family tourism.

Funding is a key element of this success: thanks to donations from major corporations such as Coca-Cola and UPS, the aquarium is built **debt-free**. Jeff Swanagan, former director of the Florida Aquarium, is hired in 2002 as the first employee to oversee the design and procurement of the tanks. His expertise is crucial to ensuring the biological viability of the complex even before it opens its doors to the public.

After 27 months of intense construction work, the building opens on **November 23, 2005**. Public reception is immediate and massive: the millionth visitor crosses the threshold just 98 days after the inauguration. This rapid adoption far exceeds initial projections and immediately establishes the aquarium as a must-see destination in the United States.

THE EXPERIENCE

From the moment you enter, visitors are struck by the vastness of the space and the crystalline clarity of the water. The modern architecture opens up to gigantic volumes where natural light filters through the glass, creating a soothing and immersive atmosphere. One immediately feels that this is not just a simple zoo, but a true marine sanctuary where every detail has been designed for the comfort of the species.

The walk unfolds at the rhythm of simulated ocean currents, offering a unique sensation of floating. The wide pathways allow for free movement, whether in a family with strollers or alone, while dolphin shows and encounters with belugas add a strong interactive and emotional dimension to the experience. It is a place where children's wonder meets adults' fascination with the power of nature.



PREPARE YOUR VISIT

Practical information

ADDRESS

Museums District • Metro: Civic Center (Red/Gold/Blue Lines, main exit) or local bus. Located right next to the central train station.

OPENING HOURS

Open 365 days a year. Hours vary by season (often 9am-8pm). Check for gallery maintenance like Cold Water Quest on the official website.

FARES

Free child admission based on age (check variants). {promo}. Crucial distinction between General Admission Ticket and timed Aqua Pass.

VISIT DURATION

Allow a minimum of 3 to 4 hours to explore the 5 themed worlds without rushing. A half-day is recommended to fully enjoy the shows and interactions.

PHOTOS

Photography allowed everywhere except during private encounters. Flash is prohibited in certain sensitive galleries like Cold Water Quest to avoid stressing the

AUDIENCE

Ideal for families with children aged 4 to 12. Wide aisles make it easy to navigate with strollers, and dolphin shows captivate young visitors.

HOW TO GET THERE

Access & transport

**Metro**

: Centennial Olympic Park — 7 min à pied

Amtrak Station - ATL (16 min) • Fulton County Airport-Brown Field (34 min)

**Bus**

: Ivan Allen Junior Blvd Northwest & Lovejoy Street — 3 min à pied

Amtrak Station - ATL (24 min) • Fulton County Airport-Brown Field (55 min)

**Car**

Amtrak Station - ATL (16 min) • Fulton County Airport-Brown Field (42 min)

**Bike**

Amtrak Station - ATL (21 min) • Fulton County Airport-Brown Field (56 min)

LOCALISATION

Où se trouve Georgia Aquarium ?



📍 225 Baker St NW — 30313 Atlanta

🌐 33°45.803' N, 84°23.707' O



ORGANIZATION

Discovering the Five Thematic Worlds

Level 0 (Ground Floor)

This is where the beating heart of the aquarium is located: Ocean Voyager. This level houses the whale shark tank, the largest in the world outside of Asia. Visitors can observe manta rays and giant manta rays in an environment simulating the deep ocean. The gallery is spacious and allows for smooth circulation even during peak times.

Level 1

This level is dedicated to cold and tropical waters. It features Cold Water Quest, with its majestic belugas, as well as Tropical Diver, which showcases an impressive diversity of colorful fish. The walkways are narrow but well-lit, facilitating close observation of the species. This is often where the interaction points and souvenir shops are located.

Level 2 (Terrace/Dining)

The upper level offers a panoramic view of Centennial Olympic Park and the Atlanta skyline. It features the main dining areas, including two cafeterias and a more upscale restaurant. Outdoor terraces allow visitors to enjoy natural light while eating, providing a refreshing break before heading back down to explore the lower galleries.

ACCESSIBILITY

**Disabled Access**

Full wheelchair access with elevators and wide aisles in all galleries.

**Families**

Ideal for families, strollers accepted, shows adapted for children.

**Audio guide**

French, English, Spanish



Must-sees

SELECTION

Aquarium Must-Sees

01

Main Tank

Ocean Voyager

The aquarium's jewel, home to giant **whale sharks**. It is the only place in the United States where these marine colossi can be observed. The 24,000 m³ tank creates a sense of total immersion in the open ocean, with curved glass that maximizes visibility.

💡 The first four whale sharks, named Ralph, Norton, Alice, and Trixie, were secretly transported from Taiwan by MD-11 aircraft, a logistical operation considered 'top secret' at the time.

02

Cold Water Gallery

Cold Water Quest

A fascinating experience with **belugas**, these iconic white mammals. The gallery faithfully replicates Arctic conditions, allowing you to observe their complex social behaviors. Clean glass in the early morning provides exceptional photos without reflections.

💡 The aquarium has housed up to five three-meter-long belugas simultaneously, a rare capacity that attracts marine biology enthusiasts from around the world.

03

Coral Reef

Tropical Diver

A maze of narrow corridors that takes visitors to the heart of a vibrant **coral reef**. The density of colorful fish and the presence of sea turtles create a fairy-tale atmosphere. It is the ideal place for children who love touching the glass and identifying species.

💡 This section was designed to minimize fish stress through advanced filtration systems and precise simulation of tropical currents.

04

Dolphin Zone

Dolphin Coast

The home of **dolphin shows**, a highlight for families. The animals perform impressive displays of dexterity and synchronization. Seated tickets should be reserved in advance to ensure good visibility, especially during popular sessions.

💡 The dolphins at this aquarium are known for their social intelligence and ability to quickly learn new tricks, making each show unique.

05

Turtle Pavilion

Sea Turtle Island

A space dedicated to **sea turtles**, showcasing their complete life cycle. It features specimens of various sizes, from juveniles to large adults. Specific lighting highlights the texture of their shells and their slow, graceful movements.

💡 Some of the turtles present have survived major storms, demonstrating the resilience of these species in the face of climate change.

06

Interactive Aquarium

Scuttlebones

A playful area where children can interact with **familiar fish**. It is a popular meeting point, especially for young visitors discovering the underwater world. The atmosphere is relaxed and educational, perfect for an active break.

💡 The name 'Scuttlebones' refers to a traditional pirate game, adding a touch of adventure to the educational experience.

07

Tropical rainforest

Rainforest

A transition to freshwater ecosystems featuring a **lush tropical rainforest**. You can spot caimans, piranhas, and various species of monkeys. This section reminds us that biodiversity is not limited to the oceans but also encompasses rivers and humid forests.

💡 The plants in this greenhouse are maintained by a specialized team to ensure the humidity required for the reptiles and birds present.

08

River Basin

River Journey

A journey that follows the course of an **imaginary river**, from the delta to the source. It features freshwater species such as alligators and barracudas. The scenography uses sound and light effects to simulate seasonal flood variations.

💡 This basin is regularly used for conservation programs aimed at raising public awareness about river pollution.

TIPS

Our Tips for a Successful Visit

TIMING

Arrive at 9 a.m. sharp, when the park opens, to avoid crowds in Ocean Voyager and enjoy ideal natural light for photos.

TICKET

Carefully check your confirmation: confusing an open ticket with a timed Aqua Pass is the main cause of frustration at entry.

TOUR

Start with Cold Water Quest to see the belugas early, then explore less crowded areas like Tropical Diver before finishing with the shows.

PHOTO

Position yourself near the beluga windows in the early morning to get sharp, reflection-free images, as the glass is cleanest at that time.

BREAK

Eat early (before 11:30) or after 1:30 PM to avoid endless lines at the cafeterias during the lunch rush.

CHILDREN

Plan the visit around the dolphin show times to maximize the emotional impact on children and structure the day.

AUDIOGUIDE

The French audioguide is available and recommended to understand the biological details of the species, especially in technical galleries such as Cold Water Quest.

COMFORT

Wear comfortable shoes as the visit lasts a minimum of 3 to 4 hours; avoid the expensive on-site parking in favor of public parking lots around Centennial Olympic Park.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQ

What is the difference between a Ticket and an Aqua Pass?

The Ticket offers all-day access without a fixed time, while the Aqua Pass requires entry at a strict time slot. This is the #1 source of frustration: check your confirmation carefully. The Aqua Pass is often required du

Are encounters with belugas included in the price?

No, Encounters (belugas, sharks) and Swims are separate paid options distinct from the standard admission ticket. They often require a separate reservation and an additional fee. Budget for this extra cost if you aim for

Do I need to book 'Swims' with sharks in advance?

Yes, absolutely. These active experiences have limited capacity and sell out quickly. Book this specific option in addition to your admission ticket to secure your spot. Do not rely on buying it on-site.

Is there a current promotion?

Discounted rates sometimes exist for early bookings or hotel packages. Regularly check the official page or our comparison tool to detect available special family or skip-the-line offers.

How much time should I allow to visit the aquarium?

Allow a minimum of 3 to 4 hours to cover the 5 themed worlds without rushing. A half-day allows you to see the dolphin shows and browse the main galleries like Ocean Voyager.

DID YOU KNOW?

Anecdotes & curiosities

Debt-free financing

Unlike most major tourist projects, the aquarium was built **without a bank loan**. Thanks to donations from Bernard Marcus and corporate partners, the budget was fully covered before opening, ensuring exemplary financial stability.

Secret air transport

The import of the first whale sharks from Taiwan was classified '**top-secret**'. It required a special MD-11 aircraft and complex logistical coordination with UPS, which offered delivery fees estimated at over 200,000 dollars.

Record attendance

The aquarium reached one million visitors in just **98 days**, an absolute record that exceeded all initial forecasts by the designers and confirmed its status as a world-class destination.

Colossal volume of water

The building contains **32 million liters** of water, a sufficient volume to maintain optimal conditions for giant species such as whale sharks, ensuring their long-term well-being.

AROUND THE MUSEUM

Located in the heart of the Museums district, the aquarium benefits from an ideal urban environment to extend your visit. Right next door, the **Centennial Olympic Park** offers a free green space perfect for a lunch break or a post-visit stroll after the physical effort of exploring. The immediate proximity of the central train station and the MARTA Civic Center station greatly facilitates access from Hartsfield-Jackson Airport or from downtown hotels, which often provide free shuttles. For food lovers, the Midtown neighborhood is brimming with diverse restaurants around the park, offering a pleasant alternative to the internal cafeterias if you wish to eat out. It is also an opportunity to visit the World of Coca-Cola, located just a few minutes' walk away, for a complete cultural and gastronomic experience.



Visiting the Georgia Aquarium is much more than a tourist outing: it is a **total immersion** into the mysteries of the oceans. Whether you are fascinated by whale sharks or amazed by coral reefs, this place leaves a lasting imprint on family memories. Leave with beautiful photos and the memory of a day when nature took center stage.