

# THE LOCAL GUIDE TO AUBURN & OPELIKA

Insider favorites, local rhythms, and how life really feels here



Curated by locals with Kent McCown Group

## WELCOME

Welcome to Auburn and Opelika — two neighboring cities with distinct personalities and a shared sense of community. This guide isn't meant to be a directory or a list of "must-see" spots. Instead, it's a look at how locals experience everyday life here — the rhythms, the timing, and the places people return to again and again.

Whether you're new to the area, considering a move, or simply want to experience Auburn and Opelika more like a local, this guide offers insight you won't always find online. Use it to explore, compare, and decide what fits your lifestyle best.



This guide was curated by Corrie Kent Green and Megan Wysopal of Kent McCown Group. As longtime residents of the Auburn–Opelika area, they created this guide to reflect what everyday life here actually feels like, beyond real estate, rankings, or tourist highlights.

Their goal is to offer practical insight and local perspective to help newcomers and longtime residents alike feel confident navigating the community.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Auburn

- Coffee & Morning Stops..... 3
- Local Eats..... 4
- Outdoor & Community Spaces..... 4
- Traditions & Game Day..... 5
- Downtown & Local Shopping..... 6

Opelika

- Coffee & Morning Stops..... 7
- Local Eats..... 8
- Breweries & Distilleries..... 8
- Arts, Culture & Events..... 9
- Outdoor & Community Spaces..... 9
- Downtown & Local Shopping..... 10

Living Like a Local..... 10

A Place That Feels Like Home..... 10

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Each section is divided by city so you can experience Auburn and Opelika individually before comparing them together. Throughout the guide, you'll see callouts labeled Good to Know, Local Tip, and Best Time to Go, these are insights locals pick up over time and often wish they'd known sooner.

This guide is designed to complement exploration, not replace it. Some of the best moments here happen when you leave room for discovery.

Read this like a local, not a checklist.

Skim, bookmark and come back to sections as your life here unfolds.

# AUBURN

In Auburn, “War Eagle” isn’t just something you hear on game day...it’s how people say hello, goodbye, and everything in between. Auburn feels energetic, tradition-rich, and closely tied to Auburn University. Life here moves with the academic calendar and game day weekends, creating a city that feels lively, walkable, and community-driven.

## COFFEE & MORNING STOPS

Mornings in Auburn often begin at neighborhood coffee shops that serve as informal meeting spaces, study spots, and quiet places to start the day. These cafés are woven into daily routines for students, professionals, and longtime residents alike.

### **Good to Know**

Traffic near campus increases quickly on weekdays during the academic year, especially between 8:00–9:00 a.m.

### **Local Tip**

Mid-morning is the calmest window if you’re planning to sit, work, or meet someone one-on-one.

### **Best Time to Go**

Weekday mornings after 9:30 a.m.

### **Local Favorites**

Coffee Cat  
Ross House Coffee  
Mama Mocha’s  
Well Red

## EATERIES

Auburn's dining scene balances elevated Southern flavors with approachable, welcoming atmospheres. Restaurants here are popular for both everyday meals and special occasions, often serving as gathering places for celebrations, casual lunches, and post-work dinners.

### **Good to Know**

Game weekends significantly impact wait times, even at restaurants that normally feel relaxed.

### **Local Tip**

Early dinners or weekday lunches offer the most laid-back experience.

### **Best Time to Go**

Weekday lunch hours or early evening on non-game weekends.

### **Local Favorites**

Acre

The Hound

Amsterdam Café

Sheila C's Burger Barn

Hamiltons

## OUTDOOR & COMMUNITY SPACES

Outdoor spaces play a central role in Auburn's lifestyle. Parks and nearby nature areas offer room to walk, exercise, attend events, or simply slow down.

### **Good to Know**

Some parks host seasonal events that affect parking and crowds.

### **Local Tip**

Early mornings are ideal for quiet walks, especially in warmer months.

### **Best Time to Go**

Weekday mornings or late afternoons.

### **Local Favorites**

Kiesel Park

Chewacla State Park

Town Creek Park

Dinius Park

Ann Pearson Park

Lake Wilmore Rec Center

## TRADITIONS & GAME DAY

Game day in Auburn is a shared experience that shapes the entire city. Even if you never attend the game, you'll feel the energy downtown, on campus, and in surrounding neighborhoods.

### **Good to Know**

On home football weekends, Auburn's population can more than double.

### **If You Love Game Day**

Many locals enjoy arriving early to experience the buildup before crowds peak.

### **KMG Favorites**

Walking downtown early in the morning before kickoff  
Spending time on campus while it's energetic but still navigable

### **Best Time to Go**

Early morning through late morning.

## FOOTBALL, FANS & FEATHERS

Held the day before a home football game, Football, Fans & Feathers offers a unique pre-game experience featuring a live raptor show. Attendees can see birds of prey up close and watch them swoop overhead, making this event both educational and memorable.

### **Good to Know**

This event takes place before peak game day crowds arrive.

### **Local Tip**

It's one of our favorite ways to introduce visitors to game day weekend without the chaos.

### **Best Time to Go**

Arrive early and plan time to explore campus afterward.

**More Info - [vetmed.auburn.edu/raptor/](https://vetmed.auburn.edu/raptor/)**

## IF YOU'RE NOT A FOOTBALL FAN

### **Local Tip**

If you're not a football fan, kickoff time is the best time to go grocery shopping, run errands, or enjoy quieter neighborhoods.

### **Best Time to Go**

From kickoff until halftime.

## THE DAY AFTER A HOME GAME

### **KMG Favorites**

Walking campus Sunday morning (mainly Toomer's Corner after an Auburn win!)

Brunch downtown when reservations are suddenly easy again

## DOWNTOWN & LOCAL SHOPPING

Downtown Auburn blends walkability with local charm. Shops and boutiques feel personal, and the area serves as a central hub for errands, dining, and casual outings.

### **Good to Know**

Parking is easiest on weekdays.

### **Local Tip**

Weekday afternoons offer the best balance of activity and calm.

### **Best Time to Go**

Late morning or early afternoon.

### **Local Favorites**

J&M Bookstore

Wrapsody

Auburn Art

Auburn Popcorn

Toomer's Drugs (gotta get a lemonade)

Behind The Glass

Fab'rik

# OPELIKA

Opelika is a historic railroad town with a creative spirit and a slightly slower pace, shaped by preserved architecture, local arts, and a downtown that feels both intentional and lived-in. The city's history continues to influence how it feels today, creating a place that values tradition while embracing thoughtful growth.

## COFFEE & MORNING STOPS

Opelika's coffee scene encourages lingering. Shops here often feel like extensions of the community, designed for conversation, creativity, and slower mornings.

### **Good to Know**

Downtown Opelika mornings are calmer than Auburn, even during the school year.

### **Local Tip**

Mid-week mornings are ideal for longer stays.

### **Best Time to Go**

Weekday mornings or early afternoons.

### **Local Favorites**

Side Track Coffee

Market Street Coffee Shop

The Well

## EATERIES

Dining in Opelika feels thoughtful and personal. Many restaurants occupy historic buildings and emphasize atmosphere alongside the menu.

### **Good to Know**

Downtown becomes busy on weekend evenings.

### **Local Tip**

Arriving earlier than peak dinner hours keeps things relaxed.

### **Best Time to Go**

Weekday evenings or early weekend dinners.

### **Local Favorites**

Zazu Gastropub

Café One Twenty Three

Dough

Botanic

Mrs. Story's Dairy Bar

O Town Ice Cream

## BREWERIES & DISTILLERIES

Craft beverage spots are central to Opelika's downtown revival and community culture. Good to Know. Event schedules change weekly.

### **Local Tip**

Check social media to choose between a lively night or a quieter visit.

### **Best Time to Go**

Weekday evenings for calm, weekends for events.

### **Local Favorites**

Red Clay Brewing Company

John Emerald Distilling Company

Resting Pulse

## ARTS, CULTURE & EVENTS

Opelika has a strong creative heartbeat shaped by music, art, and festivals.

### **Good to Know**

Many events draw visitors from outside the area.

### **Local Tip**

Arriving early allows time to explore before crowds build.

### **Best Time to Go**

Early evening or event openings.

### **Local Highlights**

Historic Downtown Opelika  
Opelika Songwriters Festival  
Touch a Truck  
SnOpelika

## OUTDOOR & COMMUNITY SPACES

Green spaces in Opelika support a balanced lifestyle and are frequently used for walking, events, and casual gatherings.

### **Good to Know**

Seasonal events may affect access.

### **Local Tip**

Late afternoons are popular for walks and meetups.

### **Best Time to Go**

Weekday mornings or early evenings.

### **Local Favorites**

Opelika SportsPlex & Aquatics Center  
Floral Park  
Spring Villa Park  
Monkey Park  
Wood Duck Nature Preserve

## DOWNTOWN & BOUTIQUES

Downtown Opelika is preserved, walkable, and deeply connected to the city's history.

### **Good to Know**

Parking is generally easier than Auburn.

### **Local Tip**

Late mornings are ideal for browsing.

### **Best Time to Go**

Late morning to early afternoon.

### **Local Favorites**

Almost Anything

Fringe Consignment

Studio 3:19

Rock & Roll Pinball

## LIVING LIKE A LOCAL

Auburn and Opelika work best when experienced together. Many residents move easily between the two, enjoying Auburn's energy and traditions alongside Opelika's creativity and slower pace. Understanding timing, traffic, and neighborhood rhythms makes everyday life smoother and more enjoyable.

## A PLACE THAT FEELS LIKE HOME

What ultimately draws people to Auburn and Opelika isn't just what's available — it's how life feels here. The balance of energy and calm, tradition and creativity, makes this a place where people often plan to stay longer than expected.

If you ever need local insight, neighborhood guidance, or help navigating a move, our team is always happy to be a resource.

As locals who live, work, and raise our families here, we believe the best way to understand Auburn and Opelika is through everyday moments, not just highlights.