



## Milledgeville named in '15 Best Small Towns to Visit in 2025'

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Milledgeville's online Tourist Information Center shared that Milledgeville was named among the "The 15 best small towns to visit in 2025" by *Smithsonian Magazine*.

Marketing Director Lacey Cummings at Visit Milledgeville, the local Milledgeville-Baldwin County Convention & Visitors Bureau, stated the article was the outcome of a large media push started by the Centennial Celebration of Flannery O'Connor. In partnership with Explore Georgia, the centennial celebration was highlighted across the nation, bringing recognition back to Milledgeville.

"We are grateful to *Smithsonian Magazine* for sharing our local partners and the importance of

## MAGAZINE

CONTINUED FROM >> A1

the centennial celebration," said Cummings. "Milledgeville has such a vibrant history and so much of its history is still being continuously told not only with Flannery but with Georgia's Old Governor's Mansion and more. History is still being written about Milledgeville and the city itself has a very well-preserved history."

The author of the *Smithsonian* article, Laura Kiniry, is a San Francisco-based freelance writer who specializes in travel writing. She contributes to a variety of outlets including *American Way*, *O-The Oprah Magazine*, and *BBC.com*, according to the *Smithsonian*.

The 15 towns she selected are from across the country and each have a population of less than 21,000 residents, according to the most recent U.S. Census Bureau estimates. Each were selected for their "engaging cultural attractions, wonderful access to nature, and distinct culinary offerings," according to the *Smithsonian*.

Milledgeville is coined the "Literary Small Town" with a population of 16,486. The *Smithsonian*

highlights the rich history surrounding southern gothic author Flannery O'Connor, who would have celebrated her 100th birthday this year, the historic buildings showcasing Victorian, Greek Revival and Federal-style structures, and the multiple historic places to tour such as Rose Hill Mansion, the Old Governor's Mansion, the Sallie Ellis Davis House, and more.

"We knew that we wanted to include the 100th anniversary of Flannery O'Connor's birth and her connection to Milledgeville," said Kiniry. "O'Connor is a literary legend and Milledgeville and its Andalusia Farm influenced so much of her work. I think this small Georgia town was the perfect "literary" addition to a list that also features a BBQ capital, a butterfly town, and a music hotspot."

In the conclusion of the short highlight, the *Smithsonian* describes Lake Sinclair as a "15,300-acre haven for hiking, biking, fishing, and watersports." The magazine notably calls out Sinclair Wild Watersports for its fun rental opportunities, the "Southern delicacies" offered by Aubri Lane's and the selection of food and entertainment offered by Taylor's Cove.

"History and getting outdoors are two of my regular beats so I knew I wanted to include these aspects of Milledgeville as well," said Kiniry. "Aubri Lane's and Taylor's both serve up Southern dishes and provide easy lake access, which made each of them great spots to include."

Visit Milledgeville, describes the city as a "southern town that boasts a hip college vibe that has an eclectic mix of locally owned shops and dining options." For its first-timer guide, it also recommends visitors of the city indulge in the rich history by taking the historic walking tour, taking a Milledgeville trolley tour, or taking a tour of one of the many local museums. It also recommends visitors explore the Oconee River Greenway, another notable waterway in Milledgeville with walking trails, picnic areas, and places to kayak and swim. If you're looking to peruse nature on land, they recommend a stroll through Lockerly Arboretum, home to the Rose Hill Mansion.

"My personal recommendation right now is to visit Flannery O'Connor's art being exhibited in Andalusia's Interpretive Center because it is an unseen wonder and is an exhibit of not only things important to the art realm

but that were meaningful to the O'Connor family," said Cummings. "My second recommendation is to walk around the old capital building. It is very well preserved and a nice, shady walk in the summertime. It is a wonderful piece of architecture."

MORE MAGAZINE >> A7