Centennial Olympic Park was built to be the world’s gathering place during the 1996 Olympic Games. This meeting point was designed for people to gather and experience the friendship and celebration that are part of any Olympics. During the Games, more than 5.5 million people visited the park to see world-class entertainment and sponsor exhibits, trade pins, enjoy the fountain, and relax and socialize with others. After the games were over, the city of Atlanta remodeled the park, adding a free-flowing stream and quiltscape.

During the Spring and Summer months, the park sponsors free concerts that allow local Atlantans and visitors to the Atlanta area to enjoy a variety of musical performances. Everything from jazz to contemporary music is played live on stage at the Southern Company Amphitheater. In addition, the park hosts many family events that include street performers, specialty displays, touring shows and plenty of great activities for children. Consult the park website for a schedule of concerts and other park events.

In the Visitor Center, you can find more information about the park and other Atlanta attractions. You can also get a bite to eat or a refreshing drink from the snack bar.

Surrounding the Fountain of Rings are 23 flags commemorating the countries who have hosted the modern Summer Olympic Games up to 1996. Known for its waterplay area, the fountain features 251 computer-controlled water jets, and 487 lights synchronized with music played from speakers surrounding the fountain. The water show is synchronized to 7 different pieces of music and can be seen several times a day, weather permitting. Children and adults alike enjoy cooling off in the water fountain during Atlanta’s hot summer months.

To continue with the park’s quilt theme design, there is the Quilts Plaza. The Quilts Plaza consists of five plazas, each telling a chapter in Atlanta’s Centennial Olympic Game history. Each of the quilts was created with contrasting bricks, and there is a series of man-made water features joining the 5 quilts together.

During the summer months, the pavilion can be rented for festivals and parties, but it’s during the winter months that this area really comes alive. In the winter months, the Pavilion becomes part of an outdoor ice skating rink. The theatrical lighting of the rink, and the “Holiday in Lights” around the park, makes this area a must see during the winter.

This 26 foot tall sculpture is titled Androgyne Planet and was created by Enric Pladevall, an artist from Barcelona, Spain, site of the 1992 Olympic Games. Like many of the pieces located in the park, the sculpture was commissioned and brought to Atlanta as a symbol of the game’s continuity of spirit and of international unity. Pladival created the piece with Olympic athletes in mind. The totem leans slightly forward as if poised on the verge of movement. Its shape allows for a wide variety of associations, among them an Olympic torch.

The Agricultural Plaza pays tribute to Georgia’s number one industry, agriculture. To the right of the Plaza is The Paralympic Legacy. The Atlanta Olympic Games set new standards for the Paralympics. For the first time, tickets to Paralympic events were sold, media coverage was increased, and more athletes than ever participated in the games. The sculpture is a tribute to the disabled athletes who participated in the 1996 Olympic Games, and it fulfilled the Paralympic Organizing Committee’s Mission Statement—“Leave a legacy for the Paralympic Movement.”

The Gateway of Dreams statue commemorates Baron Pierre de Coubertin who, in 1896, reinstituted the ancient Olympic Games after a 1500 year interruption of the tradition. The Baron was founder of the International Olympic Committee and he created the modern pentathlon. He implemented many changes to the ancient Olympic Games and is known as the founder of the modern Olympics.

The CNN Center is located across Marietta Street from the park. Beyond the CNN Center is the Georgia Dome (home of the Atlanta Falcons), and the Georgia World Congress Center. Also across the street you will find Philips Arena, home to the Atlanta Hawks and Thrashers.