

Reynolds Plantation, GA



If you're lucky enough to be heading to The Masters this year, it's likely you'll get the hankering to play a little golf yourself. After all, if a day or two wandering the pristine (and very hilly—be warned!) grounds of the Augusta National Golf Club, with the air perfumed by azaleas, the blinding white bunkers and not-a-blade-out-of-place emerald green fairways don't get you in the mood to golf your ball, probably nothing will.

Golf options in or close to Augusta during tournament week are very expensive, and courses are crowded. A far better option is to head west about 75 miles to the tiny burgh of Greensboro, GA, and the golf riches awaiting at magnificent Reynolds Plantation, one of the southeast's most expansive and desirable real estate communities. The timing for this visit is superb. Normally the 8,000 acre residential community surrounding 19,000-acre Lake Oconee is only available to members, their guests, and those who make time for an overnight or multi-day Lifestyle Package. In other words, Reynolds will welcome limited outside play, but they expect a minor commitment on the part

of the visitor. One either spends a night or two, and consents to the real estate tour, or has to check in with a golf buddy in tow. Of course, real estate is the thing at Reynolds, so take advantage of the fact that during this special week of golf in Georgia, golf comes ala carte. However Masters Week (April 4th–12th) requires no such commitment. Traveling golfers can enjoy a round on five of the six on-site courses, and have the freedom to return to Augusta, keep traveling east to Atlanta (about 85 miles) or stay the night in any charming lakeside town they choose, and try a different course the next day.



Reynolds Plantation, Great Waters

So many courses, so little time. So how does one choose? The Jack Nicklaus-designed Great Waters would be the option for those who are one-and-done. (\$262 Masters Week) The final hole on the front side provides a taste of the drama to come, and explains the course's name. This downhill par four with an approach over the lake is a microcosm of what lies ahead. Among other waterside highlights, the thirteenth is a demanding par-4 with a downhill approach to a pin that looks to be floating in the lake. The next is a fabulous par-3 over a sliver of water. You can't get closer to the lake without paddle or oars.



Reynolds Plantation, The National

The National (\$240) would be another fine choice, particularly as it was completely renovated in 2014. This is a 27-hole Tom Fazio-designed gem, characterized by dense forests of hardwoods, pines and dogwoods. More than 110 bunkers serve not only to protect green sites, but also frame the fairways in sharp relief from numerous elevated tee shots. A half dozen holes at National play directly on the lake, and a number of others have either ponds or insidious creeks at close range.



Reynolds Plantation, Plantation Course

The least expensive option is the original Plantation Course (\$202). This Bob Cupp design is pleasant enough, and thankfully features some of the dramatic elevation change that earmarks the entire property. It's a treat to play a course where so many tee shots run downhill, but it can work both ways. There are some holes on the inward nine where booming drives on a couple of tricky par 4s will run out of real estate.

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Speaking of *ala carte*, dining options abound in Greensboro, Eatonton, and most every small town in the region. Fine Italian can be had at Da Corrado Ristorante. One of the favorite local haunts is Silver Moon, and for water views and occasional live music a great choice is the Bone Island Grillhouse.