



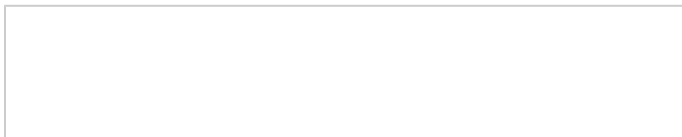
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Things to Do in Athens

Longview and Tyler would have an objection to this sentence. What about “Vast pine forests, rolling grassy meadows, fertile farmland, and beautiful lakes are the hallmarks of East Texas, and **one** place to enjoy all this natural splendor **is** Athens.” This quaint community of just 13,000 residents sits between two of the best boating and fishing spots in the region – Lake Athens and the Cedar Creek Reservoir – and is surrounded by natural areas that are worth exploring. These are just a few of the many things to do in Athens, Texas. However, there are a few experiences you absolutely can’t miss while you’re in town.

Relax at the Tara Vineyard & Winery



Everything is better when you get it right from the source, and that’s certainly true for wine. If you consider yourself an oenophile, or you just love



hanging out in scenic places, then you owe yourself a trip to Tara Vineyard & Winery. The winery, located just northeast of Athens, crafts a wide range of handcrafted red and white wines made from grapes picked from its vineyard. You can sample these wines during a tasting at its on-site restaurant, or on a tour, available every Saturday at 2:30 p.m. or by appointment. While you're there, you can go for a leisurely stroll through the seven-acre vineyard or hang out at the outdoor pavilion, which hosts live music performances on most weekends. If you'd like to extend your time at the vineyard, book a few nights at the charming The Inn at Tara Winery and Tara Cottage.

Shop at the Athens Farmer's Market

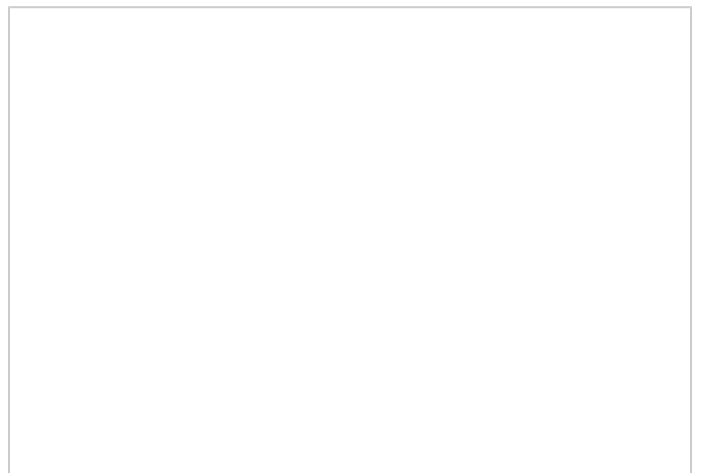
In many ways, Athens is a farming community. The many acres of fruitful land that encircle the town yield a bounty of delicious fruits and vegetables throughout the year. As such, one of the best ways to savor Athens' friendly culture is by visiting its farmers market. Browse the vendors' stalls and you'll see vibrant red strawberries, bright red-orange peaches, the lush green leaves of spinach, and much more. Locally farmed honey, mason jars full of fruit preserves, baked goods, candles, and even jewelry and clothing can also be found at the farmer's market, held throughout the year in downtown Athens. The can't-miss combination of fresh and locally grown produce and a welcoming community makes the Athens Farmer's Market a must-do at any time of the year.

Go Fishing at Lake Athens

Lake Athens is one of the premier fishing lakes of East Texas, so if you are any sort of an angler then you have to experience it. Fortunately, the lake is just five miles east of Athens, making it easily accessible. Lake Athens is known just as much for its scenic beauty as it is for the bountiful supply of largemouth bass, most of which range from three to eight pounds in weight. That's not to say there's nothing else to catch. Sunfish, white bass, and crappie are also commonly caught, while catfish are a bit rarer. Before you buy some bait and get yourself settled in at the lake, you'll need to make sure to purchase a fishing license, which you can do through the Texas Parks & Wildlife's website.

Visit Athens Scuba Park

Scuba diving in East Texas? Believe it or not, it's one of the most popular things to do in Athens. The Athens Scuba Park has everything any novice or expert scuba diver needs to have a fantastic underwater adventure. Explore numerous wrecks, including a Leer 600 jet and a Lockheed C-140 Jest Star, sunken into a warm and clear spring-fed lake that offers great visibility. Equipment rentals are available at the park's full-service dive shop, and



training courses are offered throughout the year. The park also has RV sites with electricity, camp sites, pavilions, and a volleyball court if you want to extend your stay at the lake. Remarkably, you don't have to go far to hit the lake. Athens Scuba Park sits just minutes away from downtown Athens, making it as convenient as it is fun.

Soar at New York, Texas ZipLine Adventures

No trip to Athens would be complete without zip lining at New York, Texas ZipLine Adventures, one of the few places to zip line in East Texas. Soar past towering pine trees along a rocky hillside that is one of the highest elevations in the region. New York, Texas ZipLine Adventures offers tour packages that take you on either six or nine zip lines from where you can enjoy spectacular 30-mile views of the gorgeous East Texas landscape. Tickets can be purchased online using the company's website.

