

The Local Economic Impact of Major Sports Events

This white paper explores the economic impact of hosting the Copa América Games in Atlanta, Georgia, focusing on the city's hotel segment.

- The Copa América games boosted visits at hotels across all of its host cities** – Arlington, TX experiencing the biggest weekly visit boost, with visits up 23.0% compared to the January to September 2024 weekly average.
- In Atlanta, GA, 26.1% of domestic visitors to the Mercedes Benz Stadium during the Copa América opener came from 250+ miles away** – driving an 11.0% uptick in weekly hotel visits.
- Upper Midscale hotels in Atlanta enjoyed the largest visit boost**, with 20.8% more visits than average during the week of June 20th, 2024. Chains like **Hilton's Home2 Suites** and **Hampton Inn, Choice Hotel's Comfort Inn & Suites**, and **Marriott's Fairfield Inn** and **TownePlace Suites** saw significant visit increases.
- Visitors to the Mercedes Benz Stadium during the Copa América came from areas with a median HHI above the nationwide average**, just like during the 2019 Super Bowl and 2023 Taylor Swift concert. It seems, then, that high-profile cultural and sporting events tend to attract a relatively affluent crowd – who may also have the means to purchase multiple hotel nights or splurge on nicer accommodations.
- Hotels in close proximity to the event space also received a major visit bump. Marriott's Autograph Collection Twelve Downtown**, an Upper Upscale hotel located near the Mercedes-Benz Stadium, saw increased visits during the Copa América, as well as during the 2019 Super Bowl and Taylor Swift's concert. Across all these events, the median HHI of visitors to the hotel was similar, suggesting that the hotel has been successful in attracting its target audience across different types of events.



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Placer.ai observes a panel of mobile devices in order to extrapolate and generate visitation insights for a variety of locations across the U.S. This panel covers only visitors from within the United States and does not represent or take into account international visitors.

Hospitality Surge: The Impact of Copa América on Hotel Occupancy

Professional sports are big business – the industry is valued at nearly [\\$1 billion](#) in the United States alone. And beyond the economic impact of actual ticket sales and [stadium](#) and [sponsorship](#) gains, major sporting events can have significant impacts on local industries such as tourism, dining, and hospitality. Cities hosting sports events tend to see influxes of visitors who boost tourism, spend money at restaurants and hotels, and create ripple effects that benefit entire local economies.

The 2024 Copa América, typically held in South America but hosted in the United States this year, provides a prime example of the effect sports tourism can have on local economies. The games kicked off in [Atlanta, Georgia](#) on June 20th, 2024, before moving on to other host cities and boosting hospitality traffic along the way.

This white paper dives into the data to see how the games impacted hotel visits in cities across America – and especially in Atlanta. The report uncovers the hotel tiers and brands that saw the largest visit boosts and explores visitor demographics to better understand the audiences drawn to the event.

Hotels Nationwide Enjoyed a Copa América Boost

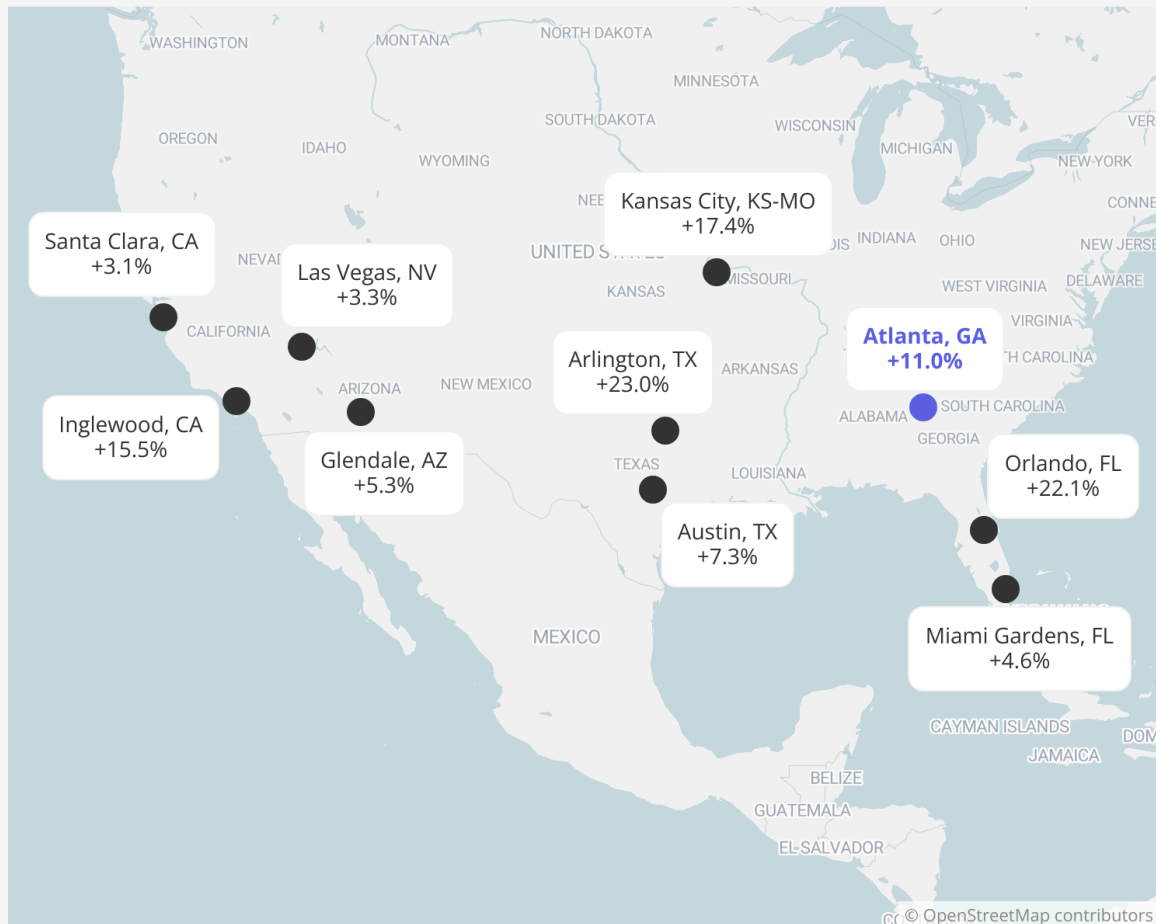
The Copa América took place in June and July 2024, with [fourteen](#) cities – mainly across the Sunbelt – hosting games. Thousands of fans attended each event, driving up demand in local hotel markets.

Arlington, TX, saw the largest hotel visit bump during the week it hosted the games, with hospitality traffic up 23.0% compared to the metro area's weekly January to September 2024 visit average. Orlando, FL, too, enjoyed a significant visit spike (22.1%), followed by Kansas City, KS-MO (17.4%).

The Atlanta metropolitan area, for its part, also saw a significant 11.0% increase in hotel visits during its hosting week compared to the city's weekly visit average.

Copa America 2024 Games Boosted Hotel Visits Across Hosting Cities

Weekly Hotel Visits in Host Metro Areas During Copa America, Compared to Jan. – Sep. 2024 Weekly Average



Out of Town Visitors Flock to Atlanta During Copa América

The Copa América games attracted fans from across the country – from as far away as Washington State and New Hampshire, as well as from neighboring states like Florida. On the day the tournament began, 26.1% of the domestic visitors to Atlanta’s Mercedes-Benz Stadium came from over 250 miles away, up from an average of



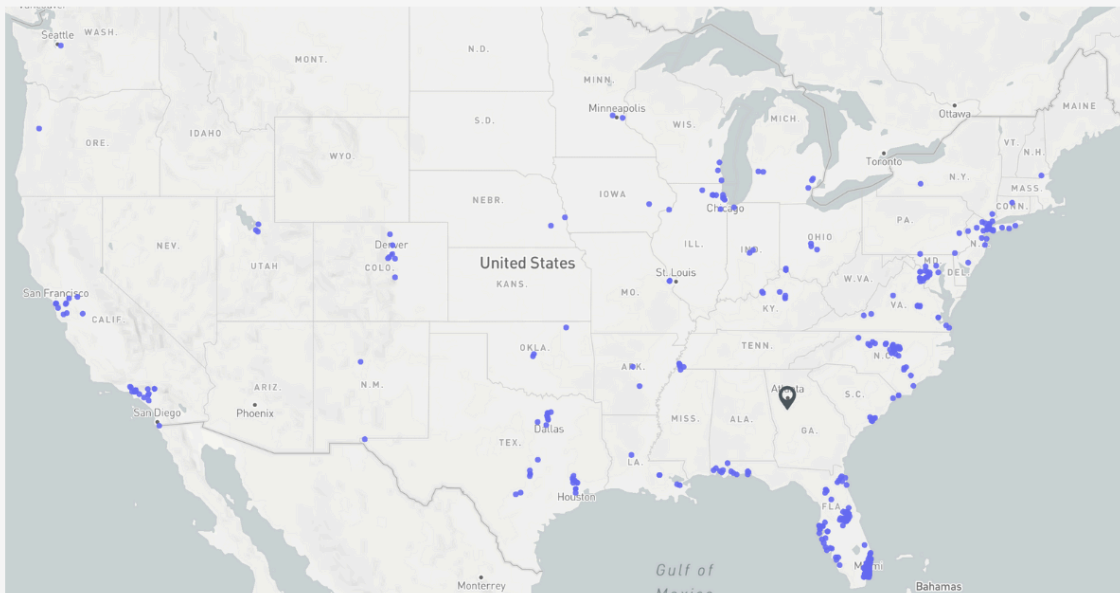
19.7% during the rest of the year (January to September 2024). These out-of-towners likely had a significant impact on Atlanta's local economy – through [spending](#) on accommodations, dining, and entertainment.

Copa America Brought a Large Share of Out-of-Towners to Mercedes-Benz Stadium (Atlanta, GA)

Share of Visits to Mercedes-Benz Stadium Coming From 250+ Miles Away



Origin of Visits Coming From 250+ Miles Away to Mercedes-Benz Stadium on Copa America Game Day June 20th '24



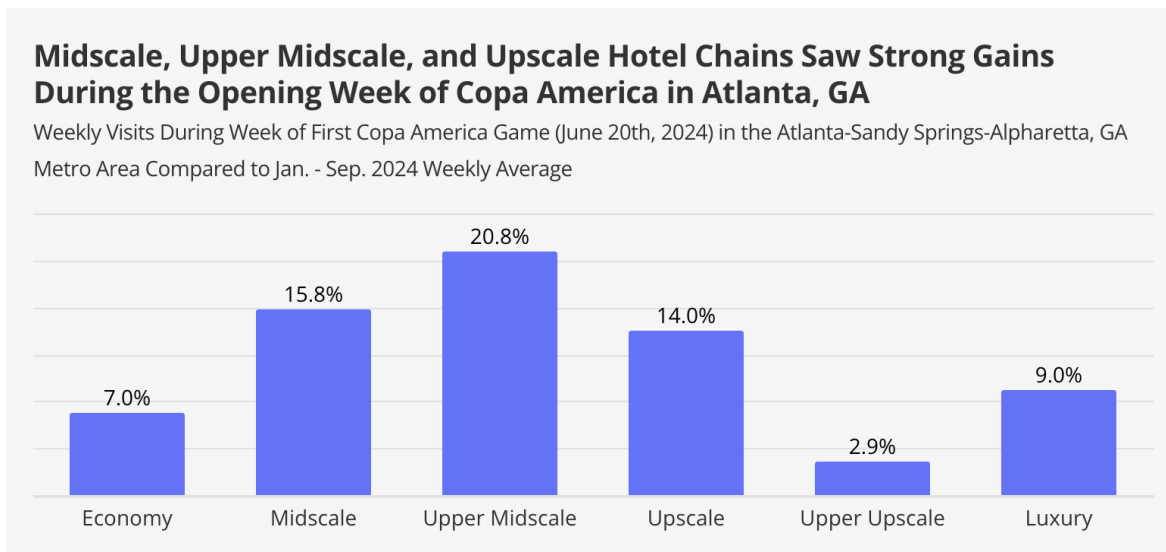
Atlanta's Mid-Tier Hotel Chains Thrived During Copa América Week

During the week of the Copa América game, all of the analyzed hotel types in Atlanta received a visit bump. And while some of these visits were likely unrelated to the

game, the massive [scale](#) of the event means that a significant share of the visit growth was driven by out-of-town soccer fans. Analyzing these patterns Atlanta can provide valuable insights for hospitality stakeholders looking to attract attendees of major sporting events.

[Upper Midscale](#) hotels saw the biggest boost during the week of the event, with visits 20.8% higher than the weekly visit average between January and September 2024. Midscale and Upscale hotels also experienced significant visit increases of 15.8% and 14.0%, respectively. During the same period, visits to Luxury hotels grew by 9.0% and Economy Hotel visits rose by 7.0% compared to the January to September 2024 weekly average. Meanwhile Upper Upscale Hotels received the smallest boost, with visits up by 2.9%.

It seems, then, that most Copa América spectators chose to stay at Midscale, Upper Midscale, or Upscale hotels during the trip.

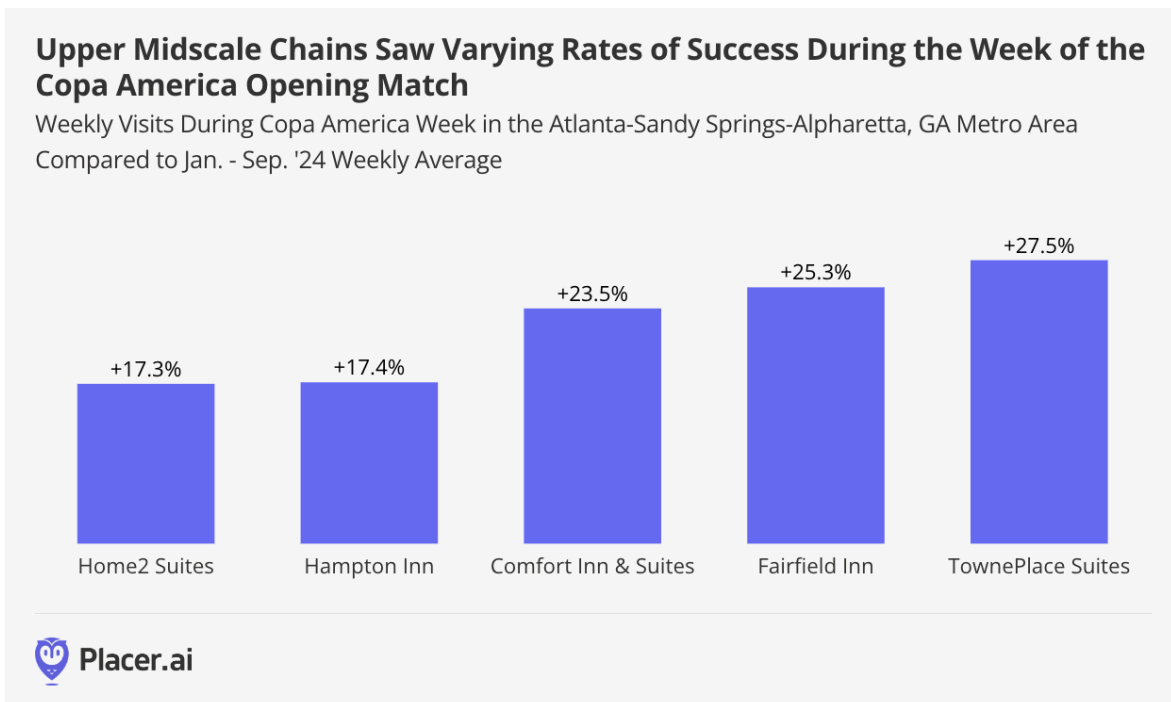


Added Value Attracts Visitors to Upper Midscale Chains

While Upper Midscale Hotels in the Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Alpharetta metro area generally experienced the biggest visit boost during the Copa América, visit performance varied somewhat from chain to chain. TownePlace Suites and Fairfield Inn, both Upper Midscale [Marriott](#) properties, saw increases of 27.5% and 25.3%, respectively, compared to their January to September 2024 weekly averages. Other

chains in the tier also enjoyed visit boosts – visits to Home2 Suites by Hilton and Hampton Inn – both Hilton chains – jumped by 17.3% and 17.4%, respectively, during the same period.

The popularity of these Upper Midscale hotels may be driven by a multitude of factors. Some, like TownePlace Suites and Home2 Suites offer kitchenettes, something that may appeal to visitors looking to save by preparing their own meals. Others, such as [Fairfield Inn](#) and [Hampton Inn](#) which offer more locations closer to the stadium may attract visitors that prioritize convenience.



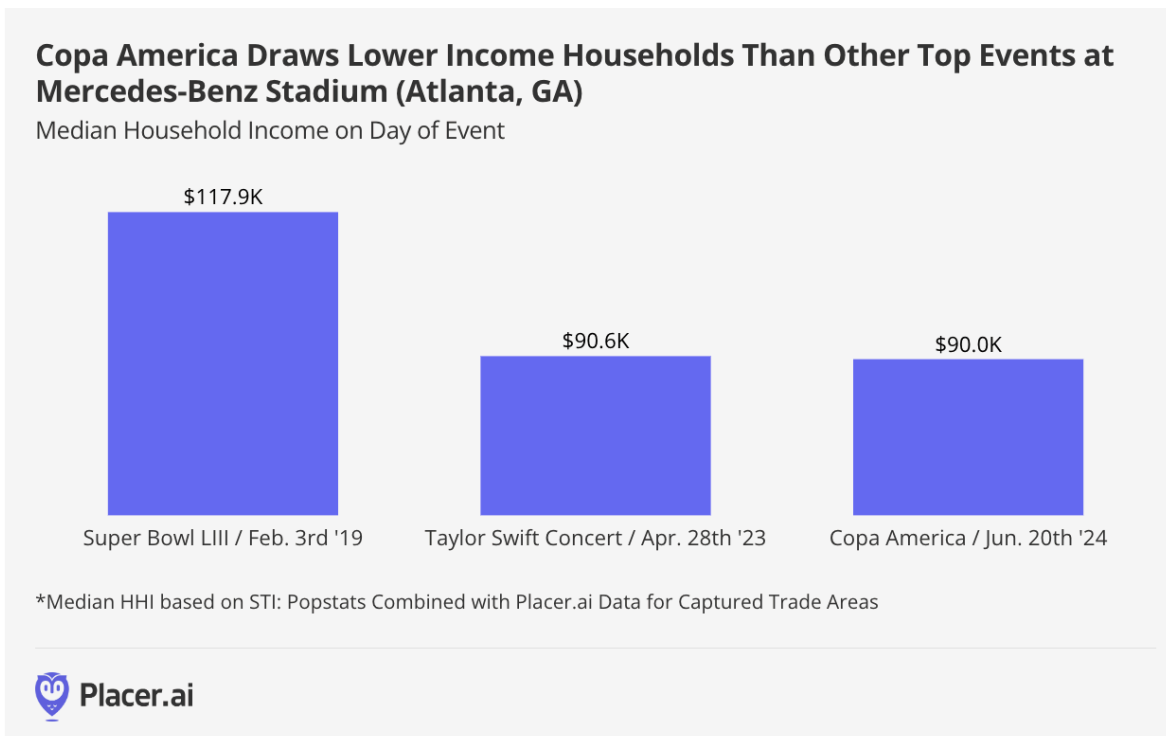
Audience Profiles Across Major Different Events

A (Relatively) Affluent Audience

Using Placer.ai [captured market](#) data with the [STI: PopStats](#) dataset to analyze the census block groups (CBGs) feeding visitors to the Mercedes-Benz Stadium can further explain the lodging preferences of Copa América fans. (The CBGs feeding visitors to a chain or venue, weighted to reflect the share of visitors from each one, are collectively referred to as the business' [captured market](#).)

During the Copa América opener, the Mercedes-Benz Stadium drew visitors from CBGs with a median household income (HHI) of \$90.0K – well above the national median of \$76.1K and similar to the median HHI during the [Taylor Swift concert](#) (\$90.6K). The stadium’s trade area median HHI was even higher during the [Super Bowl](#) (\$117.9K).

This visitor profile suggests that Copa América attendees – along with guests of other major cultural and sporting events – often have the means to splurge on comfortable, mid-range hotels for their stays. As Atlanta gears up to [host](#) the 62nd Super Bowl in 2028 – as well as a [host](#) of lower-profile events – the city can draw on historical data from Copa América and other past events to better understand the needs and preferences of stadium visitors – and plan accordingly.



Maximizing Opportunities: Attracting the Right Audience for Major Events

And although Upper Upscale hotels generally experienced relatively subdued growth during the Atlanta Copa América opener, some Upper Upscale properties – including Marriott’s Autograph Collection Twelve Downtown, saw visits jump. Visits to the hotel

were up 19.7% during the week of the Copa América compared to the January to September 2024 weekly average.

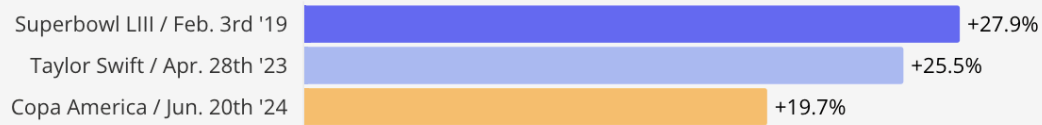
Twelve Downtown has become a popular lodging choice for major events in the city, likely due to its proximity to Mercedes-Benz Stadium. (The hotel is located just over a mile away from the stadium). During the Super Bowl LIII five years ago, Twelve Downtown drew 27.9% more visits than its weekly average for January to September 2019. And during the 2023 Taylor Swift concert, the hotel saw a 25.5% visit bump.

A closer look at the median HHI of the hotel's captured market during the three periods reveals that, despite each event attracting visitors from varying income brackets, the median HHI of visitors to the Twelve Downtown remained stable. Visitors to the hotel between January and September 2024 came from trade areas where the median HHI was \$76.2K, not far off from the median HHI during the 2019 Super Bowl (\$75.4K), Taylor Swift's 2023 concert (\$80.6K) and the Copa América (\$76.7K).

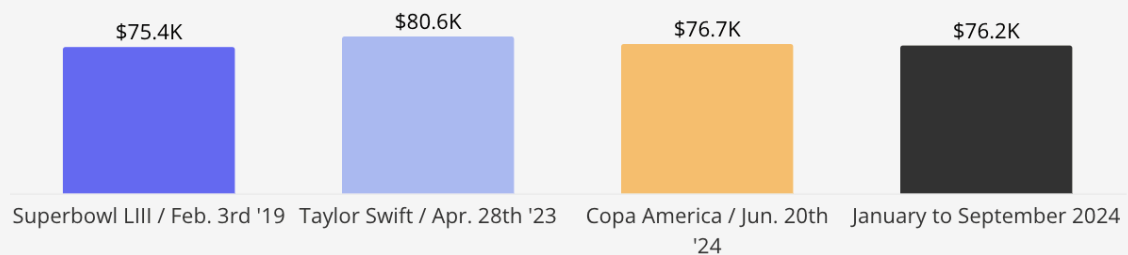
This stability suggests that, regardless of the event, hotels attract a specific visitor base. And understanding the similarities within the demographic profiles of likely hotel visitors during different events will be key for hotels at all levels seeking to capitalize on the economic opportunities created by major local events.

The Upper Upscale Hotel Twelve Downtown in Atlanta Successfully Attracted Visitors with Similar Household Incomes During Different Major Events

Hotel Visits on Week of Event Compared to Weekly Jan.-Sep. Average



Median Household Income During Week of Event*



■ Superbowl LIII / Feb. 3rd '19 ■ Taylor Swift / Apr. 28th '23 ■ Copa America / Jun. 20th '24 ■ January to September 2024

*Based on STI: Popstats Combined with Placer.ai Data for Captured Trade Areas



Game Kickoff

The Copa América games brought significant boosts to the tourism sector, driving up demand at local hotels in Atlanta and in the other host cities. By staying attuned to local events and understanding which consumer segments are most likely to attend, hotels can better target marketing campaigns and tailor visitor experiences to drive customer satisfaction.