

City of Culture: Museums, Music, and More in Charlotte

As North Carolina's largest city, Charlotte has much to offer in art, history, and culture. Come spend three days in the Queen City and discover a great sampling of museums, music, famous people, and flowering plants!

3-Day Itinerary

Day 1

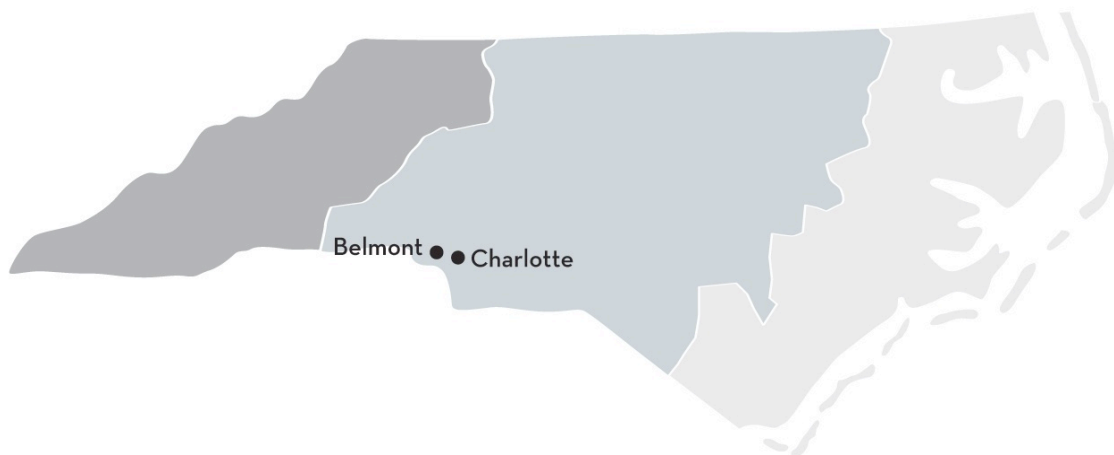
Discover what life was like in 18th Century Charlotte, then spend an evening in the city's funky NoDa arts and entertainment district.

Day 2

Explore a series of fascinating museums in the Uptown area and enjoy endless nightlife opportunities in the big city's center.

Day 3

Find out how a president and a preacher both trace their beginnings to Charlotte, then explore botanical wonders in Belmont.



With so much to see and do in the area, we recommend the following 3-day itinerary. Enjoy your visit by mixing and matching events to your particular interest. Be sure to check days and hours of operation for each venue.

Day One

If only George Washington could see it now. After touring the area in 1791, Washington described 18th century Charlottetown as a 'trifling place'. He wouldn't recognize the thriving city of today, but he might recognize the Revolutionary era **Hezekiah Alexander Home**, which now sits on the site of the **Charlotte Museum of History**. Here, you'll find three centuries worth of historical artifacts from the area, as well as living history interpretations and exhibits that tell the story of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County from the early settlers to the present day.

Now that you've seen 18th century Charlotte, move forward in time one century to the **Historic Rosedale Plantation**. Built in 1815, the home is one of the finest examples of Federal Period architecture in North Carolina, and is noted for its faux grained woodwork and the original French wallpaper that survives in three rooms. Guided tours are available Thursday through Sunday.

From here, it's time to get back to the present day by exploring **NoDa**, Charlotte's popular arts district. The name is a shortening of "North Davidson", the street that makes up the heart of this bustling community. Stroll through the galleries and enjoy the art, then enjoy Cajun and Low Country fare at **Boudreaux's Louisiana Kitchen**. Afterwards, enjoy a glass of wine at **Dolce** or bring your four-legged friend out with you to the **Dog Bar**. If you enjoy live music, NoDa has two of the city's best venues in **The Evening Muse** and **The Neighborhood Theatre**. If you're lucky enough to come on the 1st or 3rd Friday of the month, you'll have a great time as the entire NoDa community participates in one of its Gallery Crawls.

Day Two

Today, we're going museum-hopping, and there's no better place to start than the **Mint Museum of Art**, which became North Carolina's first art museum when it opened to the public in 1936. The building actually served as the first branch of the United State Mint, coining \$5 million in gold between 1836 and the outbreak of the Civil War. Today, the museum hosts a rich and diverse collection of art, ceramics, photography and much more.

Now, come Uptown and stop in for a casual lunch at **Harry & Jean's**, then walk over to **Discovery Place**, where you can explore dinosaurs, rain forests, oceans and more in one of the country's top interactive

museums. While you're here, be sure to take in a movie at the **IMAX Dome Theatre** for a truly amazing experience.

Also Uptown is the **Levine Museum of the New South**, which delves into the history of the Charlotte region since the end of the Civil War, from cotton fields to skyscrapers. Visitors can explore the major reinventions of Charlotte in the past 150 years, which resulted in critical turning points in industry, city planning, and civil rights.

Finally, stop in at the **Mint Museum of Craft + Design**, an extension of the Mint Museum that digs deep into North Carolina's long and rich craft tradition and then explores its modern manifestations in furniture design, ceramics, glass and other media.

When it's time to wind down, you're in the right place! **Uptown Charlotte** literally has dozens of bars and restaurants to choose from for your evening activities, from laid-back wine bars to intense dance clubs to authentic Irish pubs. With a little planning, you'll be able to catch a performance at the **Blumenthal Center for the Performing Arts**, or perhaps a big-name concert or professional sporting event at the **Time-Warner Cable Arena**.

Day Three

He's been a pastor to millions, and an adviser to several presidents. Now, Billy Graham's legacy is preserved for future generations at the **Billy Graham Library** on the southwest side of Charlotte. The \$27 million facility is designed to resemble a dairy barn and chronicles the life of "America's Pastor", from his boyhood days in rural North Carolina to preaching in the world's largest stadiums and arenas.

Then, head to **Pineville** for a visit to the birthplace of the 11th US President, **James K. Polk**. Located on a portion of the land that was once part of the 150-acre Polk family farm, the site includes a reconstructed log cabin with furnishings of the time period, a visitor's center with exhibits on the life of President Polk, and a picnic area.

Now, head south on I-85 into Gaston County and stop off in downtown **Belmont** for lunch at **Cherubs Café**. Not only can you get homemade soups, salads, sandwiches and desserts here, but the restaurant itself is run by the Holy Angels nonprofit corporation, providing vocational training and meaningful employment options for people with mental retardation.

After lunch, head south from **Belmont** on NC Highway 279 to the **Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden**, named one of America's "20 Great Gardens" in HGTV's popular book *Flower Gardening*. The Garden features 100 acres of themed plant life, including the brand new **Orchid Conservatory**, which is the only glass house in the Carolinas dedicated to the display of orchids and tropical plants.

Finally, finish up your visit back in Charlotte with an authentic Italian meal at **Dolce Ristorante Italiano** in the Dilworth neighborhood. Dolce began as a gelato shop owned by Italian immigrants and has grown into a popular place for locals and visitors to get a real taste of the old country. Be sure and say "Ciao" to Luisa, the restaurant's owner, and don't forget to end your meal with the house made gelato, still a specialty here.

Where to eat:

Boudreaux's Louisiana Kitchen (Charlotte) – dinner
Harry & Jean's (Charlotte) – lunch, dinner
Cherub's Café (Belmont) – lunch
Dolce Ristorante Italiano (Charlotte) – lunch, dinner

For more information:

Visit Charlotte
www.visitcharlotte.com

Gaston County Department Of Tourism
www.gastontourism.com

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visitnc.com 1-800-VISIT NC