

Heroes, Hills and Homes

This Piedmont-to-Mountains itinerary is about discovery. From legends like Dale Earnhardt to the fine art of winemaking and on to the artistic craft centers of western North Carolina, you'll encounter people and places you'll not soon forget.

4-Day Itinerary

Day 1

Visit the North Carolina Piedmont for racing and award-winning wines in Kannapolis

Day 2

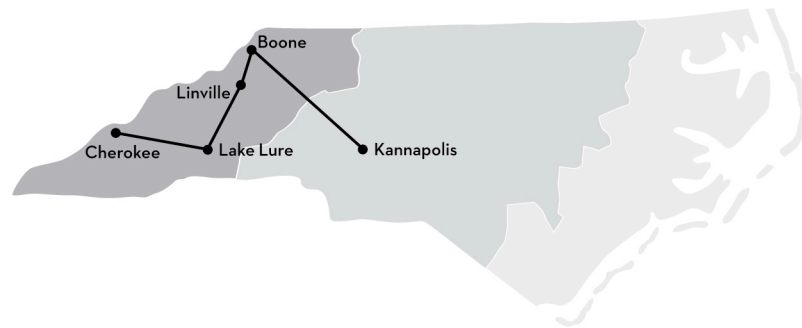
Enjoy crafts, shopping and the natural scenic beauty of the Mountains

Day 3

Tour Linville Caverns and Asheville attractions

Day 4

See Chimney Rock, Lake Lure and Cherokee



With so much to see and do in the area, we recommend the following 4-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

Your adventure begins in **Kannapolis** with a celebration of one of North Carolina's favorite legends, NASCAR race driver Dale Earnhardt. Born and raised in Kannapolis, the town now celebrates his legacy. The first stop is **Dale Earnhardt Plaza**, located in Cannon Village, where the centerpiece attraction is a 9-foot, 900-pound bronze statue of the racecar driver. Also featured is a granite monument contributed by Earnhardt fans from Vermont and New York.

Next, visit the **Dale Earnhardt Tribute Center**, showcasing artwork by world-renowned motorsports artist Sam Bass. You'll see dramatic, larger-than-life murals depicting Earnhardt's career.

Then journey about 15 miles northwest to **Mooreville** and **Dale Earnhardt, Inc.**, home base for race teams of Dale Earnhardt Jr. and Michael Waltrip, where you can explore the showroom and museum.

Finish your racing adventure at **Memory Lane Museum**, where you can trace the history of racing and the automobile. Over 15 different types of racecars, from soapbox derby racers to Nextel Cup stockcars, are on display along with vintage autos, motorcycles, toys, memorabilia and more.

Day Two

Head north to **Boone** in the North Carolina Mountains, where the **Appalachian Cultural Museum** is the perfect place to start the day. Created to foster an understanding of the people of the Appalachian Mountains and to serve as a laboratory for new museum ideas, the museum presents the rich traditions of the region through exhibits, publications and special events. Discover the beginnings of revenuers and local artists, see a moonshine still, racecar, regional art and more.

Travel a few miles south to **Blowing Rock** and visit **The Blowing Rock** for which the town is named. Learn about the legendary love story that helps create the magic of this place. This immense cliff, 4,000 feet above sea level, overhangs the John's River Gorge 3,000 feet below. The phenomenon is so called because the rocky walls of the gorge form a flume through which the northwest wind sweeps with such force that it returns lightweight objects cast over the void.

After learning about the origins of early High Country art, crafts and legends, marvel at the wares of the **Southern Highland Craft Guild**, whose artists' works are on display and for sale at the **Parkway Craft Center** on the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Moses Cone Manor, a magnificent home called "Flat Top Manor," for nearby Flat Top Mountain, is worth the trip. Moses H. Cone, known as "The Denim King" because of the heavy duty, deep-tone blue denim his factories produced, built this gleaming, white 20-room mountain estate near the turn of the century. Obtaining construction materials at that time was no small task. Lumber and furnishings were hauled uphill from the railroad in Lenoir, located more than 20 miles from the Cone property.

Visit one of nature's own legends, **Grandfather Mountain**. See indigenous animals including black bear, cougar, deer and otter. Venture across the Mile High Swinging Bridge and learn about gems, minerals, plants and endangered species at the Nature Museum.

One of the mountain region's secret jewels is just down a few curvy mountain roads. The **Mast General Store** sits in the valley in beautiful Valle Crucis. Step into a turn-of-the-century general store, preserved and fully stocked with yesteryear and modern-day necessities. From Valle Crucis, complete the loop back to Boone where you can shop in the Emporium and downtown shops or brave the climbing wall at **Footsloggers**.

Day Three

Start your day in **Linville** inside a mountain at **Linville Caverns**. View nature at work beneath Humpback Mountain. Enjoy the underground stream with native trout, a bottomless pool and perhaps a hibernating bat.

It's a couple hours south to America's largest private residence, **Biltmore Estate** in **Asheville**. This home is a National Historic Landmark. Experience the beauty that has lasted for more than a century and tour the 250-room French chateau filled with priceless treasures. Linger in century-old gardens or browse unique gift shops. End your evening in the nearby **Biltmore Village** meandering through the shops and galleries. If you're hungry, there are a wide range of restaurants, from a tea room to a cantina to fine cuisine.

Day Four

In the morning, travel 26 miles southeast of Asheville to **Chimney Rock Park**. Enjoy 75-mile views from the top of the 500-million-year-old rock. A short stroll will take you to Hickory Nut Falls, a 404-foot waterfall. Several scenes from *The Last of the Mohicans* were shot here, and you'll find many different spectacular views of the falls if you hike a few of the park's nature trails.

Our next stop is **Lake Lure**, a beautiful mountain lake with 27 miles of shoreline. The lake provided the perfect location for the 1987 film, *Dirty Dancing*. Relax on an hour-long boat tour.

Next, travel west into the beautiful Smoky Mountains of western North Carolina, home of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians. To the town of **Cherokee**. While in Cherokee, visit the **Oconaluftee Indian Village**, a recreated Indian village of the 1750s. Enjoy traditional crafts. Walk through time with the ancient Cherokee at the **Museum of the Cherokee Indian**. Learn about a native culture that has lived on this land for centuries.

For more information:

Cabarrus County Convention & Visitors Bureau
www.cabarruscvb.com

Mooresville Convention & Visitors Bureau
www.racecityusa.org

Mount Airy Chamber of Commerce
www.visitmayberry.com

North Carolina's High Country Host
www.highcountryhost.com

McDowell County TDA
www.mcdowellinc.org

Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau
www.exploreasheville.com