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exploreasheville.com/blackmountain
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For more information, call the Regional Visitor Center at 800.438.7500 or visit MountainsofNC.com
Hand in hand is a wonderful way to share the awe and delights that await you at Grandfather Mountain. Share the joy today and help us preserve it for tomorrow.

Book your visit at grandfather.com
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BEAUTY IN DIVERSITY
The 2021 travel guide celebrates the rich variety of North Carolina’s landscapes and the phenomenal people who make this state their permanent or temporary home. Get the digital version at visitnc.com/travel-guides.

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A throwback motor lodge. Tree houses in a vineyard. Overnights on a yacht. Check out these cool lodging options and more on page 16.

Treehouse Vineyards, Monterey by Ryan Donnell. Learn more on page 18.

The Ten Acre Garden, Canton by Ryan Donnell. Learn more on page 71.

Merchants Millpond State Park, Gatesville by Ryan Donnell. Learn more on page 54.

PHOTOGRAPH: RYAN DONNELL

4 2021 NC TRAVEL GUIDE
Explore Fayetteville and the 9 communities that comprise America’s Hometown. Just off I-95, you’ll discover the role the area played in our country’s rich history, intermixed with entertainment opportunities to make your visit one to remember. Wander a military museum, take in the botanical gardens, catch an event and immerse yourself in Cumberland County’s deep cultural heritage.

To learn more about the Fayetteville Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

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FAYETTEVILLE
AREA CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

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info@visitfayettenenc.com
www.VisitFayettevilleNC.com
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There’s always room for dessert, but you may want to bring a friend to help conquer these creations.
The shoreline stretches out more than a 100 miles, much of it without a single building. Whether you need a break from the city or you’re just looking for a fresh perspective, the same pioneering spirit that fueled the first English explorers and the Wright Brothers is bound to stir something real and lasting in you too. Salt water cures all.
Dear Visitors,

We dream of travel. We tap memories to encounter ourselves as carefree spirits in a hammock, adventure seekers in the throes of a thrill, passionate souls connecting with loved ones, voyagers in the act of discovery. We long to be transformed into our traveling selves and transported to the radiant beaches, sky-high mountains and captivating cities of North Carolina.

COVID-19 has taught us to value travel more than ever, to prize the smallest moments and the grandest settings, and to savor serendipity while leaving less to chance. The 2021 Official North Carolina Travel Guide responds to the times with ideas and inspiration for planning trips that return our better selves to the best of places.

Drawing from all 100 North Carolina counties, our travel guide embraces the abundance of outdoor spaces. It goes beyond storied state and national parks to gardens and wineries, urban trails, history-rich sites, rural retreats and relaxing farms. Downtowns and elevated dining find their rightful place in an era when mindful practices make it possible to enjoy a full range of experiences.

We hope this 2021 guide heightens your pleasure, from the joyful anticipation of planning to the banking of memories back home. The best part, of course, comes in the middle, when your favorite self is here.

Wit Tuttell
Executive Director
Visit North Carolina

As a special thank you, we are offering a chance to win a $10,000 cash prize in our annual sweepstakes!

Survey participation is not necessary to enter or win our sweepstakes, but we do hope you will share your opinions.*

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Or visit: meredith.com/surveys-northcarolina21

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WELCOME CENTERS AND REST AREAS
North Carolina’s welcome centers and highway rest areas offer opportunities for convenient, brief stops, and they provide easy roadside access to public restrooms, snack and drink machines, drinking water, and telephones. Welcome centers also offer picnic tables, family restrooms and even displays of North Carolina crafts.

Professional travel counselors at each welcome center provide detailed travel information and distribute the state’s Official North Carolina Travel Guide, the Department of Transportation’s official state map and other marketing publications exclusively about North Carolina. They can also book room reservations at no charge for visitors staying overnight in the Tar Heel State.

The welcome centers are open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily, except New Year’s Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Rest areas are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. For more information about traveling in North Carolina, go to visitnc.com.

RULES OF THE ROAD
• Seat belt use is mandatory for drivers and passengers in front and rear seats.
• Child seats are required for children younger than age 8 or children less than 80 pounds. Learn more at buckleupnc.org.
• When passing an emergency vehicle, tow truck or work crew with flashing lights on the highway shoulder, move over one lane if possible, or reduce speed.
• In work zones, obey the speed limit, stay alert, and be aware of physical hazards, such as traffic shifts or lane reductions.
• If you are in a minor, noninjury accident, move your vehicle to the shoulder of the road.
• Motorcyclists are required to use headlights when using windshield wipers in inclement weather.
• Right turns on red are permitted after a complete stop, unless otherwise posted. Left turns on red are not permitted.
• Cell phone use by drivers younger than 18 is prohibited except in an emergency or when talking to a parent or spouse.
• It is illegal to read or send text messages or emails while driving.
• Motorcyclists must wear helmets and use headlights at all times.
• Littering is against the law and carries a sizable fine. Learn more by searching Swat-A-Litterbug online.

STATEWIDE TRAVEL INFORMATION
Information on travel conditions is available online at ncdot.gov/travel, where you can search by region, route or county for current traffic, incident or adverse weather conditions that might affect your trip. Via phone, visitors can access updated travel information, including construction and traffic delays along interstates and major highways, by dialing 511. To speak to a VisitNC representative, call (800) VISIT NC (847-4862).

DISABILITY ACCESS
Information for travelers with disabilities is available online or via download in English and Spanish in ACCESS North Carolina: A Vacation and Travel Guide for People with Disabilities. This publication provides information about parking, paths, entrances and restrooms for hundreds of attractions, and it rates how accessible each attraction is for different types of disabilities. Email accessnorthcarolina@gmail.com to inquire about the vacation guide or contact the tourism in North Carolina. View the guide at ncdhhs.gov/documents/access-north-carolina-vacation-and-travel-guide-people-disabilities.

The Americans with Disabilities Act establishes a variety of standards for different types of properties. Visitors with disabilities and accessibility needs are encouraged to contact the accommodations or attractions directly to learn about their accessibility features.

FERRY INFORMATION
The North Carolina Department of Transportation’s ferry system includes 21 ferries that operate 365 days a year on seven routes along the coast, including Bayview-Aurora, Currituck-Knotts Island, Cedar Island-Ocracoke, Swan Quarter-Ocracoke, Hatteras-Ocracoke, Cherry Branch-Minnesott Beach and Southport-Fort Fisher. Ferries can accommodate motorcycles and any size car, trailer or RV that can operate on the highway.

Ferries provide links to lighthouses, pristine beaches, historic sites, outdoor recreational activities and more. Reservations for the Cedar Island-Ocracoke or Swan Quarter-Ocracoke routes can be made by calling (800) BY-FERRY (293-3779) or visiting ncferry.org. All other ferry routes operate on a first-come, first-served basis.

NORTH CAROLINA’S AMTRAK TRAIN SERVICE
Amtrak service to North Carolina is the gateway to your getaway with daily Amtrak passenger trains serving 25 North Carolina cities. There are also daily round-trip train services between Raleigh and Charlotte and connecting thruway service to the North Carolina coast. Plan your trip and purchase tickets online at amtrak.com, or call (800) USA-RAIL (872-7245).

SAFETY AND ALERTS
Safety tips regarding hiking, swimming, camping, and visiting beaches and waterfalls are available at visitnc.com/safety.

COVID-19 INFORMATION
Before you travel, head to visitnc.com for the latest guidelines and advisories surrounding COVID-19. In addition, Count On Me NC is a public health initiative that empowers visitors, guests and businesses to help keep everyone safe from COVID-19. Learn more about precautions you can take—and about the safety commitment of businesses across North Carolina—at countonmenc.org.
The information listed in the North Carolina Travel Guide has been carefully compiled to ensure accuracy at the time of publication. Information herein that was supplied by North Carolina businesses is subject to change without notice. The State of North Carolina’s Official Tourism Office cannot, and does not, guarantee the accuracy of all information furnished and will not be responsible for omissions or errors. The publisher assumes no responsibility or liability for errors, changes or omissions in the guide. Visitors should verify hours and admission policies with destinations.

For additional travel information, contact:
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“Beautiful and unspoiled... a world away from home.”

Connie M.

A vacation in NC’s Brunswick Islands is so much more than a stretch of days on the calendar. It’s that feeling of having vanished to a place where the world can’t reach you. Where every day unfolds with a thousand possibilities.

Spread out on 45 miles of sprawling shoreline. Explore meandering waterways and marshes. Relax in the comfort and privacy of your own beach vacation rental home. Rejuvenate and reconnect where memorable moments arrive on the tide of each new day.
Cheers to traveling again! All 100 North Carolina counties are ready for you to explore. We’ve picked at least one destination for you to experience in each of them.

Regionally sourced ingredients, such as orange blossom honey, shine in the suds of High Point’s Brown Truck Brewery.
1. PARADISE FOUND
Dismal Swamp State Park is home to rare Hessel's Hairstreak butterflies, seven species of woodpeckers and a whole lot more. Which U.S. president referred to this swamp as “a glorious paradise”?
Answer on page 99.

2. TRUE GRIOTS
The stellar sides at Southern Smoke BBQ in Garland include dirty rice and cheesy grits, which have a second name because they were often served at what type of occasion?
Answer on page 67.

3. LAKE LIFE
Featuring 18 challenging holes, Westport Golf Club in Denver lines the largest human-made lake in North Carolina, with more than 500 miles of shoreline. Which lake is this?
Answer on page 81.

4. OBX WILDLIFE
Currituck National Wildlife Refuge’s most famous residents have lived along the water for more than 500 years. What type of animal are they?
Answer on page 98.

6. FRUIT FOR THOUGHT
Five generations have kept Sugarloaf Orchards in Taylorsville ripe with apples, peaches, nectarines and which variety of pear (also known as a zodiac pear)?
Answer on page 69.

7. ROCK THIS WAY
A short and steep summit trail leads to multistate vistas from the top of Mount Jefferson in the Blue Ridge. What gives the mountain its unusually dark hue?
Answer on page 103.

8. NATURALLY MAGIC
The legendary Blowing Rock has swirled with myths and legends for hundreds of years. What phenomenon occurs here when visitors toss light objects, such as leaves, above the flume of air?
Answer on page 38.

9. LIQUID LEGEND
A short walk from the 3-mile Tar River Trail, Rocky Mount’s hopping Mythic Brewing honors which elusive creature, among others?
Answer on page 90.

10. TRAPPED AT HOME
Diverse flora and fauna—including the Venus flytrap—fill Croatan National Forest. Where is the original home of the Venus flytrap?
Answer on page 60.

For the full list of answers, see page 108.
EXPERIENCE BILTMORE LIKE A GUEST OF THE VANDERBILTS.

George and Edith Vanderbilt built their Southern getaway so that friends and family could renew their spirits with fresh mountain air and unmatched hospitality. Today, staying overnight on the estate affords you the same luxuries. So come, relax, and enjoy Biltmore as it was intended.

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SWEET DREAMS

Snooze aboard a yacht, wine down in a tree house among vineyards, or party in your room like it’s 1969. The only downside to these unique overnights: You can’t stay forever.

RETRO VIBES

Mother Earth Motor Lodge

KINSTON

If pop art took the form of a hotel, it would be this throwback delight with Route 66-style neon signage, Mad Men-esque furnishings, and a pool with multicolor lights that glow among the surrounding palm trees and miniature golf course. Reopened in 2017, the motor lodge is just steps away from sister establishment Mother Earth Brewing, plus chef Vivian Howard’s dining gem Chef and the Farmer. (The fried collards are a big hit.)
ROYAL TREATMENT
Graylyn
• WINSTON-SALEM
A freezer stocked with ice cream around the clock is just a taste of the perks at this 1920s-era estate, now a hotel and conference center. Guests feel like they’ve arrived at Downton Abbey when a butler greets them at the castle-like Manor House. Intricate details include hand-painted tile marble tubs in some rooms.

ELEVATED BOUTIQUE
The Monte Vista Hotel
• BLACK MOUNTAIN
At age 102, this Blue Ridge retreat has never looked better. Polished hardwood floors and tasteful antique accents lend a homespun vibe in the 1937 Wing, while the 14-bedroom Lodge provides the perfect spot for family reunions. On-site Milton’s restaurant serves authentic Southern comfort cuisine (and fabulous libations).

FLOAT THROUGH THE EVENING
Bayonet Enterprises Cruises
• JACKSONVILLE
Retired Marine Lance Ledoux and wife Marilyn helm overnight New River voyages on their yacht so you can kick back and enjoy onboard dinner, drinks and cozy accommodations in one of two guest staterooms. A provided kayak allows for you and your sweetheart to do some independent exploring on the water too.
**BRING YOUR HONEY**

**The Hive**  
**WILMINGTON**

Just a few of the sweet touches at this new suite-only property in the heart of town: honeycomb-shape decor, spa-like showers and luxe linens. Each stay includes complimentary snacks and beverages that you can enjoy while catching a flick on the 55-inch 4K TVs.

**BIKER BUNKING**

**Ironhorse Motorcycle Lodge**  
**STECOAH**

After a serpentine ride on the nearby Tail of the Dragon (318 curves along an 11-mile stretch of US-129), motorcyclists unwind at campsites, in Old West-style cabins and bunkhouses, or even in covered wagons. When dusk arrives, swap cycling stories by the creekside firepit.

**PINKIES UP**

**The Ivy**  
**WARRENTON**

Raise your English china teacup to a delightful stay during afternoon teatime in this 1903 Queen Anne inn. New proprietors Mike and Karen Kelley (who is originally from Essex, England) have added tasteful touches of British refinement throughout the four-guest-room property.

**SIPS IN THE BRANCHES**

**Treehouse Vineyards**  
**MONROE**

Quality time and bottles of wine are guaranteed at this 200-year-old family farm. (The on-site winery opened in 2010.) Take your pick of two overnight tree house options: the cozy 300-square-foot Papa’s Dream or the newer—and more spacious—Horsefeathers Hideaway. A third tree house named Date Nite makes for a carefree evening of vino and views.
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STELLAR NIGHTS

North Carolina’s rural areas reveal some of the most pristine night skies in the Southeast. Get glimpses of stars, planets, moons and—if you’re lucky—a phenomenon no one can quite explain.

GET A HIGH-TECH PERSPECTIVE

Enjoy the night sky during the day at Elizabeth City’s Khan Planetarium. The 60-seat dome theater offers a rotating lineup of night sky presentations. Visit the third Saturday of each month for an indoor night sky tour followed by an outdoor star party.

SPOT GHOST LIGHTS

Participate in a centuries-old search by parking at Brown Mountain Overlook on NC-181 near Morganton and setting your sights on the dark sky. Look for orbs known as Brown Mountain Lights. But here’s a heads-up: The lights are elusive. Thousands have seen them, but no one has discovered their source. Theories include torches carried by ghosts of Native American maidens, train headlights or glowing reflections from moonshine stills.

SCORE A 360-DEGREE VIEW

As the state’s largest public telescope, the Sam Scope at Burnsville’s Bare Dark Sky Observatory brings the moon so close into focus, you can imagine you’re flying by in a spaceship. Also see Saturn’s rings and Jupiter’s eye when you visit this open-air observatory atop a mountain. Brush up on your night sky knowledge during community viewing nights; the evening’s host has a pocketful of Milky Way candy bars for star students.

CAMP ALONG A STARLIT LAKE

Pitch a tent on the shore at Badin Lake Campground. Located in the Uwharrie National Forest near Troy, the remote lake and its shoreline make an ideal landing pad for stargazing.

In Manson, spend the day reeling in bass on 50,000-acre Kerr Lake. Come nightfall, retreat to your site at Bullocksville Campground and watch the stars emerge as several species of owls hoot a haunting chorus.
When you want all the comforts but not a full-service resort, come home to 200 Main for all your Highlands adventures and excursions. Step outside your door for downtown shopping, dining, arts and performances. Hike the Highlands Plateau Greenway from the trailhead behind the property. Then relax in a hammock on the park-like lawn after a dip in the heated mineral pool.

888.417.2433 | 200Main.com | Open Year-Round
WOOF-WORTHY ADVENTURES
North Carolina's first-ever dog travel agent digs up some of her favorite pupper-friendly finds.

My name is Mo, and I’m a 6-year-old rescue floofer from Charlotte. I got turbo tippy taps when VisitNC hired me to be its first doggo travel agent, cuz if there’s one thing I like more than fetchin and sniffin, it’s splorin! I’ve been woofin and hoofin all over, and I wanna share some of me and my frens’ faves. Take your puppers to these spots, and I paw promise they’ll beg for more.

AFTER GETTING A NICE FUR WHOOSH ON THE ISLAND EXPRESS FERRY (FROM BEAUFORT), I CAN GET JUST WITHIN SNIFFIN DISTANCE OF THE WILD HORSES ON SHACKLEFORD BANKS. LIKE HOOMANS, I GOTTA STAY AT LEAST 50 FEET AWAY! UNLIKE HOOMANS, I ALSO NEED A 6-FOOT LEASH.
New Bern is home to two rivers, twenty-five parks, five public golf courses and one national forest. You will be hard-pressed to run out of outdoor adventures in this Southern oasis.

www.VisitNewBern.com
Two Scoops Creamery
Charlotte and Mooresville

Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden
Belmont

I have some troubles figuring out all deez flower colors, but they sure sniff great! We floofers can visit the 110 acres of gardens as long as we stay on the trails and got our leashes on. Racing between the fountains of the Canal Garden is the bestest.

Mayberry Courthouse and Jail
Mount Airy

It wasn’t on Animal Planet so I didn’t watch it, but The Andy Griffith Show is a doggone big deal around town, cuz the star is from here. I can poze inside a copycat of the courthouse and jail from the show, as if I got locked up for stealing sausages. (I would never!)

Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge
Wadesboro

Duck! Duck! Goose! Birdie! I get so distracted by all the animals here, it’s a good thing Mom and Dad are keeping an eye on me. Otherwise I might accidentally go sploosh in the water and have to doggy-paddle my way out. That could be a lot of funsies, tho!

Palmetto-Peartree Preserve
Columbia

I love it when the parents take me and my little bro, Mister, for hikes on the boardwalk trails. We race to spot the woodpeckers and bald eagles. There are 10,000 acres to explore (I hear that’s a lot), so we always spot something new.

4 Paws Kingdom Campground and Dog Retreat
Rutherfordton

We get to live like royalty in this campground that has play parks just for us. I love to splish-splash in the giant water bowl (hoomans call it a pond), do some rollin around and then get a soapy scrub in a doggy tub. After a snooze in the cabin, I run through the agility park at max zoomies per hour.

Nauti Paws Pet Boutique & Bakery
New Bern

Sorry for the droolz, but I can’t help myself when I see all the yummo doggo snacks here, especially the cookies! They give me googy eyes. Mom and Dad also bought me a coastal-inspired leash for my vacation walkies.

Noms that last...
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Condé Nast Traveler #3 Hotel in the South
BARBECUE SAMPLER

Want to stoke a heated debate? Just mention your favorite NC barbecue. Traditionally, it involves pork cooked slowly over hardwood coals. But crossing the state lets travelers savor delicious regional nuance.

M O R E  B B Q  G R E AT S

The Flying Pig
• SHELBY

While you’ll find (and love) the traditional pork barbecue with slaw and hush puppies here, the restaurant also smokes brisket and ribs. Even devoted pork purists admit to enjoying the beef and bones.

Smokey Joe’s Barbecue
• LEXINGTON

Barbecue is so big in this Piedmont town, it has its own style named after it. Feel like a local at this BBQ joint (one of 15 in Lexington) by ordering a tray piled with chopped pork and red slaw.

Wilber’s Barbecue
• GOLDSBORO

On your coastal trek, follow countless North Carolinians who stop at Wilber’s as a road-trip ritual. Dig into a plate of wood-cooked, whole-hog pork, and chances are you’ll return on your way back through.

A.T. Home Cooking at Brigg’s Bar-B-Que
• YANCEYVILLE

Nothing fancy here—just perfectly executed comfort food. Try barbecue plates and sandwiches paired with home-style sides, such as fried okra.

Herb’s Pit Bar-B-Que
• MURPHY

Although the sauce is sweeter than at surrounding barbecue establishments, it still maintains a North Carolina tang. Pork shares menu space with ribs and chicken, all cooked over hardwood coals.
WHY THE ELK WOULD YOU GO ANYWHERE ELSE?

Glen Cove by Old Edwards

Live a Lifestyle of Adventure and Wellness with fun amenities, a community garden, mountain trails and a 12-hole, par-three golf course, in the beautiful Norton area of Cashiers, North Carolina. Cottages and Estate Lots available.

Call 828-526-1783 to Schedule a Tour Today | GlenCoveLifestyle.com
TREASURES OF THE COAST

Where do you start when you have hundreds of miles of sand, boardwalks, and inland waterways and towns to explore? Try one or more of these unique “firsts,” then venture beyond for more coastal discoveries.

PADDLE AMONG GATORS

Merchants Millpond State Park
* GATESVILLE

Watch out for pairs of big eyes in the water while canoeing through the coastal pond of this state park, generally known as the northernmost home of the American alligator. Cypress and gum trees covered with Spanish moss form a dreamlike wetland setting over the quiet pond and creek, where you’ll also spot beavers, otters, owls and dragonflies.

EXPERIENCE LIVING HISTORY WITH THE FAMILY

Cowan Museum of History and Science
* KENANSVILLE

Explore a one-room log schoolhouse, a blacksmith shop and other storied structures at this museum honoring rural North Carolina heritage. More than 4,000 artifacts, including 18th- and 19th-century farming and household items, give everyone a lesson in the joys and struggles of earlier times, many years before the days of online shopping.

VISIT A HOSPITAL FOR SEA TURTLES

Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center
* SURF CITY

Dedicated to the conservation and protection of all marine turtle species, a volunteer team cares for 40 or more turtles at any given time. Send healing vibes through the windows of the Sea Turtle Sick Bay, then observe and photograph recovering turtles nearly ready to return to the ocean. Check the event calendar to experience a turtle release in person.
Discover the art and your heart in the Barn Quilt Capital of North Carolina®

Visit and explore the local charm and heritage of Sampson County!

Autryville | Clinton | Garland | Harrells | Newton Grove | Roseboro | Salemburg | Turkey
Coharie Tribal Community Center • Friends of the Sampson County Waterways • First Miracle Vine and Wine
Harrells Gulf Station Museum • Mountains to Sea Trail • North Carolina Justice Academy • Sampson County History Museum Village
Sampson Community Theatre • Sampson County Expo Center • Victor R. Small House

414 Warsaw Rd, Clinton, NC | 910-592-2557 | VisitSampsonNC.com
**FLY A KITE FROM A SAND DUNE**

**Jockey’s Ridge State Park**

● NAGS HEAD

Watch your kite dive and whip against the backdrop of the tallest natural sand dune on the Atlantic Coast. The rolling dunes and high winds off the ocean make Jockey’s Ridge the ideal place to fly a traditional diamond kite or to learn the intricacies of launching, flying and landing a framed stunt kite. From the dunes, you can see the Atlantic Ocean to the east and the Roanoke Sound to the west.

**FLY FISH IN HISTORIC WATERS**

**Pettigrew State Park**

● CRESWELL

Cast your line into the crystal-clear waters of Lake Phelps, one of the largest natural lakes in North Carolina at 16,600 acres. It’s abundant with largemouth bass, yellow perch and bluegill fish. The park also teems with history. Ancient single-log dugout canoes—the way Carolina Algonquians traveled the coast—have been discovered here.

**SAVOR THE FASTEST FOOD AROUND**

**Melvins’ Hamburgers and Hot Dogs**

● ELIZABETHTOWN

Burgers for breakfast? At Melvins’, the line for coleslaw-and-chili-topped burgers and flame-kissed hot dogs (using the same recipes since 1938) starts forming just before doors open at 7:30 a.m. But you won’t have to wait long. At peak speed, the expert team can average a burger on the counter every five seconds.

**CATCH THE BREEZE**

**Sailing**

● ORIENTAL

Inhale saltwater-tinged air and feel the wind in your hair in this charming fishing village-turned Sailing Capital of North Carolina. Hidden waterways weave throughout Oriental, all leading to the mighty Neuse River and grand Pamlico Sound. Here, boats outnumber residents at a ratio of 3 to 1, so you’ll always have a way to get out on the water.
Drive Until the Road Ends...

And the Great Wide Open Begins in Corolla

Open. That is what many of us long to be. It is comforting to know that miles of windswept remote beaches, legendary wild horses and iconic historical sites await you where Highway 12 ends, less than a day’s drive away, on the Currituck OBX.

Call 877.287.7488 for your free visitor's guide

www.CorollaNC.com

USA Today’s Best Beach in North Carolina

Congrats.
You just found Emerald Isle.
Now it’s time to BookTheCoast.com and visit North Carolina’s Southern Outer Banks.
COOL WARM-UPS
Find comforting beverages and palate-pleasing combinations at these local coffee (and tea!) hangouts.

Heirloom Brewshop
● RALEIGH
There’s a reason you feel relaxed the moment you step into this airy, sunlit space. It’s all by design, thanks to founders Anna Phommavong and Chuan Tsay, a couple with Laotian and Taiwanese heritage, respectively. Honoring the union of their cultures, Phommavong and Tsay pursue harmony in their minimalist cafe as well as their beverages, all while aiming to build community. “Progress should be measured in terms of the diversity we can cultivate,” Tsay notes. A broad array of fragrant teas includes the Taiwan-sourced Orchid Oolong and a rose-colored Japanese Sakura. On the coffee side, a shot of brown sugar five-spice flavor adds a sweet kick to pour-overs. Need a different kick? Try one of the dozen-plus sake varieties.
With coastline and coastal towns, waterfalls and waterways, mountains and moonshine, North Carolina welcomes you to its outdoor spaces, parks and attractions. As you plan your trip, follow the state’s guidelines and discover destinations awaiting your return.
YOU CAN COUNT ON NC

Join the many thousands of Count On Me NC participants and pledge to do your part to create a safe and healthy environment as you travel throughout the state’s three regions, each offering unique discoveries.

MOUNTAINS The Blue Ridge Mountains, the Great Smoky Mountains and the New River (the nation’s oldest) call this region home. Other active outdoor pursuits include world-class fly fishing, river rafting, hiking and biking. Find more than 250 cascades around Brevard, aptly dubbed the Land of Waterfalls.

PIEDMONT In the center of it all, the Piedmont delivers a mix of town and country. Here you’ll find some of the state’s largest urban areas, renowned golf courses, more than 40 vineyards in the Yadkin Valley, and plenty of timeless attractions in historic downtowns, including those of Pittsboro, Lumberton and Burgaw.

COAST Waterfront towns dot 300 miles of coastline, where alfresco delights include the dunes of Topsail Beach and paddle trails at Hammocks Beach State Park. Tour the hometown of the pirate Blackbeard, visit Civil War battlefields and the Battleship North Carolina, and see where the Wright Brothers took flight.

WHAT TO BRING Before you go, load up on the following: nonperishable food + beverages,
OUTDOOR ADVENTURE
Find bliss in North Carolina, whether riding a wave, exploring a forest or soaring high.

**WATER**

**HIGH ROCK LAKE, LEXINGTON**
Tournament anglers come to the state’s second-largest lake (top prize goes to Lake Norman) in search of huge largemouth bass along with striper, white bass and catfish. But the calm waters also draw boaters, swimmers and campers. High Rock Mountain provides a scenic backdrop.

**NANTAHALA OUTDOOR CENTER, BRYSON CITY**
Billed as the nation’s largest outdoor recreation attraction, the center features one of the top paddling schools in the country. Millions of people have taken its whitewater rafting trips; guides also are available for fishing, biking, hiking and climbing.

**KITTY HAWK KITES KITEBOARDING SCHOOL, RODANTHE**
Hatteras Island on North Carolina’s Outer Banks is sometimes called the mecca of kiteboarding, and one look at the beach reveals why. Instructors, students and veteran kiteboarders flit all over the water, flipping and spinning under the power of wind.

**TRAVEL SMART**
Hover your phone’s camera for NC’s tips on exploring outdoors during the COVID-19 pandemic.

See a full list of Count On Me NC businesses—including Sabor Latin Street Grill in Charlotte—at countonmenc.org.

hand sanitizer, masks, disinfecting spray + wipes, a thermometer, latex gloves, and extra meds.
**LAND**

**LINVILLE GORGE, MARION**

The trails in this two-county area are as tough as they come—they form an exhausting maze of rocks, roots and endless elevation change. Views of the falls, river, gorge and mountains (especially from the summit of Hawksbill Mountain) make every step worth it. Hard-earned tip: Bring a map, extra water and sturdy shoes.

**HOWELL WOODS ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTER, FOUR OAKS**

Conservation lessons come naturally among 2,800 wooded acres packed with opportunities for hiking, camping, bird-watching and more. See live reptiles at the Learning Center.

**CEDAR CREEK STABLES, LAKE LURE**

The Overlook Trail leads horse riders over much of Cedar Creek’s 350 verdant acres. The highlight is a stop atop a mountain ridge that gives this trail its name.

**SKY**

**SKYWILD, GREENSBORO**

Traverse above the Greensboro Science Center’s zoo via rope bridges and other aerial challenges. With three levels of intensity and seven courses to choose from, you can customize the experience to match your comfort level.

**THE GORGE ZIPLINE, SALUDA**

Why let the birds have all the fun? The Gorge Zipline sends you flying on one of the fastest and steepest zipline canopy rides in the country. Eleven lines cover 1.25 miles and drop 1,100 feet. Three rappels plunge you into acres of lush old-growth forest.

**SKYDIVE COASTAL CAROLINAS, SOUTHPORT**

The weird thing about jumping from an airplane and falling toward Earth is that it doesn’t feel like falling. It feels like floating on a cushion of air. Moving 120 mph—the speed you reach as you hurtle toward the Southport coast—never seemed so mellow.

**SOUTHPORT WHERE THE RIVER MEETS THE SEA**

If you’re looking for a unique vacation that’s exhilarating, magical, and filled with beauty, history and southern charm, come visit our hidden treasure, historic Southport. Here, you’ll find more than 60 specialty shops, restaurants and museums nestled within a walkable downtown. And, to protect your safety, most of our merchants have taken the Southport Safe Pledge to ensure you can shop and dine with confidence.

CITYOFsouthport.com
910/457-7927
WHAT YOU CAN DO
Help create a healthier environment by following these guidelines.

WEAR A MASK
Cover your nose and mouth while in public.

SOCIAL DISTANCE
Stay at least 6 feet apart.

CONTAIN COVID
Stay home if you’re not feeling well.

WASH YOUR HANDS
Use soap or hand sanitizer.

CHECK IN
Call your destinations and ask about any additional restrictions.

BE MINDFUL
Be patient and kind to employees. This is all new for everyone.

WHAT BUSINESSES WILL DO
Count On Me NC businesses promise to take these extra steps to ensure a safe and healthy environment for all guests.

● Wear masks.
● Follow safe sanitation practices.
● Prior to a shift start, administer employee health checks.
● Implement physical distance guidelines inside and out.
● All entrances will have hand washing or hand sanitizer stations.
● Restaurants will clean and sanitize all tables, hard surfaces, menus and condiments between guests or provide single-use options.

MEET A
North Carolina Mask Maker
Marcus Hawley of Natty Neckware crafts double-layer masks in more than 50 diverse styles, including the Tarheel Too Mask ($15).

BURGAW
ALL ABOARD FOR FUN
This inner coastal railroad town chugs along with year-round attractions. Start your journey at the Historic Burgaw Train Depot, the oldest in North Carolina. Then explore the tree-lined streets of historic downtown. You can’t miss the striking Pender County Courthouse that towers above the oaks. Pick up a self-guided downtown walking tour brochure at the Municipal Building.

VISITPENDER.COM  910/259-1278

VISITNC.COM
TOPSAIL BEACH
BEACHES AND BITES YOU’LL REMEMBER

Visit Topsail Beach, the beach you remember for its laid-back vibe, stories of buried pirate treasure and miles of sandy shore. While you’re here, walk along the windswept dunes, drop a line from our pier, and skate the old-fashioned skate rink. Afterward, savor our local fare—from fresh seafood to comfort food staples to po’boys and more—at our locally owned restaurants.

VISITPENDER.COM
910/259-1278

LUMBERTON
IN THE MIDDLE OF IT ALL

Ideally located on I-95, Lumberton sits halfway between New York and Florida. For easy access to more than 20 hotels, take exits 17–22. Once here, you’ll find more than 100 restaurants, some with outdoor dining. In our historic downtown, discover shops, boutiques, museums and more as you stroll along the Riverwalk. Enjoy a beautiful day paddling the Lumber River on your next visit to Lumberton. Many of our businesses participate in the Count On Me NC campaign.

LUMBERTON-NC.COM
800/359-6971
WILMINGTON, NC AND ISLAND BEACHES
OPEN FOR UNWINDING

When you’re ready to get away, Wilmington and our island beaches are open and awaiting your arrival. Enjoy three island beaches, ocean sunrises, riverfront sunsets and Intracoastal Waterway views. Neighborhood discoveries include the scenic Wilmington Riverwalk lined with cafes in the River District. Explore our National Register Historic District on a self-guided tour or horse-drawn carriage ride through its 230-plus blocks. Whether you come for our beaches, state parks, premier gardens or outdoor restaurants, know that Count On Me NC businesses are working hard to ensure everyone’s safety. We’re just a short drive or flight into Wilmington International Airport, which is going above and beyond to create a safe, healthy environment.

WILMINGTONANDBEACHES.COM/COVID
877/945-6386
Known as the Land of Waterfalls, Brevard offers visitors an unparalleled chance to visit 250 spectacular waterfalls, mountain peaks, lush forests, and rivers and streams brimming with trout. Explore thousands of acres of the surrounding Pisgah National Forest, DuPont State Recreational Forest and Gorges State Park, where hundreds of miles of trails host hikers, cyclists and climbers eager to discover something new. Historic downtown makes the perfect base camp. Here, you’ll find delicious restaurants, charming shops and a wealth of local artists and craftspeople. No matter which path you choose, adventure is yours to find, always just around the bend.

EXPLOREBREVARD.COM
800/648-4523
LEXINGTON
ON THE WATER
Pick your on-the-water adventure: kayaking, paddleboarding and/or fishing on the Yadkin River, one of the state’s longest rivers. Kayakers can also drop in at the historic Wil-Cox Bridge access point. High Rock Lake begins at the confluence of the Yadkin and South Yadkin rivers. The lake not only boasts 365 miles of shoreline, it’s also the state’s second-largest lake. Drop a line or paddle away.
VISITLEXINGTONNC.COM
866/604-2389

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ROAD TRIP DELIGHTS
Plan a midweek getaway, long weekend or extended stay in a centrally located destination in North Carolina. Explore Jordan Lake, Fearrington Village, delightful B&B inns, challenging golf courses, a wildlife sanctuary and other scenic spots. Visit food and craft beverage sites for tours and tastings; indulge in eateries with varied options, including Southern eats and farm-to-table cuisine. Revel in endless opportunities for birding, cycling, hiking, sailing and shopping.
VISITPITTSBORO.COM
919/542-8296
**JOHNSTON COUNTY**

**GET OUTSIDE THE CITY**

Hike, bike and paddle JoCo’s hidden gems. Along the Neuse River, drop in your kayak or follow the 4-mile Clayton River Walk. More outdoor adventure options include Smithfield’s 3-mile Buffalo Creek Greenway, Clemmons Educational State Forest or Howell Woods Environmental Learning Center. For a different kind of trail, follow the Beer, Wine and Shine Trail known for outstanding BBQ and craft beverages.

JOHNSTONCOUNTYNC.ORG  
800/441-7829

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**ONSLOW COUNTY**

**WIDE-OPEN APPEAL**

On the central coast of North Carolina, Onslow County welcomes visitors with a wide range of things to see and do. Choose from on-the-water activities and beachfront resorts, historic waterfront towns, agritours, and remarkable military heritage. The Intracoastal Waterway attracts kayakers, paddleboarders, anglers and sightseers aboard specialty cruises. Or head to Bear Island at Hammocks Beach State Park for camping, kayaking and shelling.

ONLYINONSLOW.COM  
910/347-3141
LAKE LURE, CHIMNEY ROCK & THE BLUE RIDGE FOOTHILLS
THE GREAT OUTDOORS

From the incredible beauty and scenic views of Hickory Nut Gorge and the Blue Ridge Mountains to our quaint main streets, there are endless outdoor activities for all ages. Our idyllic location allows for a variety of activities like hiking, walking and biking paved greenways, cycling rural roads, and paddling a pristine river or beautiful mountain lake.

We are getting through this together. And we realize now more than ever that it’s the moments we share that matter most. Let’s get back out there. Let’s head for adventure. Let’s head for the hills. Let’s create more moments that matter.

Lake Lure, Chimney Rock & the Blue Ridge Foothills invite you to come back, and make your moments that matter, with us.

VISITNCSTROLLTOWNS.COM
800/849-5998
Welcome Centers

As you travel throughout the state, Welcome Centers are some of your best sources for visitor resources that include maps, brochures and more, along with on-site nationally certified travel counselors.

For the most up-to-date travel information and advisories surrounding COVID-19, head to VisitNC.com or call (800) VISIT NC.
We realize now more than ever, that it’s the moments that we share that matter most.

Come back, and make your moments that matter with us.

Plan Your Trip at VisitNCsmallTowns.com

Grab a brewski at the region’s largest beer incubator. Watch a peaceful man throw a 30-pound pot. Taste a Mac and Cheese that confirms your belief in a higher power. Or give hashtags the #weekendoff. Great stories start when you do something you’ve never done.

Great Stories Start Here. 1104 Falls Road, Rocky Mount, NC 27804 | 800.849.6825

VISIT US AT
www.elizabethtownwhitelake.com

Lake Lure, Chimney Rock & THE BLUE RIDGE FOOTHILLS

Come back, and make your moments that matter with us.
PIEDMONT
SPORTS CENTERS

If you can’t watch the state’s big-time sports events from the stands, experience these sights, sounds and tastes found near the track and court.

motor mecca

THE NASCAR HALL OF FAME COULD FIT APPROXIMATELY 1,900 RACE CARS WITHIN ITS WALLS.

Adrenaline Rush Hours

• CHARLOTTE

Auto racing’s family tree has deep roots in the woods of North Carolina, where bootleggers would soup up cars to outrun the law during Prohibition. Drivers started racing each other, and the rest is history. Explore that history at the NASCAR Hall of Fame in Charlotte, just a few laps from NASCAR’s flagship track, Charlotte Motor Speedway, in Concord. Feel the roar of engines and the crowd in your chest when you sit behind the wheel of an iRacing simulator or in front of the High Octane Theater’s 64-foot screen.

PIT STOPS

You’ll find no racetrack smell of burning rubber at The Smoke Pit in Concord. Instead, fill your lungs with smoky sweet aromas of barbecue, then fill your stomach with pork, brisket, ribs or chicken. The pulled pork sandwich comes with vinegary Lexington sauce—aka dip. Tunes and tune-ups harmonize at the Curb Motorsports and Music Museum in Kannapolis, a testament to Mike Curb’s mogul status in two industries. See country singer LeAnn Rimes’ first set of wheels (a 1995 black Dodge Viper) and famous NASCAR rides, like the No. 2 car Dale Earnhardt drove in his first Winston Cup Championship (before switching to his iconic No. 3).
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VisitSanfordNC.com/golf

ESCAPE to the lake

VisitLakeNorman.org @Visit Lake Norman

AVERAGE DRIVING DISTANCE
Charlotte: 20 min
Raleigh: 3.5 hrs
Asheville: 2 hrs
Wilmington: 3.5 hrs

VisitLakeNorman.org @Visit Lake Norman
Hoops Hysteria • Durham and Chapel Hill

College basketball’s most intense rivalry involves two schools separated by just 10 miles and two shades of blue—Duke University in Durham and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. UNC’s Tar Heels and Duke’s Blue Devils have been playing each other for more than 100 years, producing many memorable games and moments. The Carolina Basketball Museum in Chapel Hill celebrates Tar Heel hoops history with exhibits on famous UNC coaches and players, including Michael Jordan—see the jersey he wore during the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. In Durham, the Duke Basketball Museum honors the best Blue Devils ballers, including Christian Laettner, who led Duke to the 1992 NCAA championship, one of five in school history.

BONUS SHOTS

Top of the Hill Restaurant and Brewery in Chapel Hill offers locally sourced food, beers brewed in-house and a lively atmosphere. Take in views of hopping Franklin Street from the rooftop patio. In Durham, stroll through the natural wonderland of Sarah P. Duke Gardens, teeming with colorful blooms, scenic overlooks, and peaceful pools and ponds. Neighboring Raleigh’s North Carolina Sports Hall of Fame honors annual inductees across the sports spectrum with jerseys and personal memorabilia.
Explore our Palace, Gardens, and History Center. Engage in 250 years of North Carolina History.

North Carolina’s story continues at the NC History Center through its many exhibits and special programs.

Learn our story with a Palace tour. Explore our grounds and period gardens—perfect for a special event.

www.tryonpalace.org
252-639-3500

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Countless opportunities to escape and explore.

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JUST BEYOND THE PARKWAY

The Blue Ridge Parkway—nicknamed America’s Favorite Drive—celebrates the open road. Take your time to allow for delightful diversions.

With outlooks every few miles and a top speed limit of 45 mph, the Blue Ridge Parkway is the ultimate scenic route, winding 252 miles through western North Carolina. The parkway—which is part of the National Park System—does more than deliver gorgeous vistas. It also preserves landscapes beyond the blacktop, with biodiverse areas that are home to more than 1,400 plant species (including pink and purple rhododendron at Craggy Gardens). Get oriented at the Blue Ridge Parkway Visitor Center in Asheville, then venture beyond the main road for hiking trails, waterfalls (including the unique merging cascades of Soco Falls in Maggie Valley) and other high-altitude attractions.

6 STOPS TO EXPLORE

**Great Smoky Mountains Railroad**  
**BRYSON CITY**  
Step back a century to the golden age of rail travel. Cross over Fontana Lake via a 780-foot-long trestle bridge and wave at rafters along the Nantahala River.

**Looking Glass Falls**  
**BREVARD**  
Pull off US-276 just north of Brevard to experience the 60-foot-tall cascade. Follow a set of steps to the base, and the mist might kiss your face.

**Downtown Marion**  
**MARION**  
For a pint and a bite, head to hopping downtown. Refinery Taproom specializes in craft beer and creative bar food. Sip the trendy honey-based drink at Keeper’s Cut Meadery.

**The Original Mast General Store**  
**VALLE CRUCIS**  
What began in 1883 as a country store is now a local landmark. Shop for outdoor gear and mountain crafts, and fill a bag with assorted candy.

**The Blowing Rock**  
**BLOWING ROCK**  
Legends swirl around this craggy edifice, feet above sea level. A unique airflow creates a boomerang effect if you toss light objects such as leaves into the air.

**Crave**  
**SPARTA**  
Grab a booth and choose from a lineup of Italian-American fare. Count yourself extra lucky if the nightly feature is prime rib or shrimp and grits.
Height of Happiness, Year Round
WINTER MOUNTAIN MAGIC
As the weather gets cooler, so does the fun at these elevated destinations.

The mountains of western North Carolina take on an entirely fresh look and vibe as six ski resorts rev up for business around Thanksgiving. You’ll find a total of more than 100 slopes ranging from beginner to double-black diamond at Appalachian Ski Mtn., Beech Mountain Resort, Cataloochee Ski Area, Sapphire Valley Ski Area, Sugar Mountain Resort and Wolf Ridge Ski Resort. Of course, the fun doesn’t end on the ski slopes. Tubing fans should reserve tickets to Hawksnest Snow Tubing early; one of the largest tubing parks on the East Coast sells out. Boasting four tubing areas containing more than 30 lanes, the park in Seven Devils delivers incredible views. For more amazing snowscapes, hit hiking and snowshoe trails across the region. Along the Looking Glass Rock Trail near Brevard, switchbacks make for a lengthy trek (6.2 miles round trip), but the frosty mountain scenery is more than worth it. Snowshoes come in handy at Elk Knob State Park near Boone, where the powder can fall generously. Need a warm-up? Trek to Hot Springs Resort and Spa. Natural springs fuel outdoor jetted hot tubs that maintain temps of 100 degrees year-round.
**Christmas Shopping**

Inspired by a locally written children’s book, The Home of the Perfect Christmas Tree shop was launched in Spruce Pine in 2003. Later transforming into The Market on Oak, the year-round treasure trove continues to feature local artists. A holiday favorite: richly colored ornaments made from handblown glass.

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**TOTALLY TUBULAR**

Hawksnest may be the best-known tubing park in NC, but these spots also deliver a flurry of downhill thrills.

- **Black Bear Snow Tubing**
  - HENDERSONVILLE

- **Jonas Ridge Snow Tubing Park**
  - JONAS RIDGE

- **Moonshine Mountain Snow Tubing Park**
  - HENDERSONVILLE

- **Scaly Mountain Outdoor Center**
  - SCALY MOUNTAIN

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**RURAL, RELAXING, REJUVENATING**

Elizabeth City

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Connect with the Southport-Oak Island Area Chamber of Commerce

[www.GoNCBeach.com](http://www.GoNCBeach.com) • (800) 457-6964
EPIC COLLECTIONS
Join the collective amazement generated by items on display at these museums. Expect things patriotic, nostalgic, supernatural and glamorous.

**Brady C. Jefcoat Museum of Americana**
*MURFREESBORO*
In PBS terms, it’s American Experience meets Antiques Roadshow. A widower who acquired an old phonograph eventually amassed a collection of 14,000 records, jukeboxes, washing machines and more.

**MUST-SEES**
The bath section isn’t quite like the one at your local home improvement store. Think early flush toilets and vintage tubs.

**Belhaven Memorial Museum**
*BELHAVEN*
Be surprised, amused and possibly repelled by items in the collection of Eva Blount Way, an eccentric local who died in 1962. Along with antique toys, war artifacts and period fashions, see tumors and embryos preserved in jars.

**MUST-SEES**
Fleas dressed as a bride and groom (best appreciated with a magnifying glass).

**Ava Gardner Museum**
*SMITHFIELD*
A self-guided tour is like an unscripted biopic of the Hollywood legend born in Johnston County. See costumes and awards from Gardner’s film career, plus items from her off-screen life, which was full of plot twists.

**MUST-SEE**
Gardner’s grave in Sunset Memorial Park, about a mile from the museum. Follow the signs and concrete pathway.

**House of Flags**
*COLUMBUS*
Marvel at more than 300 United States, military, state and international banners, including all 27 full-size official U.S. flags from 1776 to 1960, plus the corresponding state and territory flags.

**MUST-SEES**
The Price of Liberty flags from the War of 1812, World Wars I and II, the wars on terrorism and more.

**Gourd Museum**
*ANGIER*
Shake your head in wonder at the dolls, birdhouses, musical instruments, light fixture shades and other made-from-gourd creations squashed into the town’s municipal building. It’s the collection of late locals Marvin and Mary Johnson.

**MUST-SEES**
Graceful penguins made from long-necked gourds, and an avant-gourd take on American Gothic.

**Cryptozoology and Paranormal Museum**
*LITTLETON*
Cue the X-Files theme music as you enter the spooky realm of Bigfoot, ghosts, UFOs and other phenomena. For your consideration: videos, casts of Bigfoot prints, displays of haunted dolls and maps of paranormal sightings around the region.

**MUST-SEES**
Visit local haunts on a spine-tingling evening ghost tour that departs from the museum.
There’s always something exciting to see at the NASCAR Hall of Fame. Shuffle down Glory Road, drive our realistic race simulator and relive the unbelievable racing moments that made you a fan in the first place. THIS IS OUR SPORT. THIS IS OUR HOUSE.

nascarhall.com
MATCH PLAY GETAWAYS

Pair up with your better half for a golf resort escape. If only one goes clubbing, the other can have fun too—a real sweetheart deal.

Pinehurst Resort

Hear the echoes of cheers for Hogan, Palmer, Nicklaus and Woods on this hallowed golf ground, home to iconic course No. 2, the Donald Ross masterpiece. Eight other layouts beckon, including restored No. 4, which regained original features like exposed sand areas, large cross bunkers and native wire grass. The Manor inn sports a fresh look, too, thanks to renovations that modernized guest rooms and the lobby while preserving the 1923 hotel’s charm. Nearby, a spa piles on the pampering with free poolside smoothies. Couples split on golfing versus lounging can reunite at Pinehurst Brewing Company, set in a historic steam plant. The brick exterior boasts corbels, arches and a rebuilt smokestack, while interior walls bear black scars from boilers. Vintage valves and pipes find new life as dining room fixtures, and the space is filled with aromas of oak- and hickory-smoked meats, Neapolitan-style pizza, and brewing beer.
IT’S AMAZING OUT HERE

If you’re on the hunt for outdoor fun, Carowinds is the place. Start at Carolina Harbor waterpark and slide down the new Boogie Board Racer. Then dry off on Fury 325, North America’s tallest, fastest, longest giga coaster. Or take it slow at Camp Snoopy, with fun for even the littlest parkgoers. At Carowinds there are thrills for all ages, all waiting for you.

Visit Carowinds.com for park calendar, safety information and tickets.

Charlotte, NC | Fort Mill, SC
The Omni Grove Park Inn
• ASHEVILLE

This century-old resort atop Sunset Mountain gushes with charm and romance.

For the golfer: Golf legends (Jones, Hogan and Nicklaus) and U.S. presidents have played the Grove Park Golf Course, designed by Donald Ross in 1926.

For the nongolfer: A cavernous subterranean spa boasts eucalyptus-infused steam rooms and therapeutic waterfalls.

Dine together: Edison, Craft Ales and Kitchen serves new riffs on Southern comfort and craft brews from around the region.

Brunswick Plantation Resort and Golf
• CALABASH

Come for the golf and stay at villas a short drive to the beach.

For the golfer: Play course designer by pairing two of the club’s three masterpiece nine-hole layouts in a custom 18.

For the nongolfer: Drive to The Swamp Park for ziplining or to the beach for lessons at the Carolina School of Surf.

Dine together: On-site Hickory Shaft Bistro features golf decor with a Scottish accent.

Old Edwards Inn and Spa
• HIGHLANDS

Get a taste of the English countryside in the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

For the golfer: The front nine meanders through a lush mountain valley, while the back nine reaches high ridges.

For the nongolfer: Get robed up and rubbed down in the spa, which includes a peaceful meditation area.

Dine together: Madison’s overlooks the wine garden and grows ingredients on-site.
GO ON BREAK

Day camps and surf lessons for the kids. Lush oceanfront gardens for the adults. Overflowing with vibrant variety, no two getaways here are alike. From celebrated fresh-to-table restaurants to carriage rides through historic downtown Wilmington, choose to stray off course.

Wilmingtonn.c. River District & Island Beaches

Carolina Beach · Kure Beach · Wrightsville Beach

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CAPTURING OUR FIRSTS

It’s hard to forget your first hike in the mountains, sip of Cheerwine or taste of North Carolina cuisine. These Instagram pics keep the moments alive.

Whether big or small, shared or solo, it’s our firsts that stay with us. North Carolina is a state of firsts, most notably for being “First in Flight,” thanks to Orville and Wilbur Wright’s first controlled and sustained aircraft flight at Kitty Hawk in 1903. But as the state soars through the decades, new firsts are always emerging, and they warmly invite you along for the ride.

Experience your first taste of sweet Muscadine wine, available at wineries across the state. Mine for treasures near some of the world’s richest gem and mineral deposits. Or simply take a walk through one of hundreds of parks, allowing new sights, smells and sounds to unfurl naturally. No matter which corner of the state is calling you, there’s a fresh experience that you’ll want to remember forever.
LIFTING SPIRITS Pose in front of the cheery butterfly mural at Kennedy & Co. Boutique in Mocksville. @brayboo22

DIG IN Pack a picnic and treat the family to one of the scenic parks and recreation areas around Hayesville. @johnstien

CLOUD JUMP Watch the Laurinburg-based U.S. Army Golden Knights Parachute Team descend from the sky. @armygoldenknights

LIVING HISTORY March back through time at the Historic Edenton State Historic Site. @colonial_collins

NEW DISCOVERIES Watch eyes light up during hands-on activities at Exploration Station in Lumberton. @kalehsampson

NATURE’S BREW Grab a growler at Roxboro’s Black Creek Brewery before exploring the region’s waterways. @blackcreekbrew

WOOFIN’ WORKOUT Bring the dogs for a breathtaking hike at Hanging Rock State Park in Danbury. @theaussiebrothers_

RELAXING RUSH Go with the flow while soaking up the view at Laurel Mill near Louisburg. @donnie_solomon_photo

WILD ENCOUNTERS Spot elephants and thousands of other creatures at the North Carolina Zoo in Asheboro. @laurenkgrenon
COMFORT AND SOUL

While Southern comfort cuisine and soul food use similar ingredients, it’s important to dig into the distinctions. Here, you can enjoy the best tastes of both.

SOUL FOOD

Many diners skip the history lesson when it comes to soul food, but it’s important to note that many of the dishes we enjoy today were developed on Southern plantations. Enslaved Africans worked to use undesirable cuts of meat and vegetable scraps, crafting recipes that kept their families fed. Thin meals were made hearty by stewing meats and greens, making gravies, and cooking with animal fats to provide enough sustenance to labor in the fields. Preparing meals was communal, with older generations orally sharing recipes to connect their children to the food of their ancestors. Their tenacity and will to survive meant the food was cooked with soul.

In North Carolina, multigenerational recipes are integral to soul food restaurants. At SueJay’s Soul Food, a food truck based in Albemarle, owners James and Susie Carpenter rely on family recipes to fill out their menu. Be sure to order up some of the buttermilk biscuits made using a recipe by James’ grandmother.

Hanan Shabazz ran her own restaurant in Asheville in the ’70s before becoming a mentor to Benne on Eagle chef de cuisine Ashleigh Shanti and executive chef John Fleer, who aspire to follow the ethos of Sankofa: looking back to move forward with reclaimed traditions. The restaurant’s innovative takes on soul food include the braised beef cheeks with sticky rice and kimchi. Wash it down with the refreshing Peach Smash cocktail.
Luxury, Serenity and Comfort Await You!

Twenty-five luxury cabins on a delightful 40-acre forested property with trout pond, stream, waterfall, gardens and fountains. All cabins are tastefully decorated, completely equipped and beautifully furnished. Amenities include seasonal woodburning fireplaces, covered decks, hot tubs and much more. One-, two- and three-bedroom cabins available, as well as pet friendly options.

(800) 235-2474 • www.ashevillecabins.com

Unplug and experience tranquility along the scenic Tar River. Paddle out from Town Common, stretch your legs on the Greenville Greenway, or simply enjoy the open spaces and beautiful views. NC's Emerald City is filled with countless hidden gems.

Find yours at VisitGreenvilleNC.com
Appalachian cuisine (bring on the butter) and low-country favorites (seafood all the way) join forces to create a palate-pleasing blend of dining experiences at these restaurants across the state.

Circa 1800 Restaurant & Bar
FAYETTEVILLE
The produce, honey, spirits and bakery items are locally sourced, and all 12 beers on tap are brewed in North Carolina. Brunch items like the seasonal French toast and waffles force afternoon naps.

Bout Thyme Kitchen
HERTFORD
Locals rave about this spread of Southern cuisine. Think fried fish, chicken and waffles, and smothered pork chops. Got a sweet tooth? Check the bakery for lemon squares.

Bay Sire Bistro
JACKSON
Savor stick-to-your-ribs appetizers like fried pickle fries at this horse racing-theme spot. Fresh seafood dishes, such as the Secretariat Shrimp, honor thoroughbred racers.

Georgia Deans Restaurant & Bar
WILLIAMSTON
Find comfort staples like pimento cheese alongside seafood tortellini and grilled pork chops. Try the house-made Cajun chips.
Pattan’s Downtown Grille
● ROCKINGHAM
In crowd-pleasing fashion, Pattan’s Pee Dee River Swamp Sauce mixes Eastern vinegar-based sauce and Western tomato-based sauce that’s perfect on the pit-roasted meats served here.

Mayberry Restaurant
● REIDSVILLE
Bean-based soups (Brunswick stew, bean and bacon, and chili) offer a hearty warm-up to refreshing ice cream flavors, such as banana pudding and peach.

GLOBAL FLAVORS
Comfort food is a universal language, as proven by this duo of deliciousness.

The Chef and the Frog
● WHITEVILLE
Chef Sokun Nuon-Slama and her husband, Guillaume Slama, pour their hearts—and their respective Cambodian and French heritage—into every dish. Local ingredients get boosts from Thai chilies, rice vinegar and ginger. Try Cambodian beef for dinner, and the tartelette du jour (tart of the day) for dessert.

Jamaica Cuisine Cafe
● SNOW HILL
Enjoy traditional Jamaican dishes like snapper escovitch, spicy curry goat, stewed oxtails and jerk chicken. Chef and owner Viviene Buckley-Ball travels to and from her home island to bring the spices and herbs of her childhood to this inner coastal town.

OUTDOOR ENTHUSIAST. SPEED DEMON. GIRAFFE #BFF.

Visit MOORESVILLE  www.visitmooresville.com  #VISITMOORESVILLE
Whether you crave an extravagant escape or affordable outings, find distinct diversions for every budget on your North Carolina getaway.

written by MADELAINE JEROUSEK-SMITH
Artists welcome you into their creative worlds in the **River Arts District** (aka the RAD), a collection of more than 200 studios, galleries and co-ops along the French Broad River. Meet artists like Stephen St. Claire, who paints in oil using a back-lit style that intensifies colors. Second Saturdays each month feature opportunities to meet the artists. (Find Stephen at **St. Claire Art.**) At the **Folk Art Center** along the Blue Ridge Parkway, explore two floors of Appalachian arts and crafts, including glassware, ceramics and basketry. Check out the upper level for a permanent gallery of more than 4,000 objects. Along the **Asheville Urban Trail,** a 1.7-mile self-guided walking tour, whimsical sculptures bring local lore to life. Step into the size-13 shoes of Asheville native Thomas Wolfe, and spot works by Art Deco architect Douglas Ellington.

**In this mountain city known for its creative culture, you’ll find public art, historic buildings, and a crafty food and drink scene nearly everywhere you go.**
LOW-COST For a decadent-but-price-conscious treat, enjoy the hand-rolled pastries at Hole Doughnuts, about two blocks from the French Broad River. Satisfy your sweet-and-savory tooth with the Toasted Almond Sesame Cinnamon doughnut, paired with a cup of locally roasted PennyCup coffee. Creative tacos rule at nationally acclaimed White Duck Taco Shop. If it’s on the menu (which changes often), get the Crispy Pork Belly, topped with green onion sauce and pickled watermelon rind. Each of the three Asheville locations features outdoor seating options. Most menu items cost less than $10 at Biscuit Head, where classic Southern cooking meets local ingredients. Favorites include the Mimosa Fried Chicken Biscuit with sweet potato butter, Sriracha slaw and a poached egg. Be sure to belly up to the house-made jam and butter bar.

GO BIG Explore the lavish life of George and Edith Vanderbilt during the Biltmore Exclusive Experience tour. A personal guide customizes the two-hour tour of America’s largest private home to your specific interests. See the family’s original collection of antique furnishings, fine art and tapestries; observe stunning views from rooftops and balconies; or peek into the servants’ quarters while listening to stories rich in details of family members’ lives. After the extensive tour of the home and 8,000-acre estate, enjoy a decadent dinner of small plates and cured meats at Cúrate, a hip spot in a former 1920s bus depot downtown. James Beard finalist Katie Button brings bold flavors to classic Spanish dishes like Pulpo a la Gallega—octopus with sea salt, olive oil, paprika and a potato puree. When accompanied with wines from the all-Spanish wine list and desserts like torched chocolate ganache with olive oil ice cream, it’s a splurge you won’t soon forget.
STOP AND STARE

STRIKING ART EXTENDS BEYOND THE GALLERIES OF THE NORTH CAROLINA MUSEUM OF ART. STROLL OR PICNIC AMONG THE MUSEUM PARK’S 30-PLUS INSTALLATIONS.
With three major research universities nearby, this region incorporating Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill is in a class by itself when it comes to educational and cultural experiences.

FREE In antebellum North Carolina, the Bennehan Cameron family owned one of the state’s largest plantations. Today, Historic Stagville (north of Durham) explores the daily lives of the more than 900 slaves who worked the land. See original buildings from the period, including four slave cabins, a barn and a family home. At the North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh, airy galleries display European masterpieces from the Renaissance to the 19th century, plus one of the nation’s largest collections of Jewish ceremonial art. Outside, step into interactive pieces in the 164-acre art park or wander the trails and gardens. In the center of Raleigh’s Capitol Square, check out the Greek Revival North Carolina State Capitol, one of the best-preserved examples of a public building in the style. It once housed all three government branches; today it’s part museum, part administrative offices. Take a free tour on Saturdays.

LOW-COST See the galaxy come to life, watch science demonstrations, and learn about cutting-edge local research at Morehead Planetarium and Science Center on The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill campus. Once a training center for U.S. astronauts preparing for missions like Apollo 13, the center recently underwent a $9.2 million overhaul that transformed the exhibit space. Kids can use, not lose, their marbles at the two-story Marbles Kids Museum in downtown Raleigh. A pint-size town fosters independence and imagination, while a workshop builds STEM skills (and even lets kids use real tools). To build healthy eating habits as well as minds, visit one of Alpaca Peruvian Charcoal Chicken’s Triangle locations for flavor-packed rotisserie chicken that’s marinated and cooked slowly over wood charcoal. Pair your pollo with Latin-inspired sides such as yuca fries or maduros (sweet plantains).

GO BIG Cuddling is off limits (as tempting as it is), but you can get up close and personal with the world’s largest, most diverse population of lemurs outside of Madagascar on a premium tour of the Duke Lemur Center in Durham. On the 90-minute Walking With Lemurs tour, watch the world’s most endangered (and, arguably, most adorable) mammals leap, climb and slumber in their natural habitat. The center houses more than 200 lemurs across 14 species in a forest sanctuary. Find sanctuary from standard dining at Chapel Hill’s Elements. Influenced by chef Michael Chuong’s South Vietnamese roots, the menu wedds Asian, European and American cooking styles in simple, elegant dishes. Order Chilean sea bass with aged miso and asparagus tips, and finish with a signature coconut cake. The wine menu wows with its global tour of 350-plus bottles.

TRAVEL Smart Always check ahead with individual businesses for the latest updates on hours and visitor guidelines.
Can’t choose between a city excursion or a splash in the ocean? Wilmington and its nearby beaches deliver both for a crowd-pleasing escape.

**FREE** Meander through marshland, forest and beaches at Fort Fisher State Recreation Area near Kure Beach. The park, which hugs the Atlantic Ocean and Cape Fear River, offers 6 miles of shoreline, popular with both sun-seekers and wildlife, including loggerhead sea turtles and piping plovers. See carnivorous plants on a guided hike along Carolina Beach State Park’s Flytrap Trail, starring the native Venus flytrap. Look up for other colorful characters, including brown-headed nuthatches and summer tanagers. In Wrightsville Beach, step into the past at the Wrightsville Beach Museum of History, housed in a turn-of-the-century cottage. For urban vibes, stroll the Wilmington Riverwalk. The 2-mile path along the Cape Fear River gets you within a stone’s throw of more than 200 shops, restaurants and attractions.
With its panoramic ocean views and fresh-caught seafood specialties, Oceanic in Wrightsville Beach sets the scene for a special meal. Go for the Carolina Crab Cake and a Tropical Lightning IPA (from local Wilmington Brewing Company) while you watch the sun set over Crystal Pier. If your idea of manna from heaven involves divine American cuisine and cleverly named dishes, reserve a table at Manna in downtown Wilmington. The restaurant’s frequently changing menu may include the Star-Crossed Livers (chicken liver mousse with pickles and preserves) or Hook, Line and Sinker (trout and bacon with squash, tomato and fingerlings). You’ll want comfortable walking shoes and an empty stomach for a Downtown Wilmington Tasting Tour, which weaves together history, architecture and the local food scene. You might meet a James Beard-nominated chef, sample fried green tomatoes at a historic wharf or sip bourbon on an open-air downtown patio.

Dubbed Wilmywood and Hollywood East by some locals, Wilmington stars in more than 500 films and TV shows. (Credits include Dawson’s Creek, Weekend at Bernie’s and Iron Man 3.) Also A-list in Wilmington: ghosts. The 90-minute Ghost Walk of Old Wilmington covers haunted homes and burial grounds. Continue your journey through the past via horse-drawn carriage or trolley led by Springbrook Farms Carriage Tours. Costumed drivers narrate the 30-minute tours with stories of the city’s history. Feel-good fact: Carriages are pulled by rescued Percheron draft horses. In Kure Beach, watch sharks, rays and sea turtles swim and glide at the North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher. Adorable Asian small-clawed otters rule the Otters on the Edge exhibit. For a carefree summer afternoon, savor treats like handmade fudge on ocean-facing swings along the Carolina Beach Boardwalk.
In the countryside, it’s easier to appreciate the simpler things: the scent of hay, the symphony of animals, a shimmer of morning dew. In North Carolina, pastoral scenes and farm-fresh flavors are only a short drive away.

writers: LEIGH ANN HENION AND JESS HOFFERT
Under owners David Couch and Stephanie Quayle Couch’s guidance, this cattle farm hosts outdoor concerts, yoga classes and a variety of other events in modern, farmhouse-style structures. At The Market, purchase beef and seasonal produce (berries, root veggies and more), or buy a chilled bottle of wine and unwind on the property.
Rural Retreats

Whether your idea of a good time is front-porch rocking or cowboy-boot stomping, these off-the-beaten-path getaways will have you yearning to explore North Carolina’s backroads.
ears ago, when Celebrity Dairy proprietors Fleming and Brit Pfann weren’t home to welcome visitors, one of their goats would dramatically jump from her pen as an unofficial greeter.

The goat’s name? Kathryn Hepburn (not to be confused with the movie star who spelled her name “Katharine”). Often, guests to the Siler City farm were concerned that the goat had escaped. But just when they began to worry if they should try to trap her, the doe would reliably hop back into her enclosure, where she would continue to entertain guests with spirited performances. “Goats like to play with people because it amuses them,” Fleming says, “and that amuses the people.”

When Fleming and Brit started keeping goats in the 1980s, they just wanted a personal milk source, but their interests quickly evolved to include goat cheese and gelato. Now they’re best known for hosting monthly farm dinners, barn tours and overnight stays at the on-site inn. It’s composed of two buildings, including a settler’s cabin from the 1800s, and one of the rooms is named after Kathryn. Even with a current tribe of more than 100 animals, she remains Fleming’s all-time favorite. “Kathryn was always curious and she loved connecting. That’s what a lot of people find here—a sense of connection.”

Guests who spend the night often request permission to help with farm chores, especially after they learn that even the dairy’s most demure goats have been known to kiss the hands that feed them. This is one farm that’s less focused on milk than it is on the animals that produce it. “We try to give people a chance to experience what we live every day,” Fleming says. “Once you’ve spent time on a farm, it’s really hard to leave.”

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Springfield Bed and Breakfast

**HERTFORD**

This charming B&B has been owned by the same family for more than 100 years. Spend an afternoon drinking sweet tea on the porch or stroll through pecan trees on the grounds before returning to a room lined with quilts. You might forget which century you’re living in, and that’s more than OK.

Fickle Creek Farm

**EFLAND**

The chickens, pigs and sheep that make their home on this 215-acre farm are all free-range, and you’re invited to join them in their rambles across pesticide-free pastures. Book an overnight stay or enjoy a tour. Those who choose to sleep on-site are invited to gather eggs for breakfast.

Doodad Farm

**GREENSBORO**

Found objects and colorful folk art fill the grounds of this 60-acre retreat, which has a Southern sort of bohemian vibe. During sunset shows at the farm’s historic tobacco barn—which has been renovated with a touch of whimsy—visitors can often hear the songs of crickets harmonizing with musicians. It’s 15 minutes from downtown Greensboro, but worlds away.
Fresh from the Farm

With dining areas ranging from outdoor picnic tables to white-tablecloth settings, these spots offer a variety of ways to engage with grower-centric foodways.

Mike’s Farm
BEULAVILLE
Fried chicken and fixings are served family-style, and they often pair with stage acts performing oldies and beach music. If you prefer the sound of songbirds to electric guitars, visit Mike’s fields to pick strawberries or, in fall, walk among pumpkins. Once you’ve secured the perfect one, you can kick back and enjoy a hayride.

The Orchard
CASHIERS
The Orchard takes the rugged beauty of western North Carolina and transforms it into refined fare. Its dining room with tables made from reclaimed lumber echoes the surrounding wilderness, and the ingredients are salt of the earth. Experience a taste of Appalachia with dishes such as wild mushroom-stuffed ravioli or venison filets topped with caramelized apples.

Reverence Farms
GRAHAM
The proprietors of Reverence Farms spend most of their time running the 400-acre property, but they’re happy to share the space with anyone wanting to get fresh air and hike past the farm’s cows, pigs and chickens. You can order their organically fed heritage pork and grass-fed beef and lamb online. For a sweet bonus, enjoy farm-fresh ice cream while exploring the grounds.

FIRST TASTES
Watch New York City couple Zac and Tomo explore rural NC. visitnc.com/story/xHsW/first-time-tasting-moonshine
**Southern Smoke BBQ**

**GARLAND**

Fair warning: The meaty sandwiches here get messy. But given their outstanding quality, you may not mind risking a shirt stain. Stop by for a fried chicken sandwich or a smoked burger loaded with pickles. While you’re here, try some sides. Dirty Rice and Funeral Grits (a cheesy casserole) occasionally grace the ever-evolving menu.

**Heirloom**

**CHARLOTTE**

Heirloom travels beyond farms to offer forest-to-fork experiences. It isn’t uncommon to find dishes on their menu that use acorns, mushrooms, wild onions and other locally foraged ingredients. Their local commitment means that the menu is always changing, and it’s generally offered as a six-course tasting lineup inspired by what’s seasonally available.

**Newgrass Brewing Company**

**SHELBY**

The first microbrewery in Cleveland County takes its name from the term for modern bluegrass. It’s an ode to the musical history of Shelby, which is home to the Earl Scruggs Center and Don Gibson Theatre. The brewery regularly hosts regional acts, who give Newgrass Brewing patrons an introduction to the next generation of Carolina musicians.

**Guadalupe Cafe**

**SYLVA**

This intimate eatery prides itself on being deliciously quirky. In what was once a downtown drugstore and soda shop, local ingredients find global flair in dishes that connect Carolina to the Caribbean. Here, shrimp and grits are served alongside huevos rancheros. The cafe also acts as a gallery for local artwork that’s as diverse and colorful as the food.

**Under the Oak Restaurant**

**SMITHFIELD**

Occasional pop-up suppers take place beneath the namesake tree’s substantial branches. Steps away, a garden supplies the restaurant with its vegetables. Regardless of whether you visit the brick-and-mortar restaurant and grocery or attend a field dinner 20 minutes away, savor delicious small plates, desserts and house-made charcuterie.
Cultured Stops

Sample the crème de la crème of North Carolina’s dairy farms while exploring cheese caves and rolling farmland.

Cheese-maker Crosby Jack helms the shelves of aging wheels at Looking Glass Creamery in Columbus.

Thank these cuties for the soft goat cheeses made at Round Mountain Creamery in Black Mountain.
When Jen and Andy Perkins dreamed of growing their small cheese-making operation in Fairview, taking over an entire 226-acre dairy farm in the Blue Ridge Mountains wasn’t part of the original plan. But thanks to an offer from the family-owned Harmon Dairy—and the support of friends and relatives—the latest iteration of **Looking Glass Creamery** was born in 2017.

Visitors wander the dirt roads of the Columbus farm, peeking into underground cellars to see aging wheels of cheese before heading to the Farm Store for tastes of creamy Green River Blue and Chocolate Lab, which is washed in stout beer and rubbed with cacao nibs. Jen and Andy’s original white clapboard Cheese Shop in Fairview crafts elegant charcuterie boards paired with wine and beer. At both locations, you can take home a jar of their Carmoolita dulce de leche sauce, cooked over flames in a copper kettle.

Also in Fairview, **Blue Ridge Mountain Creamery** offers tours of its cheese-aging cave. Sample fresh varieties of gouda in a tasting room and buy fresh mozzarella, raclette or a miniature wheel of Common Bears (a tasty riff on Camembert) at area farmers markets, including **Asheville City Market**.

In nearby Black Mountain, **Round Mountain Creamery** specializes in cheese produced by the friendly Alpine and tiny-eared LaMancha goats you can meet on a tour. Swing by the farm store to purchase Cran-Nut Zest—it makes for an excellent bagel spread—along with eight additional soft cheeses. **Trout Lily Market** in Fairview and other Asheville-area shops carry their products too.

Named for the waterway that flows near this southwestern gem, **Yellow Branch Pottery and Cheese** delivers a double batch of handcrafted items near Fontana Dam. Jersey cows give the Yellow Branch Farmstead Cheese its buttery flavor, while Karen Mickler forms functional stoneware on her potter’s wheel. Stop for a short visit or spend a couple of nights in a renovated farmhouse on the property.

In the Piedmont region, **Buffalo Creek Farm and Creamery** whips up fresh chèvre, feta, raw-milk cheese and queso fresco in Germanton. Milk from the farm’s Nubian dairy goats also makes its way into the soaps for sale at the farm store.

**Pick Your Pleasure**

With more than 100 orchards and pumpkin patches across NC, a taste of fall’s bounty is always within reach.

**Orchards**

An apple a day? Try thousands—and 21 varieties—picked during the fall season at **Stepp’s Hillcrest Orchard** in Hendersonville. Have a literal blast with the apple cannon on weekends. Since 1994, **Apple Hill Orchard and Cider Mill** in Morganton has cranked out gallon after gallon of fall’s sweet nectar, available cold, hot and spiced, or in slushie form. Panoramic Blue Ridge Mountain views accompany apple pickers in **The Historic Orchard at Altapass**. Before leaving the Spruce Pine oasis, visit the store to watch monarch butterflies emerge in terrariums. In Taylorsville, five generations have kept **Sugarloaf Orchards** ripe with apples, peaches, Asian pears and nectarines.

**Pumpkins and More**

Labor Day weekend unofficially kicks off pumpkin-picking season in North Carolina. At **Darnell Farms** in Bryson City, the pumpkin party comes with hayrides, a corn maze and more. Stop by Mooresville’s **Carrigan Farms** during the day to select your gourd, then come back at night for the Scarrigan Farms haunted trail (select evenings in October). **Gross Farms** in Sanford keeps everything G-rated with giant slides, pedal karts and a corn maze. Known for its summer sunflowers, **Odom Farming Company** in Goldsboro evolves into an autumn paradise. Partake in dueling Punkin’ Chunkin’, wagon rides, two corn mazes and a unique cotton maze.
If insanity really is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results, then innovation is the opposite: trying something new for a fresh outcome. That’s the thread binding these six diverse attractions. They’re venerable old venues reaching new generations by reinventing themselves a little—or a lot.
An old farm can learn new tricks. Ten Acre, one of a few Century Farms remaining in the NC mountains, decided to add a sunflower maze. It’s a fun and flowery way for visitors to test their inner GPS—like getting lost in a van Gogh painting. Visit in July to enjoy the smile-inducing spectacle.
Sanford

Walls have divided some cities, but here they unite, thanks to artists turning buildings into canvases. Stroll through downtown and allow the visual surprises to unfold. Chris Dalton painted these giant wings to let passersby easily morph into soaring social (media) butterflies.
Smokes pass the torch to suds at this brewery in the converted Bailey Power Plant, which once served tobacco warehouses. The plant’s old coal pit is now a huge outdoor concert space next to the brewery’s private patio. A flight of stout concrete supports adds gritty industrial character.
This hallowed ground keeps expanding to honor those who serve our country, including ones who have given the ultimate sacrifice in places like Vietnam, Beirut and the World Trade Center. A memorial dedicated in 2016 honors the Montford Point Marines, the Corps’ first Black recruits. Another recent addition, the Lejeune Memorial Gardens Greenway and Trail, connects the gardens with both downtown Jacksonville and Camp Lejeune.
A vintage Lucky Strike water tower and smokestack were rolled into an ever-growing development that breathes fresh air into the old American Tobacco Company headquarters. Offices, apartments, shops and restaurants now fill historic redbrick buildings once owned by the world’s biggest cigarette maker.
Hickory

Call it a town squared. Hickory’s historic downtown district has grown exponentially more exciting, thanks to a series of recent upgrades: a storefront promenade, shaded seating areas and City Walk, a 1.7-mile path linking downtown to local neighborhoods.
Lake Norman, Mooresville
Why choose between the wild and the serene? In these cities, you can enjoy the extremes of the vacation spectrum.

writer JESS HOFFERT
Charlotte

In North Carolina’s largest city, skyscrapers also come in the form of towering roller coasters and rock-climbing walls. Regain your footing at a color-splashed cafe and along an artsy rail-trail.

THRILL

Swap the freeway for waterways at the U.S. National Whitewater Center, home to the world’s largest human-made whitewater river. Families tackle Class II–III rapids, while pros paddle the Class IV Competition Channel. Prefer to stay dry? Zoom across ziplines, scale a rock wall, navigate a ropes course, and pedal a serpentine mountain biking trail. Named after a venomous snake, the Copperhead Strike roller coaster at Carowinds launches riders twice through a tightly wound course of loops and overbanked turns. Racing legend Dale Earnhardt inspired the Intimidator coaster, which reaches speeds of 80 mph and a peak height of 232 feet. Not to be outdone, Fury 325 plummets 325 feet, hitting a top speed of 95 mph on its 1¼-mile journey. Younger kiddos enjoy pint-size thrills in the park’s Camp Snoopy area, with rides like the Flying Ace Balloon Race.

CHILL

Elegantly painted across a colorful exposed-brick wall at Flower Child, the phrase “happiness around every corner” sums up the cheery vibes at this health-focused restaurant in Charlotte’s hip South End. You’ll find more positive vibes along the Charlotte Rail Trail linking the South End with Uptown. Art installations decorate the route that passes some of the city’s buzziest boutique shops and cafes. For even more elevated dining (and drinks), look up to Charlotte’s ever-growing array of rooftops. Trendy spots include the tree house-esque Charlotte Beer Garden (with more than 400 brews on tap), Lincoln Street Kitchen and Cocktails (try the Old-Fashioned with house-infused vanilla and orange bourbon), and Nuvolé Rooftop TwentyTwo (serving seafood and Insta-perfect skyline views).
Go from skimming across Lake Norman to the sensation of floating on a cloud at **Ahlara International Day Spa and Boutique**. A dry float bed surrounds you with a water-filled membrane, allowing effortless relaxation as you feel warmth and allow tension to melt away. Ahlara founder Lynne Wiggins has taken extra care to create relaxing vibes in treatment rooms, each inspired by a country she’s visited. Other spa experiences include organic body scrubs, hot stone massages and bamboo firming facials. Water views provide the backdrop to relaxed-casual dining at **Eddie’s on Lake Norman**. Try the linguine with clam sauce, or take the turf route with the Eddie Burger, made with grass-fed beef and smoked brisket. Signature drinks like the Millionaire Margarita pair best with patio seating during sunset.

Home to professional racing teams and auto museums, there’s a reason Mooresville is often referred to as Race City USA. It should come as no surprise, then, that it’s also home to one of the world’s premier go-karting facilities: **GoPro Motorplex**. Speed-seekers with a valid driver’s license can hit the 11-turn course modeled after the historic Kartdromo Parma circuit in Italy. Capture the adrenaline rush with your GoPro camera (rentals available) as you reach 55 mph. Go from wheels to waves at **Ride LKN Wake and Surf School**, where coaches help you master wakeboarding and wakesurfing on the largest human-made lake in NC. Founder Martin Cagle and crew have taught hundreds of kids and adults. Book private and group lessons, or send the kids to a summer camp.

**THRILL**

**CHILL**

Ride the waves and race like you’re a NASCAR driver before coasting at a spa and lakeside restaurant 30 miles north of Charlotte.

**make it a weekend**

Combine Mooresville and Charlotte for one ultimate thrill and chill vacation!
The wooden barn-like interior of Artisanal provides a not-so-subtle hint that the meal you’re about to enjoy is served fresh from the farm. But nothing can prepare you for the magic of dishes like smoked duck breast with morel mushrooms, snap peas, and a beet and pear coulis. Executive chef Bill Greene has partnered with Amy Fielder of nearby Springhouse Farm to showcase the finest ingredients of Appalachia in a menu that evolves with the growing seasons. Paul Alcazar tapped into his family’s Cuban heritage to create Bodega’s Kitchen and Wine Bar with Jocelyn Yost. Enjoy tapas-style fare, including conch fritters, jerk wings and empanadas, or up your Sunday brunch game by ordering the guava and cream cheese French toast.

Banner Elk’s two nearby ski resorts boast serious superlatives. (Sugar Mountain is NC’s largest, while Beech Mountain is the highest.) The 21 trails at Sugar Mountain range from beginner to expert, plus you’ll find snowboarding, ice-skating and snowshoeing during the winter. In summer, take scenic lift rides, hike or go mountain biking. Beech Mountain becomes a mountain biking mecca in the summer, while its winter lineup includes a state-of-the-art tubing park with chutes up to 700 feet long. The Wilderness Run Alpine Coaster is Banner Elk’s newest year-round thrill. Control your own brakes as you reach nearly 30 mph on the 2,160-foot track that dodges boulders and trees. Warning: You may become addicted after your first run; thankfully, a bundle of three rides comes at a discount.
With its growing collection of indie shops and restaurants, downtown Fayetteville is made for strolling. Gobble down lunch and dinner at The Fried Turkey Sandwich Shop, or sip a craft brew with your meal at Gaston Brewing Company, one of many veteran-owned establishments in the area. Fun fact: The Lafayette Kolsch honors French military officer the Marquis de Lafayette, Fayetteville’s namesake. Sniffs are always free at Hummingbird Candle Company, known for its BYOB candle-making experiences. If you’re looking for something sassy, try White Trash and Colorful Accessories. In addition to decor and accessories with humorous sayings, the shop also sells handmade jewelry. Just west of downtown, LeClair’s General Store is equal parts vintage store and local gathering place. Order a cup of coffee as you peruse the extensive collection of antiques, NC apparel, and local foods and beverages that make the perfect take-home souvenirs.

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IN NORTH CAROLINA, IT’S TIME TO

Raise a Glass!

TASTE YOUR WAY THROUGH THE STATE’S WORLD-CLASS WINES, SPIRITS AND BEERS.

Point Lookout Vineyards, Hendersonville
Family recipes, traditional techniques and unique growing conditions produce one-of-a-kind flavors. Clear your palate (and calendar) for a tour of vineyards, distilleries and breweries. Each offers a special setting and story.

写手 GARY THOMPSON
NC TRAVEL GUIDE

North Carolina’s passion for wine dates to the 1580s, when explorers found what is reputed to be America’s first grapevine on Roanoke Island. Experience the ongoing love affair at vineyards and tasting rooms.

WINERIES

ITALIAN ESCAPE
PICCIONE VINEYARDS AND RAFFALDINI VINEYARDS

The Piccione family hails from Marsala, Sicily, home of sweet and dry wines. They make wine from on-site grown grapes such as Sangiovese and Montepulciano, reds hard to find outside of Italy. Less than 2 miles away, the Raffaldini family maintains roots in an Italian farm in Mantua (near where the poet Virgil once lived). The family follows Virgil’s philosophy of working with the land, not against it, to produce wines like Sagrantino, a full-bodied red that’s inky purple.

LUXE OVERNIGHT
OVERMOUNTAIN VINEYARDS

Get your own private tasting room—and views of the vineyards—when you stay in a luxury villa at this family-run winery. Frank Lilly and daughter Sofia create French-style wines from 17 acres of estate-grown fruit. Try their Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Verdot, Chardonnay and others. Each two-bedroom villa features a private patio and a full kitchen—including a wine fridge.
Too bad this winery can’t bottle the views from Point Lookout Mountain. Fortunately, it does bottle the flavors of grapes grown in the morning sun and cool breezes.

Take in the views and vintages from an open-air tasting room. The popular Riesling comes dry or slightly sweet.

Folks turned off by sweet wines will think this cider house rules. A natural fermentation approach (no additives) turns farm-grown blueberries, hand-picked heritage apples and other locally sourced fruit into crisp ciders and wines that contain little or no sugar. One shining example: Basq in the Glory, inspired by traditional Basque ciders.

Sweet wines made from native Muscadine grapes and bucolic beauty create a romantic setting in Elizabethtown. The name honors the late Lucille and Miller Taylor, whose family is known for inventing ag equipment including a grape harvester. Try Muscadine wines like Old Cumberland (a semidry white) or Lucille’s Choice (an alcohol-free option).

A shipshape tasting room with mountain views awaits in the Blue Ridge foothills. Owners Deane and Becky Muhlenberg named their winery for the color of U.S. Navy ships, a salute to Deane’s long naval career. The 9-acre vineyard produces grapes like Chambourcin, with black cherry and black pepper notes.
Raise a Glass to SPIRITED TALES

DISTILLERIES

In 1908, more than a decade before Prohibition, voters said “last call” in North Carolina, making it the South’s first dry state—though moonshine was already big business. You could buy legal booze again in 1937, but making it stayed illegal until 1979. The state’s first modern-era distillery opened in 2005. Today, there are more than 80, including Manteo’s Outer Banks Distilling, home to a flagship Kill Devil line of rums and a Shipwreck Series that honors vessels lost in the “Graveyard of the Atlantic.” You’ll find similar local ties and legends in the names and flavors of these distilled delights across North Carolina.

WELDON MILLS DISTILLERY

The pirate-free Roanoke River provides a picturesque setting for Weldon Mills Distillery. The historic former cornmill crafts spirits with a cause, like Soldier’s Cut bourbon (benefiting families of fallen soldiers) and Rockfish whiskey (protecting the river’s iconic striped bass). The bar’s exposed brick walls ooze character, and live music fills the patio most weekends.
CALL FAMILY DISTILLERS
Wilmington

Descendants of legendary moonshiner Willie Clay Call—aka The Uncatchable—still run this operation that has roots back to 1868. Call’s name and mug grace bottles of Sour Mash Moonshine in flavors like Apple Pie and Cherry. Book a tour to see The Bull, a massive still.

BROADSLAB DISTILLERY
Benson

The distillery operates (and gets its name) from an old moonshining mecca called The Broadslab. Offerings include Legacy Shine, a white corn whiskey, Carolina Coast rum (silver or spiced), and Legacy Appleshine, infused with apple juice. A tour earns you a free tasting and shot glass.

MYSTIC FARM AND DISTILLERY
Durham

This field-to-bottle distillery grows corn and winter wheat for Heart of Mystic bourbon, Mystic 57 Navy Strength Gin and other spirits. Relax on the covered porch, sip at a century-old bar, or take a walking tour of the farm.

PHOTOGRAPHS: WELDON RYAN DONNELL, SPIRITS CARSON DOWNING
BREWERS

Get in sync with barley culture at these breweries, all new-ish kids on the block. Come for the beer, then stay for food, games and music.

LACONIA ALE WORKS

Named for an ancient Greek region, this small but feisty brewery trades a Spartan warrior’s sword and shield for a sturdy mash paddle and shiny fermentation tanks. Expect light lagers, hoppy pales, and dark porters, plus pop-up food vendors, live weekend music and games.

MUST-TRY
Sparta Pale Ale

ROCKY MOUNT MILLS

Opened along the Tar River more than 200 years ago, Rocky Mount Mills was one of the state’s oldest cotton mills. Today, the mixed-use development is home to the region’s only brewery incubator. Mythic Brewing and HopFly Brewing Company are just two of the six breweries hopping on the 82-acre campus of restaurants and residential buildings. At Mythic, mythological creatures like Bigfoot star in the names of the rotating IPAs, sours, lagers and stouts. At HopFly, brewmaster Cameron Schulz salutes outdoor adventurers with innovative brews. After a drink or two, explore the historic buildings of Rocky Mount Mills—dating from before the Civil War to the mid-20th century.

MUST-TRIES
The Abominable Joe Man mocha stout at Mythic; Beach Beer Session IPA at HopFly
GOOSE AND THE MONKEY BREWHOUSE

An old song (“three, six, nine, the goose drank wine”) inspired the name of this dog-friendly place in the Depot District, a mixed-use area with an amphitheater, restaurants, shops and more. Enjoy GMBH’s growing lineup of craft beers, plus food truck visits, live music and weekly trivia night.

MUST-TRY
The Wandering Pig

HUGGER MUGGER BREWING COMPANY

In this town with Masonic influences and imagery, try deciphering symbols on the beer hall’s tapestries while sampling 18 house-made brews. Outside, food trucks set up in the beer garden. By the way, Shakespeare used “hugger-mugger” to mean secrecy (check out Hamlet, Act 4, Scene 5).

MUST-TRY
Wicked Pitch of the Yeast

JOLLY ROGER BREWERY

Drink like a pirate at this spot anchored near Lake Norman and captained by a military veteran. German brewing traditions and a special blend of American hops produce premium batch ales with intoxicatingly strong aromas and minimal bitterness.

MUST-TRY
IPAtch Double IPA

LOCAL OAK BREWING CO., Winterville

Relax in a cozy taproom or huge outdoor beer garden that’s shaded by the nano brewery’s eponymous 150-year-old tree in Winterville. The owners are always experimenting with new variations, so you can try something different every time you visit.

MUST-TRY
Cerveza, a Mexican-style lager
Walk the path that brothers Wilbur and Orville Wright took for their first manned flights in 1903; the longest lasted about a minute and reached 852 feet. The visitors center features a life-size replica of the 1903 Wright Flyer. For a bird’s-eye view of the grassy air strip, hike to the Wright Brothers Monument at the top of Big Kill Devil Hill.

The African Moravian Log Church stands among dozens of other historic structures at Old Salem Museums & Gardens in Winston-Salem. Tour the rebuilt Georgian-style Governor’s Palace at New Bern’s Tryon Palace. Learn about the power of nonviolent protest at the International Civil Rights Center & Museum in Greensboro. Sacred dances and demonstrations bring Cherokee’s Oconaluftee Indian Village to life.

Always check ahead with individual businesses for the latest updates on hours and visitor guidelines.
TRYON PALACE
● NEW BERN
Costumed interpreters roam the 18th-century-inspired lawns and gardens surrounding North Carolina’s first permanent State Capitol. While the original structure burned down in 1798, a rebuilt palace hosts visitors who can imagine entertaining George Washington on his 1791 trip. Next door, the North Carolina History Center shares the tales of early settlers and modern times with interactive displays.

REED GOLD MINE
● MIDLAND
Before the wild rush out west, North Carolina led the nation in gold production until 1848. The first documented gold discovery occurred right here in 1799, thanks to 12-year-old Conrad Reed. Take a guided tour through restored underground tunnels, and try your hand (and your luck) at seasonal gold panning.

OCNALUFTEE INDIAN VILLAGE
● CHEROKEE
The ancestral home of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians provides an inside look at their 18th-century lives. Artisans demonstrate basket weaving, woodcarving and more as Cherokee delegates lead visitors through this living-history village with dwellings and sacred ritual sites.

INTERNATIONAL CIVIL RIGHTS CENTER & MUSEUM
● GREENSBORO
In the former F.W. Woolworth Co. building, revisit the struggle of Black people to obtain equal rights at a counter that became a true turning point in the journey to end segregation. Film reenactments depict discussions by the Greensboro Four before their sit-in and the six-month effort that followed to integrate the lunch counter in 1960.

OLD SALEM MUSEUMS & GARDENS
● WINSTON-SALEM
Get a taste of early Moravian life at Winkler Bakery—one of the country’s oldest operating bakeries—that’s made fresh loaves since 1807. It’s one of approximately 100 well-preserved structures here. More recently, the site has shed light on enslaved people who lived in Salem with its Hidden Town Project. Visit a room of reflection above the Tavern Museum’s kitchen.

The state of North Carolina (and in some cases, the world) has been forever changed because of these historically rich destinations. They remain open today for memorable tours and important lessons.

writer JESS HOFFERT
INTERSTATE 95 came along well after colonists called for freedom from British rule in Halifax County, but the freeway makes it easy to reach the natural and historical wonders of this inner coastal region. Here are five stops that honor great American pastimes and pleasures.

1. ROANOKE CANAL MUSEUM AND TRAIL
   ROANOKE RAPIDS
   See some of the nation’s best preserved 19th-century canal construction along this 7½-mile trail. Once a source of trade and hydroelectric power, the canal draws hikers and bikers, along with flocks of birds. Get an interactive overview at the museum, then head outside to see an aqueduct spanning 35 feet.

2. RALPH’S BARBECUE
   WELDON
   Founder Ralph Woodruff’s granddaughter and great-grandson stand on the (pork) shoulders of the local barbecue icon, who launched his restaurant in Roanoke Rapids 80 years ago. Come for the chopped pork sandwiches blended with vinegar-based sauce.

3. RIVERSIDE MILL
   WELDON
   A Civil War cemetery stands near this former cotton mill that now holds an antique mall, outlet shops and an artisan gallery. After shopping, savor scenic Roanoke River overlooks.

4. SYLVAN HEIGHTS BIRD PARK
   SCOTLAND NECK
   Self-guided or guided tours provide an up-close experience with more than 2,000 waterfowl, parrots, toucans, flamingos and other exotic birds. Walk through aviaries themed by continent.

5. HISTORIC HALIFAX STATE HISTORIC SITE
   HALIFAX
   Visit the district where colonists first called for independence from Great Britain by signing the Halifax Resolves, a precursor to the Declaration of Independence. Guided and self-guided tours include period-furnished homes and the Eagle Tavern, which hosted Revolutionary War hero the Marquis de Lafayette.
Welcome to North Carolina! Roanoke Rapids & Weldon have everything you need to experience southern hospitality at its finest. The first major Exit off I-95 as you enter NC from VA, offering 1200 hotel rooms, mouth-watering dining, and rich history. Recharge, refuel, and refresh at Americas Best Exit!
Discover the exceptional nature of North Carolina with wildlife watching on the coast; climbing, hiking and boating in the Piedmont; and soaking up the majesty of the mountains.

written: JASON FRYE AND JESS HOFFERT
Before you hit the outdoors, review these tips on exploring safely and responsibly during the COVID-19 pandemic.
visitnc.com/leave-no-trace
Visitors heading for the coast should pack more than a swimsuit and sunscreen; binoculars, a camera, and a kayak or two will make any coastal getaway one to remember. Combine all that with seven national wildlife refuges and the trip may yield once-in-a-lifetime wildlife encounters. Wild horses, rare birds, sea turtles, black bears and even red wolves await in the woods, marshes, lakes and shoreline.

On the Outer Banks, loggerhead sea turtles come ashore to nest in Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge, joining thousands of migratory birds as they find a seasonal home. Farther north, see the Currituck National Wildlife Refuge’s most famous residents—the wild horses that have lived here for more than 500 years. You’ll need a four-wheel drive vehicle to access the refuge, and be sure to stay at least 50 feet away from the horses. It’s the law.

A black bear haven sits just across the sound at Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, a place where moonshiners, red wolves and alligators lived in the swamps and brackish marsh. The moonshiners are long gone, but 13 miles of paddling trails carry kayakers through the habitats of the wolves, bears and gators, offering a potential glimpse of these wild neighbors at the right time of day.

The Atlantic Flyway jets through the coast, and hundreds of thousands of migratory birds stop over here to rest and refuel. At Lake Mattamuskeet, the state’s largest freshwater lake, tundra swans, migrating ducks and geese crowd the shallow lake. As the region’s duck population swells a thousand-fold, the Swanquarter and Cedar Island national refuges overflow with waterfowl competing with anglers for fish teeming in the waters.

The Roanoke River National Wildlife Refuge sees its share of waterfowl. But songbirds—like the elusive Swainson’s warbler—and fish, including striped bass, alewives, and blueback herring, draw visitors hoping to catch a peek at a winged beauty or make a photo-worthy catch.
CREATURE FEATURES

Coastal state parks teem with unique animal sightings. Be sure to bring the binoculars to these natural attractions.

DISMAL SWAMP STATE PARK SOUTH MILLS
Called “a glorious paradise” by George Washington, Dismal Swamp is home to a history with ties to American Indian hunting parties and the Underground Railroad. It’s also home to rare Hessel’s Hairstreak butterflies and seven species of woodpeckers. Seek them out on the ½-mile boardwalk trail.

FORT MACON STATE PARK ATLANTIC BEACH
Herons, egrets and painted buntings hold down the fort at one of the finest surviving examples of 19th-century military fortification. At low tide, walk along the beach and search for sea urchins, sea stars, coral and mollusk shells.

HAMMOKS BEACH STATE PARK SWANSBORO
Hop on a ferry (or paddle) to explore this park’s undeveloped, 3-mile-long Bear Island. Watch for the nests of endangered loggerhead sea turtles. Females come ashore at night to lay eggs between mid-May and late August. Three additional islands feature sand dunes, maritime forest and marshland.

LAKE WACCAMAW STATE PARK LAKE WACCAMAW
Three boardwalk trails guide visitors to the golden brown waters of Lake Waccamaw, one of many unique Carolina bays. (Their formation along the coast remains a mystery.) Endemic species with names like Waccamaw fatmucket reside in the water. Encounter American alligators and southern leopard frogs in the Green Swamp Preserve nearby.

LUMBER RIVER STATE PARK ORRUM
Angling enthusiasts find loads to love about the National Wild and Scenic River, made tea-colored by the tannins of cypress gum trees along its banks. Black crappie, redbreast sunfish, largemouth bass and catfish are abundant in these waters. You may also catch glimpses of great blue herons, belted kingfishers, river otters and barred owls.

MEDOC MOUNTAIN STATE PARK HOLLISTER
The forested park on this modest mountain (325 feet tall) is an animal magnet, providing habitat for the southern flying squirrel that nests in the cavities of trees. Watch for opossums, gray foxes and whitetail deer too. If you’re lucky, you can spot the rare Carolina mudpuppy (a large aquatic salamander) along Little Fishing Creek.
Between the Blue Ridge and the coastal plain, adventure calls. Scale sheer walls for hundred-mile views or take things easy on calm lakes and rivers.

The woods of Crowders Mountain State Park ring with the sounds of carabiners and cams (specialized rock climbing equipment) chiming softly as climbers make their way to the craggy rock walls near Crowders Mountain and The Pinnacle, the twin peaks in this park near Kings Mountain.

Soon these climbers will dust their hands with chalk and begin a spider-like ascent, following one of 100-plus routes while taking care to leave the rock faces unmarred by piton and bolts, the routes left ready for the next challengers.

Beginners come here to learn the ropes on easier 5.5 routes, while pros challenge tricky 5.13 paths up sheer walls. Registered and roped in, these climbers will soon stand at the cliff’s edge, surveying the Piedmont as it rolls into the distance.

At the other end of the park, climbers who prefer something closer to the ground solve bouldering problems, climbing specified routes across, up and over boulders without the assistance of a rope. A 1-mile hike to the Boulders Access Area builds anticipation as the house-size rocks begin to reveal chalk handprints and scuff marks left by climbing shoes, evidence of attempts to navigate and tackle these tricky routes.

READY TO CLimb?

Crowders Mountain State Park is a great place to learn traditional climbing or bouldering. Make the most of your climb with these tips.

• Climb with a club or guide who can demonstrate proper techniques and equipment.
• Check ahead for any required permits.
• Use your arms less and your legs more for better endurance.
• Practice essential knots beforehand.
• Get fit. Focus on the core, legs, hands, arms and shoulders.
• Warm up before you climb. The last thing you want is a cramp.
• Study your route and go through each step before you chalk up.

EXPLORE NC'S GREAT OUTDOORS
MORROW MOUNTAIN STATE PARK
ALBEMARLE
More than 15 miles of hiking trails sit in the shadow of the Uwharrie Mountains, stretching from the summit of Morrow Mountain to Lake Tillery. At the boathouse, rent rowboats and canoes, and get bait for fishing from the pier. Cast a line for bass, perch, catfish and more.

HAW RIVER STATE PARK
BROWNS SUMMIT
Three easy loop trails weave through wetlands and along Robins Nest Lake, providing countless opportunities to spot migrating waterfowl and songbirds. The 0.4-mile Wetlands Boardwalk snakes through lush scenery, leading to the Haw River shoreline.

JORDAN LAKE STATE RECREATION AREA
APEX
The shoreline surrounding Jordan Lake provides a perfect sanctuary for bald eagles. In fact, this area is one of their largest summertime homes in the country. Join a park ranger at the Bald Eagle Observation Deck to catch a view of their nests and explore water habitats along the Haw and New Hope rivers.

KERR LAKE STATE RECREATION AREA
HENDERSON
Bird-watching boaters flock to this 50,000-acre preserve hugging Kerr Lake along the Piedmont’s northern edge. Observe waterfowl from the lake or via shoreline trails, where beavers, muskrats, river otters and wading birds hang out. The vigilant may even spot gray foxes.

MAYO RIVER STATE PARK
MAYODAN
A growing network of easy, family-friendly loop trails immerse hikers in rolling terrain and diverse forest habitats. The mild Mayo River is the perfect opportunity to paddle or dip your toes into whitewater rafting. Catch the serene view at Fall Creek Falls.

RAVEN ROCK STATE PARK
LILLINGTON
Massive Raven Rock has been a beacon for Cape Fear River paddlers for centuries. Negotiate sections of the Cape Fear Canoe River Trail, or cast a line at Fish Traps rapids. Hikers, bikers and horseback riders navigate steep terrain, encountering mountain laurel and creeks.

GO WITH THE FLOW
Lakes, rivers and creeks fill these Piedmont parks with a rush of scenery, wildlife and serenity.
As branches sway with the breeze, you can almost hear the mountains breathe with life. Feel refreshed and renewed at these elevated escapes.

Escape the rush of modern life and embrace the healing powers of nature in North Carolina’s mountains.

**Pinnacle Park**, a 1,000-acre playground of oak and rhododendron near Sylva, invites the curious to abandon their phones and cameras in exchange for a morning spent practicing the Japanese art of *shinrin-yoku*, or forest bathing.

“Shinrin-yoku is the practice of spending time in forested areas to enhance health, wellness and happiness,” says Dr. Mark Ellison, certified forest therapy guide and leader of shinrin-yoku walks in Pinnacle Park. “It provides an opportunity to slow down and connect with nature on a deeper level.”

The quiet, the calm and the exceptional nature of Pinnacle Park make it an ideal place to forest bathe. Ellison’s guided walks—observant affairs that reconnect participants with all their senses—introduce a practice that lasts longer than any tangible souvenir.

“There’s considerable science that links spending time in forests with improved health: a strengthened immune system, lower blood pressure, reduced stress, increased creativity, a heightened ability to focus and an overall feeling of well-being,” Ellison says.

Best of all, just about anyone can practice forest bathing, and North Carolina is the perfect place to begin, with 18.6 million acres of forests—more than half of the state’s total land area. Hiking paths in the Great Smokies and Blue Ridge Mountains allow for infinite moments of peace and restoration. The only ingredients necessary: humans and trees.

“To get started, you need a quiet area and time to experience it free from distraction,” Ellison says. “Turn off your phone. Spend a couple of hours purposefully reconnecting with the natural environment. Open all of your senses.”

After a little practice, you’ll find yourself pausing to take in simple beauty. Light glowing through leaves. The green heads of ferns emerging from the forest floor. Birds singing. A cool breeze carrying the faint sweetness of wildflowers. Above, branches move, sway and hush the woods as if the mountains are sighing.
PHOTOGRAPH: PINNACLE RYAN DONNELL

STONE MOUNTAIN STATE PARK, ROARING GAP

A bald granite dome rises feet from the center of this park adjacent to the Blue Ridge Parkway. Plentiful camping on its flanks means daytime hikes to the top and firefly-filled meadows in the evening. A strenuous 4½-mile loop takes trekkers across the summit of Stone Mountain and past a 200-foot waterfall.

CHIMNEY ROCK STATE PARK

CHIMNEY ROCK

This park knows how to amp up the drama, with a 499-step Outcroppings Trail (or take the elevator, plus two flights of stairs) that leads to 315-foot Chimney Rock and 75-mile views of Hickory Nut Gorge. Hickory Nut Falls is another showstopper with its 40-story plummet off a cliff.

GORGES STATE PARK

SAPPHIRE

An elevation that rises 2,000 feet in only 4 miles, combined with more than 80 inches of annual rainfall, creates a temperate rain forest that supports the most biodiverse park in the state parks system. See some of the 125 rare species on hikes to Bearwallow Falls, Lake Jocassee, and nearby Rainbow Falls and Turtleback Falls in Pisgah National Forest.

LAKE JAMES STATE PARK

NEBO

Day trippers boat, swim and fish in the clear waters of Lake James, while overnighters book one of 30 paddle-in campsites on the park’s Long Arm Peninsula. Canoe or kayak your way to your own peaceful corner of wooded paradise, complete with tent pads, picnic tables and firepits.

MOUNT JEFFERSON STATE NATURAL AREA

WEST JEFFERSON

The short and steep 0.3-mile Summit Trail leads to multistate vistas at the top of 1,600-foot Mount Jefferson. Black volcanic rock gives the mountain its dark hue. Get a closer view of the rocks along the 1.1-mile Rhododendron Trail, which leads through a rare virgin forest of northern red oaks.

SOUTH MOUNTAINS STATE PARK

CONNELLY SPRINGS

The South Mountains rise sharp and steep, making for more than 40 miles of exciting trails. Options range from the easy 0.3-mile Hemlock Nature Trail along the Jacob Fork River to the heart-pumping 2.1-mile Chestnut Knob trek that ascends to striking views of High Shoals Falls.

WOODS AND WATERFALLS

Venture to hidden worlds of towering trees and thunderous falls. Just be sure to keep a safe distance from the cascades.
Local Information Sources

MOUNTAINS

Alexander County VC, 316 Hiddenite Church Rd., Hiddenite 28636; (828) 632-8141; hiddenitearts.org

Alleghany County C of C, 58 S. Main St., Sparta 28675; (336) 372-5473; sparta-nc.com

 Ashe County C of C, 61 N. Jefferson Ave., Suite C, West Jefferson 28694; (336) 846-9550; ashechamber.com

Avery County C of C, 4501 Tynecastle Hwy., Unit 2, Banner Elk 28604; (828) 898-5605;averycounty.com

Banner Elk TDA, 100 W. Main St., Banner Elk 28604; (828) 988-5398; bannerelk.com

Beech Mountain TDA, 403-A Beech Mountain Pkwy., Beech Mountain 28604; (828) 387-9283; beechmtn.com

Blowing Rock TDA, 132 Park Ave., Blowing Rock 28605; (828) 295-4636; blowingrock.com

Brevard-Tryon Transylvania County TDA, 175 E. Main St., Brevard 28712; (828) 884-8900; visitwaterfalls.com

Burnsville-Yancey C of C, 106 W. Main St., Burnsville 28714; (828) 682-7413; yanceychamber.com

Caldwell County C of C, 1900 Hickory Blvd. SE, Lenoir 28645; (828) 726-0616; explorecaldwell.com

Cherokee C of C, 498 Tsali Blvd., Cherokee 28719; (828) 788-0034; cherokeesmokies.com

Cherokee County TDA, 20 Tennyson St., Murphy 28906; (828) 557-0602; visitcherokeecountync.com

Cherokee Welcome Center, 498 Tsali Blvd., Cherokee 28719; (828) 497-9195; cherokeewelcomecenter.com

Clay County C of C, 96 Sanderson St., Hayesville 28940; (828) 389-3704; ncmtncambchamber.com

Explore Ashe CVB, 27 College Pl., Ashevile 28801; (828) 258-6101; exploreshville.com

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Franklin Area C of C, 98 Hyatt Rd., Franklin 28734; (828) 524-3161; visitfranklinnc.com

Greenville County TDA, 989 Piedmont Dr., Greenville 29601; (864) 242-3300; visitgreenville.com

Haywood County TDA, 1110 Soco Rd., Maggie Valley 28751; (828) 944-0761; visitsmokiesnc.com

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Henderson County TDA, 201 S. Main St., Hendersonville 28792; (828) 693-9708; visithendersonvillenc.org

Highlands C of C, 108 Main St., Highlands 28741; (828) 526-2112; highlandschamber.org

Jackson County TDA, 116 Central St., Sylva 28779; (828) 586-2153; discoverjacksonnc.com

Madison County C of C, 56 S. Main St., Mars Hill 28754; (828) 680-3031; visitmadisonnc.com

Mcdowell County TDA, 91 S. Catawba Ave., Old Fort 28762; (828) 688-4282; blueridgetravelers.com

Mitchell County C of C, 79 Parkway Rd., Spruce Pine 28777; (828) 765-9483; craftyouradventure.com

Morganton/Burke County TDA, 110 E. Meeting St., Morganton 28655; (828) 433-6793; discoverburkecounty.com

NC High Country Host, 6370 US Hwy. 321 S., Blowing Rock 28605; (828) 264-1299; highcountryhost.com

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Northwest NC VC, 2101 E. US Hwy. 421, North Wilkesboro 28659; (336) 667-1259; nwcvc.com

Polk County T & T, 20 E. Mills St., Columbus 28722; (828) 804-2324; firstpeaknc.com

Rutherford County TDA, 146 N. Main St., Rutherfordton 28139; (800) 849-5998; visitncsmalltows.com

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Smoky Mountain Host, 4437 Georgia Rd., Franklin 28734; (828) 369-9606; visitsmokies.org

Sugar Mountain Host, 251 Dick Truney Ln., Sugar Mountain 28604; (828) 898-9292; seesugar.com

Swain County TDA, 2 Everett St., Bryson City 28713; (828) 488-7857; greatsmokies.com

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Valdese Dept. of Tourism, 400 Main St., Valdese 28690; (828) 879-2126; visitvaldese.org

Wilkes C of C, 717 Main St., North Wilkesboro 28659; (336) 838-8662; wilkesnc.org

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Alamance County TDA, 200 S. Main St., Burlington 27215; (336) 870-1444; visitalamance.com

Anson County TDA, 107A E. Wade St., Wadesboro 28170; (704) 694-4198; visitanson.com

Cabarrus County CVB, 10099 Weddington Rd. Ext., Suite 102, Concord 28027; (704) 782-4340; visitcabarrus.com

Caswell County C of C, 142 Main St., Yanceyville 27379; (336) 694-6106; caswellchamber.com

Chapel Hill/Orange County VB, 501 W. Franklin St., Chapel Hill 27516; (919) 245-4320; visitchapelhill.org

Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority, 501 S. College St., Charlotte 28202; (704) 331-2700; charlottesgotalot.com

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Cleveland County Tourism, 311 E. Marion St., Shelby 28150; (704) 487-8521; tourclevelandcounty.com

Davie County C of C, 135 S. Salisbury St., Mocksville 27028; (336) 751-3304; daviechamber.com

Discover Durham TDA, 212 W. Main St., #101, Durham 27701; (919) 687-0288; durham-nc.com

Dunn Area TDA, 103 E. Cumberland St., Dunn 28334; (910) 892-3282; dunnitourism.org

Fayetteville Area CVB, 245 Person St., Fayetteville 28301; (910) 483-5311; visitfayettevillenc.com

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Gaston County Dept. of Tourism, 600 N. Main St., Belmont 28012; (704) 825-4044; visitgaston.org

Granville County TDA, 124 Hillsboro St., Oxford 27565; (919) 693-6125; visitgranvillenc.com

Greater Franklin County C of C, 112 E. Nash St., Louisburg 27549; (919) 496-3056; franklin-chamber.org

Greater Raleigh CVB, 500 Fayetteville St., Raleigh, 27601; (919) 834-5900; visitraleigh.com

Greensboro Area CVB, 4211 W. Gate City Blvd., Greensboro 27403; (336) 274-2282; visitgreensboro.com

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Heart of North Carolina VB, 145-B Worth St., Asheboro 27203; (336) 626-0364; heartofnorthcarolina.com

Advertising Partner, p. 51

Hickory Metro CVB, 1060 12th Ave. Dr. SE, Hickory 28602; (828) 322-1335; hickoryconventions.com

Advertising Partner, p. 11

I-73/I-74 VCBA, 4393 I-73/74 - Northbound: 4390 I-73/74 - Southbound; Seagrove 27341; (336) 873-7213; ncdot.gov/travel/restareas

Johnson County VB, 234 Venture Dr., Smithfield 27577; (919) 989-8687; johnsoncountytc.org

Lake Norman CVB, 19900 W. Catawba Ave., Suite 102, Cornelius 28031; (704) 987-3300; visitlakenorman.org

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Lexington TA, 2 N. Main St., Lexington 27292; (336) 256-4218; visitlexingtonnc.com

Lincoln-Lincoln County C of C, 101 E. Main St., Lincoln 28092; (704) 735-3096; lincolncambch.com

Lumberton VB, 3431 Lackey St., Lumberton 28350; (910) 739-9999; lumberton-nc.com
Warren County EDC, 501 US Hwy. 158 Bus. E., Warrenton 21589; (252) 257-3114; warrencounty.com

Wilson NC, 209 Broad St., Wilson 27893; (252) 243-8440; wilson-nc.com

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Winston-Salem CBV, 200 Brookstown Ave., Winston-Salem 27101; (336) 728-4200; visitwinstonalem.com

Yadkin County C of C, 205 S. Jackson St., Yadkinville 27055; (336) 679-2900; visityadkin.com

Yadkin Valley C of C, 116 E. Market St., Elkin 28621; (336) 526-1111; visitthedaydinkvalley.com

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COAST

Ahoskie C of C, 310 S. Catherine Creek Rd., Ahoskie 27910; (252) 332-2042; ahsiekichamber.net

Camden County CBV, 2336 US Hwy. 17 N., South Mills 27976; (252) 771-8333; visitcamdencountync.com

Chowan County, 101 W. Water St., Edenton 27932; (252) 482-0300; visitedenton.com

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Columbus C of C & T, 601 S. Madison St., Whiteville 28472; (910) 642-3371; thecolumbuschamber.com

Crystal Coast DA, 3409 Arendell St., Morehead City 28557; (252) 726-8148; crystalcoastnc.org

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Currituck County Dept. of T & T, 106 Caratole Hwy., Moyock 27958; (252) 435-3947; visitcurrituck.com

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Duplin County CBV, 165 Agriculture Dr., Suite B, Kenansville 28349; (910) 396-2181; uncorcduplin.com

Elizabeth City-Pasquotank County CBV, 501 S. Water St., Elizabeth City, 27909; (252) 335-5339; visitelizabethcitytva.com

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Elizabethtown-White Lake C of C, 207 E. Broad St., Suite B, Elizabethtown 28337; (910) 862-4368; elizabethtownwhitelake.com

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Gates County, 200 Court St., Gatesville 27938; (252) 357-2411; gatescounty.gov/freetv2.com

Goldboro Wayne County T & T, 308 N. William St., Goldsboro 27530; (919) 734-7922; visitgoldboro.com

Greene County EDC, 229 Kingold Blvd., #D, Snow Hill 28580; (252) 747-3446; co.greene.nc.us

Greenville-Pitt County CBV, 417 Cotanche St., Suite 100, Greenville 27858; (252) 329-4200; visitgreenvilletva.com

Advertising Partner, p. 51

Halifax County CBV, 200 Premier Blvd., Roanoke Rapids 27870; (919) 535-1687; visithalifax.com

Advertising Partner, p. 95

Hyde County EDC, 30 Oyster Creek Rd., Swan Quarter 27885; (252) 926-4180

Jones County Co-op Extension, 367A NC Hwy. 58 S., Trenton 25685; (252) 448-9621; jonescountync.gov

Kinston-Lenoir County TDA, 118 W. North St., Suite A, Kinston 28501; (252) 523-2500; visitkinston.com

Martin County TDA, 132 W. Main St., Williamston 27892; (252) 792-6605; visitmartincounty.com

Murfreesboro C of C, 116 E. Main St., Murfreesboro 27855; (252) 398-4886; murfreesborochamber.com

NC Coast Host, 203 S. Front St., New Bern 28560; coasthost-nc.com

North Carolina’s NC’s Brunswick Islands - Brunswick County TDA, PO Box 1186, Shallotte 28459; (910) 755-5517; ncbunswick.com

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New Bern CBV, 203 S. Front St., New Bern 28560; (252) 637-9400; visitnewbern.com

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Northampton County, 127 W. Jefferson St., Jackson 27845; (252) 534-0331; visitnorthamptonnc.com

Ocracoke Civic & Business Assn., 278 Irvin Garrish Hwy. Ocracoke 27960; (252) 928-6711; visitocrakonc.com

Onslow County Tourism, 1099 Gum Branch Rd., Jacksonville 28540; (910) 347-3141; onlyinonslow.com

Outer Banks VB, 1 Visitors Center Cir., Manteo 27954; (877) 629-4386; outerbanks.org

Advertising Partner, p. 7

Pamlico County C of C, 10642 NC Hwy. 55 E., Grantsboro 28592; (252) 745-3008; pamlicochamber.com

Pender County Tourism, 106 E. Wilmington St., Burgaw 28425; (910) 259-1278; visitpender.com

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Perquimans County C of C, 118 W. Market St., Hertford 27944; (252) 426-5657; visitperquimans.com

Sampson County CBV, 414 Warsaw Rd., Clinton 28328; (910) 592-2557; visit sampsonnc.com

Advertising Partner, p. 29

Southport-Oak Island C of C, 4433 Long Beach Rd. SE, Southport 28461; (910) 457-8964; southport-oakisland.com

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Tyrrell County VC, 203 S. Ludington Dr., Columbia 27925; (252) 796-0729

Washington County TDA, 701 Washington St., Plymouth 27962; (252) 793-6627; gowildnc.com

Washington TDA, 108 Gladjen St., Washington 27889; (252) 975-9653; littlewashingtonnc.com

Wilmington and Beaches CBV, 505 Nutt St., Unit A, Wilmington 28401; (910) 341-4030; wilmingtonandbeaches.com

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Windsor-Bertie County C of C, 121 E. Granville St., Windsor 27983; (252) 784-4277; windsorbertieschamber.com
STATE AGENCIES
NC Agritourism Office, 1020 MSC, Raleigh 27601; (919) 707-3120; ncagr.gov/markets/agritourism
NC Arts Council, 4632 MSC, Raleigh 27601; (919) 814-6500; ncarts.org
NC Dept. of Natural & Cultural Resources, 4601 MSC, Raleigh 27601; (919) 814-6800; nccr.gov
NC Dept. of Transportation - Bicycle & Pedestrian Transportation, 1552 MSC, Raleigh 27601; (919) 707-2600; ncdot.gov/divisions/bike-ped
NC Dept. of Transportation - Ferry Division, 2300 Ferry Rd., Havelock (252) 456-3236; ncdot.gov/divisions/ferry
NC Historic Sites, 1615 MSC, Raleigh 27601; (919) 707-9300; historicnights.nc.gov
NC State Parks, 1701 MSC, Raleigh 27601; (919) 707-0010; ncparks.gov
NC Wildlife Resources Commission, 1553 MSC, Raleigh 27601; (800) 298-7246; ncbwildlife.org
NC's Amtrak Service, 2300 Ferry Rd., Havelock 28532; (800) 293-3779; ncdot.gov/divisions/ferry
NC State Parks, 1615 MSC, Raleigh 27601; (919) 707-9300; ncparks.gov
NC Wildlife Resources Commission, 1701 MSC, Raleigh 27601; (919) 707-0010; ncparks.gov
NC's Amtrak Service, 1553 MSC, Raleigh 27601; (800) 298-7246; ncbwildlife.org

WELCOME CENTERS
I-26 East NC Welcome Center, I-26 at Mile Marker 68, Columbus 28722; (828) 694-2120
I-26 West NC Welcome Center, I-26 at Mile Marker 6, Mars Hill 28754; (828) 689-4275
I-40 West NC Welcome Center, I-40 at Mile Marker 10, Waynesville 28786; (828) 627-6206
I-77 North NC Welcome Center, I-77 at Mile Marker 105, Dobson 27017; (336) 320-2181
I-77 South NC Welcome Center, I-77 at Mile Marker 1, Charlotte 28241; (704) 588-2660
I-85 North NC Welcome Center, I-85 at Mile Marker 231, Norlina 27563; (252) 456-3236
I-85 South NC Welcome Center, I-85 at Mile Marker 2, Kings Mountain 28086; (704) 937-7861
I-95 North NC Welcome Center, I-95 at Mile Marker 181, Pleasant Hill 27866; (252) 537-3365
I-95 South NC Welcome Center, I-95 at Mile Marker 5, Rowland 28383; (910) 422-8314
NC Welcome Centers & Tourism Call Center, 4324 MSC, Raleigh 27601; (800) VISIT NC; nccommerce.com/contact/north-carolina-welcome-centers

GENERAL INFORMATION
Blue Ridge National Heritage Area, 195 Hemphill Knob Rd., Asheville 28803; (828) 298-5330; blueridgeheritage.com
Blue Ridge Parkway Association, PO Box 2136, Asheville 28802; (828) 670-1924; blueridgeparkway.org
Blue Ridge Parkway Association, PO Box 2136, Asheville 28802; (828) 670-1924; blueridgeparkway.org
NC Bed & Breakfast Inns, ncbbi.org
NC Restaurant & Lodging Association, 222 N. Person St., Ste. 210, Raleigh 27601; (919) 844-0098; ncrla.org
NC Ski Areas Association, PO Box 369, Banner Elk 28604; (828) 898-4521; goskinc.com

State Information Sources
Taylor Creek, Beaufort
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Brunswick County TDA
Carowinds
Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority
Cherokee County TDA
Chowan County TDA
Crystal Coast TDA
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Heart of North Carolina VB
Haywood County TDA
Henderson County TDA
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The Inn & Village Hotel on Biltmore Estate
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Mooresville CVB
NASCAR Hall of Fame
Nash County Tourism
NC High Country Host
NC State Parks
New Bern CVB
Old Edwards Inn
Outer Banks VB
Pender County Tourism
Person County TDA
Pittsboro-Siler City CVB
Rutherford County TDA
Sampson County CVB
Sanford TDA
Southport-Oak Island C of C
Swain County TDA
Thomasville Tourism
Tryon Palace
200 Main
Wilmington and Beaches CVB
Wilson NC
Yadkin Valley C of C

SHARE your JOURNEY

The beauty of North Carolina is in the eye of the camera holder. Grab some besties, strike a pose and tag your favorite scenes with #visitnc on social media for a chance to be featured online or in a future travel guide!

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SWEET ENDING

There’s always room for dessert, but you may want to bring a friend along to help conquer some of these indulgent North Carolina creations.

1. @CCORNETET The eye-popping banana split at Lexington’s Bar-B-Q Center weighs a button-busting 3.5 pounds.
2. @GUGLHPFNC Bakers use European techniques to craft delights like these vegan oatmeal sandwich cookies at Guglhupf in Durham.
3. @YOBREZDESSERT Tacos don’t get any more refreshing than this frozen yogurt variation at Jacksonville’s YoBre’z Frozen Dessert Bar.
4. @CAFEMADELEINE_3699 In Farmville, Cafe Madeleine serves fashionable fruit tarts along with cakes, cookies and croissants.
5. @FAYPYEHC Award-winning pies come in both sweet and savory varieties at Fayetteville Pie Company.
6. @THETABLEFARMBAKERY The seasonal Mocha Milk—made with regionally sourced chocolate milk—stars at The Table in Asheboro.

ANSWERS TO TRIVIA FROM PAGE 14 — 1: George Washington 2: Funeral Grits 3: Lake Norman 4: Sasquatch (or Bigfoot) 5: the Wilmington and Beaches area
6: Asian pear 7: black volcanic rock 8: a boomerang effect 9: a goat
No matter where you go on this map, use these 7 guidelines as your compass.

Outdoor NC and Leave No Trace Center For Ethics have partnered to preserve the richer experiences of the NC outdoors. Leave No Trace emphasizes these 7 key principles to minimize visitors’ impact so the outdoors stays stunningly gorgeous and infinitely usable.

**PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE**
Be prepared and learn about the area(s) you plan to visit. Remember food, water, hand sanitizer, a face covering and the right clothes to protect you from the elements.

**STICK TO TRAILS AND OVERNIGHT RIGHT**
Walk and ride on designated trails to protect trailside plants, and camp only on existing or designated campsites to avoid damaging vegetation.

**TRASH YOUR TRASH**
Pack your trash and recyclables out with you and throw them out at home. If adventuring with your pet, plan to pack out its waste as well. Pack it in. Pack it out.

**LEAVE IT AS YOU FIND IT**
Always leave plants, rocks and historical items as you find them. Also, North Carolina is home to an amazing diversity of indigenous plants. Help keep it that way and avoid picking flowers.

**BE CAREFUL WITH FIRE**
If you plan an overnight camping trip, please use a stove for cooking. If you choose to have a fire, make sure it is permitted in the area you are visiting, and keep it small.

**KEEP WILDLIFE WILD**
Always observe wildlife from a distance and never approach, feed or follow our animals. Also keep your pets under control; this will protect them, other visitors and wildlife.

**SHARE OUR TRAILS**
Our trails are everyone’s trails. Be considerate, and cover your nose and mouth when passing others on the trail, and give plenty of space. If you’re sick, please stay at home.