



Visit Chapel Hill & Orange County

Come visit for live music, breweries, more than 50 murals, eclectic eats, local culture, sports, beautiful gardens all around this **quintessential college town**, home to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the oldest public university in the country. The main street, Franklin Street, is seeing a recent renaissance with the opening of five new restaurants and bars in the past year.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR TWO CITY AND COUNTYWIDE ARTS FESTIVALS HAPPENING IN 2027



For three days, February 19-21, 2027, visiting artists, UNC researchers and students, Triangle artists, and community partners transform buildings and outdoor spaces across Carolina's campus and downtown Chapel Hill into a connected, dynamic playground in the brand new **All. Together. Now. Arts Festival**. Headliners include comedian Josh Johnson on Comedy Central's *The Daily Show* and NPR Music's 2026 Tiny Desk Contest winner, Cure for Paranoia (photo).

The biennial **Uproar Festival of Public Art** returns in July/August 2027 featuring 60 works of art countywide for people to visit over a multi-week span.

WHAT'S NEW IN THE LOCAL MUSIC SCENE

A club that has spawned bands, record labels and a 57-year+ live-music legacy is progressing on a second location in downtown Carrboro, a town which shares a border with Chapel Hill. **The Cat's Cradle**, which should open in **2027** around the corner at 107 Brewer Lane, is expanding an old 8,800-square-foot building into a two-story, up to 14,000-square-foot club, about 1,000 square feet larger than the original Cat's Cradle, which plans to stay open at present. The new club will have a merchandise area near the main bar, which features a seating area and cocktails. Four additional beer bars are planned — two on each floor. Cat's Cradle has hosted legendary acts since 1969 including Nirvana (just 10 days after *Nevermind* dropped), Pearl Jam and Radiohead, as well as John Mayer, Iggy Pop, and Joan Baez.

GET OUTSIDE

Eno River Farm in Hillsborough, North Carolina, features a hidden wooden **"troll forest" trail** with 3 to 4 giant, hand-carved wooden troll sculptures. The trolls were carved by local artist Tracey Leonard. See Grandpa Troll whose head, hand, leg, and foot appear half-buried rising up from the ground and visitors can climb in. In the pine woods behind the farm, find two more giant whimsical woodmen trolls standing completely above ground.



The **Union Grove Farm** between in central Orange County is kicking off its harvest this fall of a new, thin-skinned, seedless Muscadine grape developed by Jeff Bloodworth: The SuperHero Freeze-Dried Grapes. The first vineyard in the nation to earn the highest Tier 5 certification level for regenerative agriculture, the farm vineyards are expanding to nearly 100 planted acres, Experience the joys of sheep herding or take an immersive farm and vineyard tour to explore their holistic methods up close. In the future plans are for a Silo Distillery. Nearby is a Wedding Venue Barn, plus spacious French Country Farm Escape & more.

Chapel Hill's **Spring Haven Farm** offers baby goats, pigs, donkeys, cows and more. Kids can take a ride on the Tractor Train Express and make farm crafts. Year-round seasonal events from. Pumpkin carving, movies with goats, s'mores with goats and more. See gem mining, the Farmory (archery, axe throwing and darts), mini-golf, and a general store.

NEW GUIDED SPORTS TOURS IN CHAPEL HILL

Get an insider's experience and see where the Tar Heels play like never before with a brand new exclusive, behind-the-scenes Carolina Athletic Facilities Guided Tour. Visit central campus facilities, Dean Smith Center and Kenan Stadium. Kenan by the way is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year.

NEW-LOOK ACCOMMODATION

Due to a fire, Chapel Hill's **Siena Hotel, Marriott Autograph Collection** has been closed since August 2025. Work continues on a **Complete Overhaul of Accommodations** with the "thoughtfully refining" of all 79 guest rooms and suites. While they plan to preserve the hotel's classic Tuscan charm, the interiors are being fully modernized with upgraded tech and fresh décor as well as **Upgraded Amenities**. You'll find **Reimagined Public Spaces** where the main lobby, corridors, and guest areas elevate the overall luxury experience. Finally, enjoy a **Refreshed and Elevated Dining Experience** at the hotel's Italian Restaurant, Il Palio. **April 2027**.

WHAT'S NEW IN OUR CULINARY & COCKTAIL SCENE



Among what's new, **Geo's Tavern & Oyster Bar** featuring North Carolina seafood offerings, is an elevated neighborhood 220-seat gastropub in the East 54 development with a menu from Chef and Partner Daniel Jackson, whose experience includes Eleven Madison Park and Union Square Hospitality Group. He is also a former winner on the Food Network *Chopped*. The restaurant is the newest concept from acclaimed restaurateur Giorgios Bakatsias.

Additionally, Chef Sujan Sarkar, the culinary force behind Chicago's Michelin-starred Indienne, brings his vision for contemporary Indian fine dining to Chapel Hill with **Ayra**, a 5,000-square-foot contemporary Indian restaurant right across the street to Geo's. Sarkar, a two-time James Beard Award nominee for Best Chef: Great Lakes, has spent his career championing the idea that Indian cuisine belongs at the forefront of global fine dining. Ayra will offer an Indian-inspired cocktail bar, a tasting menu dining room, and an à la carte dining room. Anticipate fall opening for Sarkar's first expansion into the South.

Other new downtown restaurants and bars include **Taal Dining**, Indian dining featuring handcrafted dishes, cocktails, chaats, **Kahlovera Tacos & Bar**, **Road to Myanmar** featuring Burmese, Thai, and Malaysian Food, **Sora Sushi & Bar** and **Tikka Tequila** a new Mexican-Indian fusion restaurant (with a Salvadoran twist), the first in the state. Finally **Good Fortune**, a craft cocktail bar is open with an Asian-inspired theme and aesthetic.

NEW SHOPPING

Chapel Hill's mall University Place has been turned inside-out, with 350,000 square feet of retail space, 60,000 square feet of offices and apartments. All the storefronts face the parking lot. A large public lawn, The Commons, hosts public events and activities including live music. Home to Chapel Hill's first entertainment district. **East 54** is home to **VIETRI's** new flagship retail store featuring the brand's full assortment of handcrafted Italian dinnerware, glassware, flatware, home décor & finds sourced directly from Italy.



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Media Contact: Patty Griffin, Communications Director, Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau, 919.245.4321
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