



ASHEVILLE NORTH CAROLINA

By Caroline Eubanks

Ashville, North Carolina has long attracted travelers looking for a slice of mountain charm. The city was established in 1797 on Cherokee land and named for the North Carolina governor. It came to prominence with the arrival of the railroad in the 1800s and during the following

decades, welcomed the rich and famous like F. Scott Fitzgerald and the Vanderbilt family. Many of its Art Deco buildings are still standing. Few cities have placed as much of an emphasis on local businesses than Asheville, which made it a priority long before it was part of a trend. Explore downtown's independent shops and galleries, where buskers often perform, and take in popular events like the weekly drum circles in Pritchard Park.

LOCAL LANDMARKS

The most popular attraction in Asheville is the aforementioned Biltmore Estate, the Vanderbilt family residence and the largest private home in America. Give yourself an entire day to explore the grand mansion's rooms, visit the special exhibits and roam the stunning grounds. While you're there, check out the onsite winery for a tasting, or dine at one of multiple restaurants.

Make sure to drive along the Blue Ridge Parkway, a New Deal program-constructed project that connects the most beautiful scenery between North Carolina and Virginia. Known as "America's Favorite Drive," there are countless pull-offs and hiking trails where you can take in the views.

Detour to pick up locally made goods like quilts and pottery at the Southern Highland Guild Folk Art Center, a hub for the region's makers.

OUTDOOR ATTRACTIONS

The French Broad River runs through the city, which you can explore by kayak or paddleboard. If you'd rather relax in a different way, Shoji Spa & Retreat is a Japanese-style spa with hot tubs overlooking the forest. If that's not enough time outside, head to the North Carolina Arboretum, a 400-acre garden originally envisioned by landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted. It contains themed gardens, hiking and biking trails and a model railroad. Then learn about the botanical bounty of the North Carolina mountains on a tour with No Taste Like Home, a company that brings guests foraging for mushrooms and other plant life, which is then prepared by a chef.





Give yourself time to tour the River Arts District, a mural-covered neighborhood of former warehouses now home to art galleries, shops, restaurants and breweries. Second Saturdays, a monthly art walk, is a great way to explore the neighborhood.

WHERE TO EAT

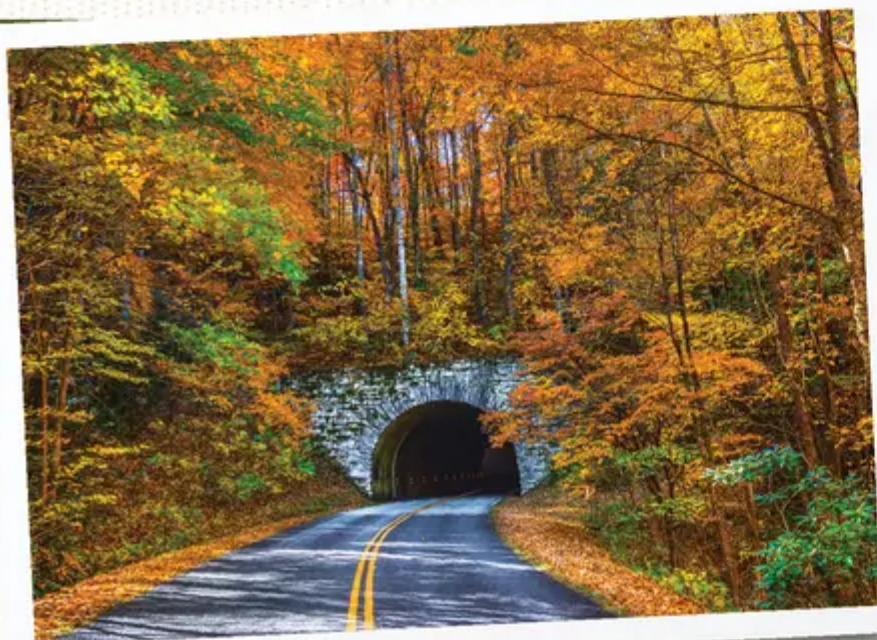
Try some of Asheville's best eats at The S&W Market, a food hall in a historic 1929 cafeteria. Among the tempting options are fried chicken, tacos, Thai street food, ice cream, and, of course, plenty of beer at the Highland Brewing taproom. Locals and visitors alike flock to Sunny Point Café for meals on the patio. The restaurant offers breakfast, lunch and dinner, including meatless options.

Chai Pani focuses on Indian street food, with favorites like crispy potato fritters, daal and butter chicken. No restaurant in town is better known than the James Beard award-winning Cúrate.

The Spanish tapas restaurant has traditional dishes like pan de tomate, patatas bravas, and plenty of jamon and queso from the Iberian Peninsula. If you can't nab a table, opt for the more casual La Bodega by Cúrate, its all-day wine bar. Despite the mountain locale, Jettie Rae's Oyster House serves the finest seafood you might expect from the coast. The stylish midcentury-style space recommends reservations to snag a seat.

BEER CULTURE

Asheville long has had a reputation for its many breweries, with locally owned operations and nationally known brands alike. Each focuses on different styles of beer. Highland Brewing was one of the first to open in 1994, taking inspiration from the Scottish Highlands, where many North Carolina High Country residents originally hailed from. Green Man is a downtown staple, open since 1997 and named for the legendary creature of the forest. Wedge in the River Arts District offers outdoor movies and food trucks. Even if beer is not your thing, creative food, live music and other events make the breweries lively places to visit.



LOCAL CAMPGROUNDS:

- Asheville Glamping (dome tents, treehouses) ashevilleglamping.com
- Asheville KOA East (RV and tent sites, cabins) koa.com
- Asheville KOA West (RV and tent sites, cabins) koa.com
- Pisgah National Forest (RV and tent sites, cabins) fs.usda.gov