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## Roanoke: Not-so-Sleepy Mountain Town

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By [Tamar Fleishman](#), May 15, 2012

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[Roanoke, Virginia](#), is a mountain city in the South, but it's not quiet and it's by no means sleepy.

The city has a culture of fine arts and music that permeates all of downtown. It's influenced by the nearby [Crooked Road](#),

Virginia's heritage music trail and home to many of the earliest bluegrass and country music stars. But with a thriving railroad economy and colleges nearby, there's a modern feeling to it. Roanoke can stay up all night having fun.

Roanoke's known as "the star city of the South," all because of a [huge electrified star](#) put up on the top of Mill Mountain during Christmas of 1949. The star remains and you can hike there nightly until 11:00 p.m. There's a 24-hour webcam on site – so you can start your evening as a star in front of the star. (Bring a flashlight to be seen after dark.)

The city has a symphony orchestra, theater, art gallery, ballet company and lots of venues for live music. [Blue 5](#) is a restaurant that features blues, acoustic and jazz music while serving Gulf Coast fare.

They strive to recreate the [New Orleans](#)/Bourbon St. scene. [Kirk Avenue Music Hall](#) hosts a number of eclectic performances, from alt-country and roots music to burlesque dancers, in a super intimate atmosphere.

After a night of entertainment, Roanoke is set for after-hours munchies. [Texas Tavern](#) is a little hamburger joint with ten stools at its counter – open all night, every night. If you've spent five bucks, you probably treated a couple of friends. It's been referred to as "Roanoke's Millionaire's Club" since it opened during the Depression: you really never know who will stop in. The Three Stooges used to grab a late dinner at Texas Tavern after performing at nearby vaudeville theaters.

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