

# CHAPEL HILL IN NORTH CAROLINA OFFERS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

When the UNC Tar Heels win a basketball tournament during March Madness, Franklin Street in Chapel Hill, N.C., often turns Carolina blue.

Attired in the team's colors and shouting "Go Heels!" students swarm the street and blanket the town with blue confetti, streamers, and balloons in celebration of the school's yet another victory. After all, the Tar Heels can claim

44 NCAA national tournaments in their history.

If you can't witness Franklin Street's transformation during basketball season, you'll discover the street has a certain vibe to it just about any time of the year. It's the main artery that runs through the town of 60,000 residents and 30,000 students, with shops, restaurants, clubs, pubs, museums, attractions, hotels, two visitor

centers, parking lots, and more connected to it. And did you know the street is named for Ben Franklin, an icon of American history? In 1795, when the school was founded on the principles of light and liberty as the first public university in the land, Franklin was a popular figure known for his intellect and wit.

The state chartered the school a few years later. Today the school has "an unwavering commitment to excellence as one of the world's great research universities." It has topped the list of 100 best public colleges and universities 18 times in Kiplinger's Personal Finance magazine. If your primary interest is the university, stop by the new UNC Visitors Center, located at 134 Franklin St. If you want information on the town and the school, as well as Orange County, including Carrboro and Historic Hillsborough (which

dates to 1754), go to the Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau at 501 W. Franklin St.

Perhaps the best way to experience UNC and the town of Chapel Hill, also known as "the southern side of heaven," is a free self-guided tour. (free-walkingtourschapelhill.com, heartofthehilltours.com, unc.edu/visitors)

The Visitor Guide includes an excellent campus map. Be sure to visit Old East (1793), the 300-year-old Davie Poplar Tree, the Old Well, Caldwell Monument to the university's first president, the Morehead-Patterson Memorial Bell Tower, the Monument to Free Speech, Wilson Library, Unsung Founders Memorial to African-Americans who served the school, Memorial Hall, The Pit (considered the epicenter of the campus), Center for Dramatic Art/Forest The-

atre (home of the Play-Makers Repertory Company), and other highlights. If you need transportation, hop aboard the free Carolina blue Chapel Hill Transit, which runs throughout the campus, Chapel Hill, and Carrboro.

The Carolina Basketball Museum is a must-see for visitors, especially those who love the sport. It features video tributes to Coach Dean Smith, Roy Williams, Michael Jordan, and Tyler Hansborough, plus interactive presentations highlighting Carolina's 20 Final Four appearances and 18 ACC Tournament championships, and more. The Dean Smith Center, the home court of UNC men's basketball, is open for tours except when teams are practicing. Call (919) 962-7777.

The Morehead Planetarium & Science Center, the largest full-dome planetarium in the Southeast, has al-



Carol Timblin

The African American Trailblazers mural in Chapel Hill.

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ways been a stellar attraction, but even more so now, thanks to the new \$9.2 million renovation and expanded exhibit space. Here you can learn about the important role of the planetarium in training 62 of NASA's astronauts from Mercury, Gemini, Apollo, and Skylab missions; visit the Breakthrough Hub, which highlights research at UNC; see live demonstrations on the Science Stage; and enjoy shows at Fulldome Theater. (moreheadplanetarium.org)

The Ackland Art Museum houses a universal collection of artwork, ranging from antiquity to the present. John D. Rockefeller, founder of the Asia Society, gave the museum around 300 works of art, including pieces recently shown in the "Buddha and Shiva, Lotus and Dragon" exhibit. Now showing through April 3 is "Peace, Power & Prestige: Metal Arts in Africa," and through July 25 "Ancestral Altar Ram Heads from the Collection of Rhonda Morgan Wilkerson, PhD." The exhibit on "Modern Black Culture: The Art of Aaron Douglas" opens April 22 and continues through June 19. (ackland.org)

Art of another kind can be seen in the murals that adorn buildings, parking lots, alleys, and trails around town. Alumnus Michael Brown started painting murals several years ago, and other artists and volunteers have contributed their talents, as well. Each of the 30 murals tells its own unique story. Among the subjects featured are folk singer Elizabeth Cotton, UNC Coach Dean Smith, African-American Trailblazers, Greetings from Chapel Hill, Black Lives Matters, Paint by Number, and Hands, featuring the hands of children, parents, and friends.

The 700-acre North Carolina Botanical Garden, located off NC 15-501, is the largest botanical garden in the Southeast. It includes formal gardens, herb gardens, natural areas and trails, and carnivorous plant collections. Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Paul Green wrote many of his works in the log cabin on site. Coker Arboretum, which dates to 1903 and a part of the botanical garden, is known for its wisteria arbor. The town offers plenty of gardens, parks, trails, and bike paths, by the way.

When you need a break, Chapel Hill has a plethora of coffee shops, restaurants, and places to wind down. Check out the Carolina Coffee Shop, the town's oldest restaurant. Established in 1922, it has

catered to the likes of writer David Sedaris, football legend Choo Choo Justice, and soccer star Heather O'Reilly. Sutton's Drug Store recalls the days when soda fountains were the rage. Looking for a home-cooked meal? Students and visitors love dining at Mama Dip's Kitchen, especially desserts such as banana pudding and pecan pie. If you prefer fine dining, try Elaine's on Franklin, featuring farm-to-fork cuisine. Il Palio at The Siena Hotel is the only Four Diamond Italian restaurant in the state. The best places to find beer are Four Corners, the Carolina Brewery, and Top of the Hill Restaurant and Brewery.

Chapel Hill also offers a variety of accommodations, ranging from trendy to top of the line. The newly renovated Sheraton Chapel Hill Hotel is the epitome of luxury and style. The Graduate has an academic theme, while The Carolina Inn, built in 1924, presents the history of UNC through pictures, artifacts, and more. The inn's Fridays on the Front Porch feature music and food trucks. There's much more to see and do in Chapel Hill and Orange County. Check out visitchapelhill.org.

### Special Events at Jamestown Settlement

\* "FOCUSED, A Century of Virginia Indian Resilience," an exhibition on Virginia's Native American communities, continues through March 25 at Jamestown Settlement. It features professional and photograph collections, tribal regalia, quilts, pottery, and personal stories that tell the story of Native Americans in Virginia from the passage and repeal of the Racial Integrity Act in 1924 to the efforts of 11 Virginia tribes to receive state and federal recognition today.

\* The 2022 Director's Series at Jamestown Settlement, sponsored by the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, got underway in January. The first conversation with Executive Director Christy S. Coleman featured Jason Herbert. Future programs will include talks with Dr. Joanne B. Freeman on March 19; Lonnie G. Bunch III, May 25; Dr. Keisha Blain, July 20; Winona Duke, Sept. 21; and Shannon Lanier, Nov. 16. Online registration at [jyfmuseums.org/directorseries](http://jyfmuseums.org/directorseries) is required to attend the talks.

Carol Timblin welcomes travel information at [ctimblin@gmail.com](mailto:ctimblin@gmail.com).

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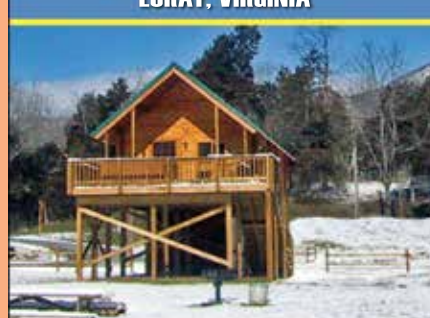


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