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>be a fan in: chapel hill, north carolina



Chapel Hill, North Carolina



(Top) Franklin Street in Downtown Chapel Hill from Top of the Hill Restaurant

(Middle) Gazebo on the campus of UNC

(Bottom) Carrboro Arts Center

WHERE: Chapel Hill will be rocking this fall as the excitement from a rejuvenated Tar Heels team is growing and fans – more than 28,000 strong – will take over this charming, historic progressive town to cheer on the home team! In fact, season tickets have already sold out for the six home games, which include Duke, Georgia Tech, University of South Carolina and NCAA champion Clemson Tigers.

When you're not at Kenan Memorial Stadium (which has new turf), there is a lot to do and see – everything from great museums, restaurants, shops and the pure natural beauty that is Chapel Hill and Orange County.

CHECK IN: While Chapel Hill has a variety of fabulous hotels, there are some that are walking distance to the game. If that's what you're looking for, then check out the AC Hotel Chapel Hill Downtown, The Carolina Inn and the Hampton Inn & Suites in Carrboro.

The Carolina Inn is almost an iconic institution with fully renovated, well-appointed guest rooms, including seven luxury suites. This AAA Four Diamond hotel is also within walking distance of several shops full of Tar Heels Blue clothing and paraphilia just in case you forgot yours (gaspl). www.carolinainn.com

The Siena Hotel, a member of the Autograph Collection, is a boutique hotel with Italian inspirations – from the lobby's brass doors to the Tuscan inspired restaurant Il Palio. This pet-friendly hotel boasts 79 well-appointed rooms and the suites feature Juliet balconies and large marble bathrooms. www.sienahotel.com

TASTES OF THE TOWN: Chapel Hill's culinary scene has been under the radar but that is changing with some recent national articles putting it front and center. New to the town is the opening of Hawthorne and Wood, a neighborhood restaurant with a bar and patio lounge. Although the menu changes daily, there are some dishes that have already garnered "favorite" status such as the pastrami-crusted yellowfin tuna, crispy rutabaga sticky cake and General Tso's cauliflower. www.hawthorneandwood.com

Crook's Corner is a James Beard Foundation restaurant that focuses on seasonally available Southern cuisine, so expect everything from pimento cheese to duck cassoulet. Housed in a former fish market, Crook's Corner has been called the "one of the birthplaces of the modern renaissance of Southern cooking." www.crookscorner.com

Speaking of James Beard Foundation, Aaron Vandemark, executive chef at **Pancuito in Hillsborough**, is a six-time James Beard nominee. www.panciuto.com

But we don't want to forget long-time favorite restaurants such as **Al's Burger Shack**, whose food is all natural, hormone- and antibiotic-free. All specialty toppings and dressings are made in-house. Oh yes, *Food & Wine* named it the best burger in the country. Enough said. www.alsburgershack.com

TOURING AND MORE:

Historic **Franklin Street** is considered the center of social life for the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, as well as the town of Chapel Hill. Home to numerous coffee shops, restaurants, museums, music stores and bars, it is where the action is if you want festivities, nightlife, and culture. The stretch of college-oriented businesses continues west into neighboring Carrboro. Both streets are home to small music venues, like the **Cat's Cradle** and the **Carrboro Arts Center**, which were influential in the birth of Chapel Hill rock. It is also home to two of our all-time favorite names for bars: He's Not Here and Might As Well Bar & Grill.

Need a break from the crowds? Well, a visit to the **North Carolina Botanical Garden** will soothe your spirit and connect you with nature. With more than 1,100 acres of garden and conservation areas, the garden has a serious mission to safeguard rare and endangered plant species from extinction and educate new generations of plant lovers and environmentalists. It doesn't matter the season, a trip to the botanical gardens is a must. ncbg.unc.edu