

ASHEVILLE



Successful Meetings Start Here

Asheville, North Carolina, situated in the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains and one of America's most vibrant destinations, is growing in all the ways most important to planners. The city's hotel product and accessibility have reached a new level, with the room inventory continuing to expand across all price points and meeting hotels ranging from the modern and chic to grand historic resorts. Planners recognize that once-in-a-lifetime activities can be powerful differentiators, and Asheville has plenty of those to offer - from Biltmore, to the Blue Ridge Parkway or the world-famous spa at The Omni Grove Park Inn.

- Meeting space ranging from 2,500 to 83,000 sq. ft.
- 8,000+ hotel rooms, and a total of 10,000 rooms by the end of 2020
- Asheville is an easy drive from many locations in the eastern United States.
- A variety of group activities and venue options in a four-season mountain setting
- Asheville Regional Airport (AVL), located 12 miles from downtown, offers nonstops and easy connections through major U.S. and international hubs, with 60+ nonstop flights daily to and from 22 destinations and served by six airlines. One of the fastest-growing airports in the U.S. for two consecutive years, AVL is nearing the completion of \$115 million in improvements and recently opened a new five-story parking garage. In 2020, Allegiant Air will expand its AVL service options by offering seasonal nonstop flights to Austin, Boston, Chicago and Houston. Meanwhile, American Airlines has announced new nonstop routes to Chicago and Washington, D.C., while expanding its nonstop service to Dallas-Fort Worth, LaGuardia and Philadelphia.

Hotel Growth Continues

Current hotel development and future plans will bring more than 1,500 additional rooms to the already expanded Asheville inventory.

NOW OPEN: ► Asheville's famed Art Deco skyline has gained a new icon. The **Kimpton Hotel Arras**, opened October 2019, is a four-star luxury property with floor-to-ceiling windows offering views of downtown and the Blue Ridge Mountains. Set in the former BB&T Bank building, the tallest building in Western North Carolina, the Art Deco façade is a nod to Asheville's iconic architecture. The 128-room hotel offers more than 3,000 square feet of meeting space and also has an extensive food focus with two restaurants by local chef, Peter Pollay. **Bargello** is a Mediterranean-inspired restaurant with handmade pastas, oven-fired pizzas and more. The second space, **District 42**, is a more casual spot for small bites and handcrafted cocktails.

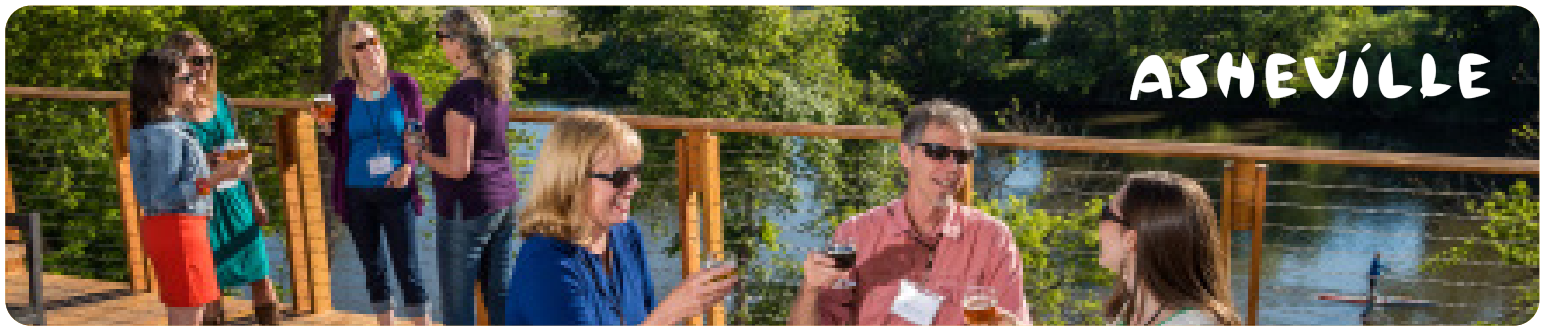
NEW DOWNTOWN: ► **The Foundry Hotel Asheville**, Curio Collection by Hilton, opened late 2018 on The Block, Asheville's historical African-American business district, with 3,000 square feet of functional meeting and event space. The hotel's 100-seat upscale restaurant **Benne on Eagle**, the newest venture of five-time James Beard semifinalist Chef John Flerer, pays homage to its historic Eagle Street neighborhood and the often-overlooked contributions of African-American cooks to Appalachian and Southern food. ► **The Element By Westin** has 100 rooms and 1,200 square feet of meeting space near downtown.



Explore Asheville: A Vital Piece of the Planning Process

Explore Asheville provides support to help create a planner's most successful and memorable meeting ever. Planners that send RFPs to Explore Asheville receive local expertise, a comprehensive view of Asheville and time-saving assistance.

- By sourcing meetings through Explore Asheville, planners receive the best local info and a full menu of **Exclusive Services**, which includes registration staffing, attraction value cards for attendees and more.
- The **Have More Fun on Us** incentive program offers planners with eligible meetings up to \$2,500 to incorporate unique-to-Asheville elements into their meetings.
- Planners are invited to tour hotel properties and experience activities for themselves at the **Asheville 48-Hour Experience**.



New Brewery Event Spaces in “Beer City USA”

► Vying for the most breweries per capita than anywhere else in the U.S., Asheville is Beer City USA. The area has a brewery count of over 50, and large groups can also get “hopping.” ► Opening this spring, **Highland Brewing’s** The Barrel Room will be able to host groups of up to 80 people. ► **Archetype Brewing’s** downtown location can seat 60-80 in its private venue, with a total capacity of 150 including the tap lounge. ► **Wicked Weed’s Funkatorium** has new space located in the back-barrel area of the facility that can seat 200 for dinner and accommodate up to 300 for cocktail events. It is complete with an in-house catering kitchen, as well as two customizable bars.



Cultural Opportunities Expand With Downtown Museums

► **Asheville Art Museum** reopened this fall after a major renovation with a new state-of-the-art building. Self-guided and guided group tours of its collection and exhibitions, as well as numerous education-program opportunities, are available. The expanded facility has multiple venues for events of all kinds, including social events and conferences. ► The **Center for Craft** has expanded with The National Craft Innovation Hub, including new galleries, lecture space, classrooms and a co-working space. ► **COMING SOON:** Opening to the public in early 2020, **LEAF Global Arts Center** will offer

educational experiences for guests rooted in music, art, community and culture via a mini-theater and global-immersion room using virtual reality, unique musical instruments and a stage for performances and interactive artist workstations.

Unique Wellness Offerings for Groups

► **Namaste in Nature** combines yoga, meditation and hiking experiences, accommodating 10 or fewer but also able to split up larger groups. **NEW** offerings include mountaintop yoga, waterfall hikes and a “Sunset and Full Moon Yoga Hike” (full moons March through October) on a scenic mountaintop with guided yoga and meditation. ► **Asheville Wellness Tours**, known for their guided tours to zen-filled businesses downtown, greatly expands their menu to include yoga hikes, sound-healing sessions, forest bathing, food tours, ziplining, flower-crown workshops and group tarot readings. ► **Blue Ridge Hiking Company**, owned by Appalachian Trail record setter Jennifer Pharr Davis, will begin offering guided daytrips to the Great Smoky Mountains, as well as several new private group options combining half-day hikes with activities such as jewelry-making classes or beer tastings.

Team-Building Adventures

► **Axeville Throwing Club** can host corporate groups of up to 60 who want to try their hands at axe-throwing while enjoying some local craft beer, cider or wine. By early 2020, they have plans to also set up remote locations for off-site events. ► **Asheville Detours** leads scavenger-hunt-style tours downtown, including “The Team Building Detour” and the **NEW** “Authentic Asheville Detour,” designed to get guests off the beaten path while they solve clues. ► Groups can take part in archery, sporting clays, off-roading and more on George Vanderbilt’s 8,000-acre playground at **Biltmore Estate**.

Nontraditional Meeting Spaces on the Horizon

► **COMING SPRING 2020:** James Beard Chef Meherwan Irani and Highland Brewing Co. join forces for a new food and beer hall, **The S&W Market**, in the iconic S&W Building, to include a separate event space with a “Roaring ‘20s” vibe and room for 40 seated guests. ► **COMING SUMMER 2020:** **Citizen Vinyl** will offer an immersive music experience with a vinyl-pressing plant, independent record store and music café and bar with food, coffee and craft cocktails, plus room for private events.

Food Scene, FAST:

250+ independent restaurants; **13** James Beard-nominated Asheville food folk; **50+** breweries, more per capita than any city in the nation; **14** farmers markets; **1** vegan butcher; **1,000+** family farms; **1** wild-foods market, the first in the nation; **3** craft hard cideries using local apples; the **fifth** micro sake brewery in the nation; **1** kombucha bar; **1** honey bar/boutique; **1** underground supper club with wild themes and secret locations; **4** insanely creative donut shops; **2** locations to get bean-to-bar local chocolate; **1** mushroom man tour guide; and the first woman to legally distill moonshine.