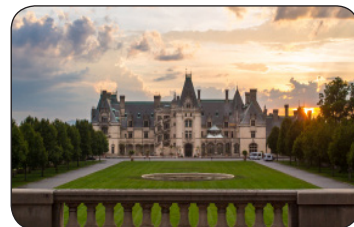




## ASHEVILLE FACT SHEET

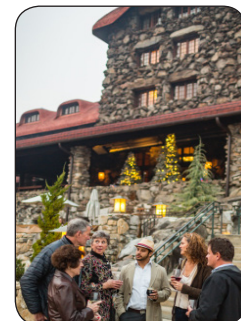
### GENERAL INFO & RECENT ACCOLADES

- ▶ Asheville is the largest city in Western North Carolina, with more than 89,000 city residents, and more than 253,000 residents in Buncombe County combined.
- ▶ Asheville Regional Airport is Western North Carolina's largest airport and is serviced by Allegiant, American Airlines, Delta, Elite Airways, Spirit and United. Non-stop service is available to Atlanta, Baltimore, Charlotte, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, New York and a number of Florida destinations. *Bloomberg* named Asheville one of "America's fastest-growing airports" (May 2018) with weekly departing seats from the airport growing 33 percent on average the last two years.
- ▶ *Forbes Travel Guide* listed Asheville as one of the "18 Top Destinations of 2018" (Jan. 2018).
- ▶ *National Geographic Traveler* named the city as one of the "Best U.S. Small Cities for 2018" (Jan. 2018) and one of the "Top 10 Music Cities in the U.S." (May 2018).
- ▶ *CNN Travel* listed Asheville as one of the "18 Best Places to Visit in 2018" (Jan. 2018).
- ▶ The city was named *Lonely Planet's* #1 "Best in the U.S. Destination for 2017" (Jan. 2017).



### ATTRACTIONS

- ▶ The largest private residence in North America, Biltmore, is located in Asheville. This 250-room mansion, built by George W. Vanderbilt and completed in 1895, is modeled after the 16th-century chateaux Blois, Chenonceaux and Chambord in France's Loire Valley. Architect Richard Morris Hunt designed the house and Frederick Law Olmsted, designer of New York's Central Park, landscaped the estate.
- ▶ George Vanderbilt was instrumental in founding the first forestry school in America when he hired Carl Schenck to succeed Gifford Pinchot as manager of Vanderbilt's 100,000-acre forest. Known today as the Cradle of Forestry in America, this national historic site operated by the U.S. Forest Service is located about 20 miles southwest of Asheville off U.S. Highway 276 in Pisgah National Forest.
- ▶ The Basilica of Saint Lawrence, a National Historic Site, contains the largest unsupported tile dome in the U.S. With only 35 basilicas nationwide, architect Rafael Guastavino constructed the structure from 1905 to 1909. There are no beams of wood or steel in the entire structure; all walls, floors, ceilings and pillars are made of tile or other masonry materials.
- ▶ One of America's most esteemed authors, Thomas Wolfe, was born and raised in Asheville. Wolfe spent his boyhood years at his mother's boardinghouse, the Old Kentucky Home, which he later used as the setting of his most famous novel, "Look Homeward Angel." Although many of the rooms and furnishings were damaged by a fire that ravaged the house in July 1998, the house has been completely restored and offers tours daily. Located on Market Street and directly behind the house, the memorial and visitor center is open to the public.
- ▶ The world's largest public collection of furniture and lighting fixtures from the Arts & Crafts era can be found at The Omni Grove Park Inn. Elbert Hubbard's Roycrofters custom made 700 pieces of furniture and 600 hand-hammered copper lighting fixtures originally for Grove Park, and much of it remains there today. E.W. Grove, who made a fortune in patent medicines, opened the 510-room Grove Park Inn (listed on the National Register of Historic Places) in 1913.
- ▶ Historic Montford boasts the highest concentration of bed & breakfasts in Asheville. In subtle ways, the neighborhood mirrors Asheville's cosmopolitan character at the turn of the century. Artistic influences in the town include details from national architectural trendsetters like Bruce Price, Bernard Maybeck and Frank Lloyd Wright. It is also where Zelda Fitzgerald, the wife of F. Scott Fitzgerald, died in the Old Highland Hospital, formerly located at the north end of Montford.



## OUTDOOR

- ▶ Mount Mitchell is the highest point east of the Mississippi River at 6,684 feet, located about 20 miles northwest of Asheville. The state park is about 5 miles west of Blue Ridge Parkway milepost 365.
- ▶ More motorists exit and enter the nation's most popular scenic highway, the Blue Ridge Parkway, in Asheville than at any other point along the road's 469 miles linking Shenandoah National Park in Virginia with Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina.
- ▶ The Blue Ridge Mountains surrounding Asheville make it the premier southeastern destination for autumn leaf watchers. The fall color season extends from late September through early November, with trees turning first at the highest elevations of 6,000 feet, and moving downward through October to Asheville at 2,500 feet and then to Chimney Rock at 1,300 feet.
- ▶ Nine of North Carolina's 11 major waterfalls are located in the western part of the state, including the eastern United States' highest, Whitewater Falls at 411 feet. Bridal Veil Falls, Cullasaja Falls, High Falls, Rainbow Falls and Whitewater Falls are all on or just off U.S. Highway 64. Connetsee Falls, Looking Glass Falls and Maiden Hair Falls can be found along U.S. Highway 276. Sliding Rock, a natural waterslide, is also just off U.S. 276.
- ▶ Great Smoky Mountains National Park, located about 50 miles southwest of Asheville, is the country's most popular national park with more than 514,000 acres and an estimated population of 1,500 black bears. The most biodiverse park in the National Park system, the Great Smoky Mountains have more than 19,000 documented species of animals, plants, organisms and fungi, and an additional 80,000 - 100,000 believed to live there.
- ▶ The French Broad River, flowing through Asheville, is the third-oldest river in the world, according to geologists, and helped shape the Appalachian Mountains. The river also runs from south to north, to the Tennessee River.



## FOOD & BEVERAGE

- ▶ Referred to as Foodtopia, Asheville's food scene is a community of culinary collaborators with 250+ independent restaurants, six James Beard-nominated chefs and 14 farmers markets.
- ▶ From Caribbean to vegetarian, four-star restaurants to down-home diners, Asheville boasts a variety of eateries that go well beyond its Southern cooking and barbecue roots. Asheville is most well-known for restaurants that utilize traditional Appalachian ingredients that are farmed or foraged locally like ramps, serviceberry, creasy greens, honey, apples and wild mushrooms. Pork, beef and trout from local farms are also widely utilized by restaurants, as well as goat and cow cheeses from local creameries.
- ▶ Asheville has grown into the eastern U.S. craft beer destination. The story began in 1994 when retired engineer Oscar Wong opened Highland Brewing Company, Asheville's first craft brewery. Today, there are 46 breweries in the Asheville area and that number is continually growing. On any given day, hundreds of locally brewed beers are on tap around the city.
- ▶ Asheville's beer scene got a major boost in 2009 when noted brew writer Charlie Papazian conducted his first "Beer City USA" poll. Asheville tied with much bigger Portland, Ore., to share the title and went on to win or tie the poll the next three years. The poll was retired in 2014, but the city's craft beer scene was firmly established. The numbers tell the story - *SmartAsset.com* stories in both 2016 and 2017 on "The Best Cities for Beer Drinkers" found that Asheville has the most breweries per 100,000 residents of any U.S. city.



## CULTURE

- ▶ More art deco architecture built in the late 1920s and early 1930s can be found in downtown Asheville than in any other southeastern city outside Miami.
- ▶ Asheville is home to the Southern Highland Craft Guild, the second oldest of its kind in the nation, located at the Folk Art Center off the scenic Blue Ridge Parkway, just 15 minutes from downtown.
- ▶ The Mountain Dance and Folk Festival, held in August in downtown Asheville, is the oldest of its kind in the nation. Celebrating music indigenous to the Blue Ridge and Great Smoky mountains, some of the region's best musicians entertain capacity crowds and compete for prize money. The mountain music and clog dancing performed at the festival have roots in the lives of Welsh, Irish, Scottish and English pioneers who settled this area.
- ▶ Arts and culture equate to significant numbers in Asheville, that represent household incomes, livelihoods and economic growth. According to a 2018 Creative Sector Snapshot Report, there are 7,993 total creative jobs in Buncombe County, including 1,036 photographers, 769 musicians and singers, 752 writers and authors, 513 graphic designers and 328 fine artists. Asheville is ranked 1.25 on the Creative Vitality Index (CVI), which measures the health of the creative economy as it compares to the national index average of 1.
- ▶ According to an Asheville Chamber-led case study on the music industry's impact in the local economy, the industry's core employment grew by a staggering 76 percent from 2010 to 2018, totaling 778 jobs. The industry is led by musical groups and artists and musical instrument manufacturing. The job concentration in the musical manufacturing industry in Asheville provides 854 percent more jobs than the national average.
- ▶ The Asheville area has produced a number of legends and Grammy-winning musicians. Giants like Roberta Flack, Nina Simone, Warren Haynes, The Steep Canyon Rangers, David Holt and Doc Watson all have roots in the region.

