

# rock of ages, for all ages

Exploring the mountains surrounding Asheville is an immersion in millions of years of natural history. Nowhere in North America is the biodiversity matched. Nowhere east of the Rockies are the summits higher and the gorges deeper. And nowhere on the continent are the mountains and streams more ancient. Formed three hundred million years ago, these timeworn mountains are a haven for wildlife and a botanical paradise. For families that appreciate the natural world, the possibilities are endless.

Consider a day trip to Cataloochee Valley, home to a herd of antlered elk; marvel at tiny bonsai replicas of famous mountain landscapes at the North Carolina Arboretum; or get up-close, but not too personal, with native black bear at the WNC Nature Center or Grandfather Mountain. Downtown Asheville also offers an array of kid-friendly activities from museums to electro bike and segway tours.

## New for Families in Asheville

The Asheville area has seen a surge in kid-friendly offerings and businesses over the last year - perfect for downtown exploration or days when its too rainy to hit the trails. ▶ The **Asheville Art Museum** features an ArtPLAYce for families and children. ▶ Tour the city by bus on the **LaZoom Kids' Comedy Bus**. The start and stop point for the tour is the **LaZoom Room**, offering juice boxes and snacks for kids. ▶ Take a tour of Asheville on two wheels with **The Flying Bike** electric bike tours, or if



your kid needs lessons, sign up for a private class with **Kids Cycle Club**. ▶ Explore Mars at the **Asheville Museum of Science**. ▶ Roll the dice at **Well Played Board Game Cafe**, which is set to reopen in a new downtown Asheville location in winter 2022. ▶ **The WNC Nature Center's Prehistoric Appalachia Project** has come to life with a **red panda exhibit**. An ancient ancestor of the endangered animal, the Bristol's Panda, was once prevalent in the region. ▶ The **Moogseum** in downtown Asheville includes synthesizers, theremins & effect pedals allowing people to explore the science behind electronic music and a Young Inventors Lab where children can create their own circuit board. ▶ The **Asheville Pinball Museum** in downtown is an all-you-can-play arcade featuring pinball machines and classic video games. ▶ Experience the mountains and the Blue Ridge Parkway in a Polaris Slingshot with **Joyride Slingshot Rentals**.

## Family Adventures in Foodtopia

With over 250 independent restaurants, an array of locally made artisan food products and 17 tailgate markets, the Asheville area is known as Foodtopia. ▶ **The tour most likely to be led by a goat?** The Asheville area is home to dozens of mountain creameries, honoring the time-honed traditions of Appalachian artisan cheese production. The WNC Cheese Trail connects a number of creameries open to receiving visitors. Many of these farms let you get hands-on with their cows and goats. ▶ **Asheville's Willy Wonka:** Parents and kids alike will enjoy a stop into the French Broad Chocolate Lounge for handcrafted treats.

## Top Five Creeks to Wade, Swim & Explore

Hike to a waterfall, paddle a river, fish a remote stream, or just watch and listen. Refreshing and clear, visitors will see why the scenic waterways of Western North Carolina are, as many locals believe, sacred and purifying. Oh, and fun! Visit the prized waterfalls of film at DuPont State Forest or wade over age-old wedges of polished rock on the crooked waterways in Panthertown Valley.

1. **Little River** - Take a dip below one of dozens of waterfalls at DuPont State Forest that are so impressive you'll hardly notice the chill.
2. **Davidson River** - Float down in a tube, cast a fly, or dream along this broad watershed of the Pisgah National Forest.
3. **Bent Creek** - Hike or cycle to the perfect spot on the creek on this favorite destination just minutes from downtown.
4. **Skinny Dip Falls, Yellowstone Prong of the Big East Fork** - A cascading stream with a five star swimming hole and just a short stroll from the Parkway.
5. **Headwaters of the Tuckaseegee River, Panthertown Valley** - The creeks, granite domes, and bogs here offer a lifetime of footpaths, streams and waterfalls to explore.

**ASHEVILLE**  
ExploreAsheville.com

Let your  
spirit  
run free

## Try it Here First

Perform yoga on a stand-up paddle board, zip line over paradise or paddle whitewater on your belly, and you'll see that funky outdoor pursuits are a fitting reflection of this open-minded mountain town. Imagine surfing rapids in a **Bellyak**—a locally designed watercraft that makes getting on the river quick and easy. ► Imagine surfing in a kayak, mid-air, harnessed to a cable three-stories high, then climbing a rock wall suspended in a mammoth oak tree. You can do that at North Carolina's first full scale aerial adventure course, Asheville Treetops Adventure Park at the **Adventure Center of Asheville**, just minutes from downtown. The park offers KidZip, one of America's first zipline adventures designed for kids 4-10 years old, Quick Jump - a 65-foot jump with a 15-20-foot free fall, and a trail designed for kids age 4-6 with beam walks, cargo net, a tunnel, plank bridges, cable bridges and a zip line finish. The Adventure Center also offers recreational tree climbing, allowing families the thrill of the climb in a controlled setting. Participants will use specialized gear and techniques, along with a rope, while they climb, without negatively affecting the tree. ► Want to race through the sky? Venture north of town to experience **Navitat Zipline Canopy Tours**, the nation's premier tree-top adventure reaching speeds up to 65 mph. A side-by-side "racing style" journey from mountain peak to mountain peak offers endless views from more than 350 feet above the ground. ► **Smoky Mountain Adventure Center** and **Climbmax Climbing** offer kids climbing and a special rate for kids five years old and under.



## Flora, Fauna & Family

Kids love scat. They really do! Animal poo is totally a laughing matter as you follow the interactive hiking exhibits with scat map in hand at **Chimney Rock State Park**. Amateur naturalists and curious kids can also help experts tally the thousands of critters, large and small, on a "fern forray" or "snail survey" at **Great Smoky Mountains National Park**. On the edge of town, pick up a Discovery Day Pack or take in a Wee Naturalist Class for your tiny one before a trail or garden expedition at the **North Carolina Arboretum**. Wildlife lovers of all ages will adore the indigenous otters, owls and wolves of the **WNC Nature Center**. Learn about life as a salamander or the art of fly fishing for mountain trout at the **Pisgah Center for Wildlife Education**.

## One of America's Largest Backyards

While "don't touch!" may come to mind when thinking about the grandeur and elegance of **Biltmore**, the property is actually very kid friendly. Every restaurant has a children's menu, the winery offers grape juice for kids (don't forget the Grape Stomp during Live After Five events) and there's a fun treasure hunt that you can use while you explore with your family. The activities and opportunities at **Antler Hill Village** allow children to "be a farmer for a day." Here they can pet barn animals, climb aboard tractors and try their hand at butter making and grinding corn on the weekends! The estate also offers hiking and biking trails, horseback trail rides, segway tours, river float trips and fly fishing lessons for kids.

## Family-Friendly Breweries

With more breweries per capita than anywhere else in the nation, parents don't have to leave their children behind to experience Beer City USA. Many Asheville breweries incorporate family-friendly elements like kids' menus, cornhole and ample space for children to run around. **Asheville Brewing Co.** is part brewery, part pizza business with a movie theater regularly showing children's movies and a giant UFO on the roof. **Whistle Stop** is a train-themed taproom with a mini-golf course, mini bowling and a special disc golf Connect 4-style game. Also check out: **Highland Brewing Co., Sierra Nevada, Archetype, Zillicoah and Turgua** (lots of room to run).

## Family Fun Favorites

- **Dance your cares away** at the Friday night drum circle in Pritchard Park.
- **Cool off** in Splasheville, an interactive water fountain in Pack Square Park.
- **Forage** for mushrooms and edible plants with No Taste Like Home, then enjoy them at a local restaurant.
- **Take a ride** down Sliding Rock, a 60-foot natural waterslide in the Pisgah National Forest.
- **Play all day** at the Asheville Pinball Museum.
- **Serafina and the Seven Stars:** The fourth book of local author Robert Beatty's best-selling mystery-thriller series is now available. Serafina is a young girl who protects Biltmore, facing a dark & dangerous mystery to save her friend, Braeden Vanderbilt.