

Make a To Do List When Visiting Chapel Hill, NC

For Release Ongoing

Chapel Hill, NC While you are in town for a vacation getaway, meeting or conference, take advantage of the many sights and sounds of Orange County. In Chapel Hill, stroll down Franklin Street, the heartbeat of this community, to visit a multitude of shopping, dining, and entertainment venues that are open night and day. Each spring and fall enjoy buskers playing music weekend evenings on Franklin Street.

Some of the downtown features include T-shirt and memorabilia shops, gifts, collectibles and clothing stores. You can buy everything from unique gifts to custom jewelry or hip trendy fashions. Restaurants and food are plentiful with everything from Asian and Mexican cuisine to deli counters, brewpubs, coffee shops, and ice cream parlors.

Speaking of food, **Al's Burger Shack**, home of the best burger in America according to TripAdvisor, is in the heart of downtown Chapel Hill. **Sutton's Drug Store** features an old fashioned soda fountain, cool milkshakes and heavenly cheeseburgers. You'll also find one James Beard Foundation award winner on W. Franklin Street, the 2011 "Best Chef in the Southeast" Andrea Reusing at Pan-Asian **Lantern** Restaurant. Lantern also received the 2013 nomination for "Outstanding Restaurant." The oldest restaurant in Chapel Hill, which opened in 1922, is the **Carolina Coffee Shop** also on Franklin Street. There is also a growing Food Hall, **Blue Dogwood Public Market** to enjoy.

Other must try restaurants include longtime **Merritt's Grill** known for their famous BLTs and new Bluebird, a French Bistro, Market & Moss, Momo's Master known for its dumplings and Piero's Pasta and Wine. Check locations for days and hours open.

There are five craft beer breweries in Orange County you can visit, including two in downtown Chapel Hill. The triangle's oldest brewery is the W. Franklin Street, **Carolina Brewery** and nearby **Top of the Hill Restaurant and Brewery**, whose outdoor patio overlooks Franklin Street. In Carrboro visit Steel String, Vecino and Craftboro Brewing Depot. The newest taprooms are E. Franklin Street's **Gizmo Brew Works** and **Dingo Dog Ciderhouse & Taproom** in the new Shelton Station in Carrboro. In Cedar Grove, visit cidery and winery **Botanist and Barrel** located on an organic blueberry farm. Coming soon is the new Eno River Brewery on the banks of the Eno River in Hillsborough.

The newest hotel in town is the 98-room TRU by Hilton Chapel Hill, In downtown is the West Franklin Street **Graduate Chapel Hill** which opened in August 2020. The **AC Hotel Downtown Chapel Hill**, which opened in December 2017, is a 123-room Marriott property on Rosemary Street, two blocks from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill campus and has a European flare melding contemporary architecture with local art, including a community mural. The historic hotel in town is the nearby **Carolina Inn** on the edge of the campus. This Destination Hotel, which opened in 1924, is an AAA Four Diamond property on the National Register of Historic Places featuring 185 guestrooms and the Crossroads Chapel Hill Restaurant & Bar.

Steps from The Carolina Inn is the Ackland Art Museum, which houses an internationally respected collection of more than 20,000 objects, drawings, and prints representing Asia, Africa, Europe and America, with works ranging from ancient times to the 21st century. There is also a retail gift show in the museum.

Additionally for **art lovers** don't forget the multitude of colorful murals and numerous art galleries and festivals. The music scene includes live music clubs including **Local 506** and **The Cave** on West Franklin.

For **kids**, the popular **Kidzu Children's Museum** has exhibits and hands-on activities focused on kids infant to tweens. The 8,500 sq ft museum is located in the University Place (formerly University Mall).

The older streets, just a block from the downtown business district, are lined with historic houses and charming cottages. For **history lovers**, The Preservation Society of Chapel Hill and Chapel Hill Historical Society have teamed up to provide Heart of Chapel Hill Tours. Visit <https://heartofthehilltours.com/> to register. Visitors may also tour the Horace Williams House, which is the only **historic** house in Chapel Hill open to the public. Visit preservationchapelhill.org for details. Additional free guided tours of downtown are available via the site www.freewalkingtourschapelhill.com/

A visit to Chapel Hill would not be complete with a walk on the UNC campus, the oldest state university in the country. Register for a walking tour leaving from the UNC Visitor's Center at 134 E. Franklin Street. Please contact the UNC Visitor's Center at (919) 962-1630 for more information. On the campus, make plans to visit the new-look **Morehead Planetarium & Science Center** with its \$9.2 million dollar renovation and newly installed digital projector. Visit www.moreheadplanetarium.org for details. Known for its breathtaking star shows, this first planetarium in the South once served as a NASA training center for astronauts from 1959 to 1975. Experience Full-dome Digital Video Technology with super-high-definition resolution and digital surround sound system and reconfigured seating for better sight lines. See shows about everything from astronauts, to Black Holes, the solar system to the current Carolina Skies. See the large iconic sundial and rose garden in front.

Another campus treasure is the **North Carolina Collection Gallery** in Wilson Library. Noted as the largest collection of documents and artifacts on a single state, the collection contains over 650,000 rare books, maps, photographs, oil portraits, currency, antique furniture, and other historical artifacts. Read more at <https://library.unc.edu/wilson/ncc/>

If you **love the outdoors**, drop by the [North Carolina Botanical Garden](#), the largest botanical garden in the southeast. This garden contains piedmont nature trails; mountain, coastal plains and sandhills habitat collections; ferns, carnivorous, aquatic and rare plant collections; an extensive herb garden and plant family garden. There is also a children's Wonder Garden and a 29,000 square foot "Green" Education Center, which has a Platinum LEED designation.

For **sports lovers**, tour the free 8,000 square foot interactive **Carolina Basketball Museum** next to the Dean E. Smith Center basketball complex, or stop by the Frank Kenan Football Center, both on the UNC campus. The basketball museum highlights a century of Carolina Basketball while the football center's Charlie Justice Hall of Honor features a wall of Jordan brand sneakers and UNC football highlights. See the large Ram statue out front. The first UNC football game took place in 1888. Also catch exciting college sporting events for more than two dozen men and women's teams

on the UNC campus. Also check out the UNC Women's Basketball Museum in the Carmichael Arena on the UNC Campus. Visit www.goheels.com for updates.

Chapel Hill offers a multitude of performing arts opportunities. Enjoy theatre, dance, opera, concerts and more at the **PlayMakers Repertory Company** or at the beautiful historic **Memorial Hall** on the UNC-Chapel Hill campus.

Check out one of many wonderful shopping locations in the town.

In Carrboro, some of the most progressive music can be heard at the famous **Cat's Cradle** and wonderful plays, music and dance is at the **ArtsCenter**, which will be moving to a new location around the corner in 2023. **Carr Mill**, the town's first textile mill, is now a charming shopping mall. Attached is the **Weaver Street Market**, the largest food co-op in the southeast providing everything from soybean margarine or baked tofu to goat's milk soap and organic olive oil.

Shop Carrboro's popular **Farmers' Market** adjacent to the Carrboro Town Hall on Saturday morning's year round, expanding spring through fall adding Wednesday afternoon hours. The area's oldest market, which opened in 1979, features produce, flowers, baked goods and more all from farmers within a 50 miles radius. Other farmers markets are year round in Chapel Hill and Hillsborough.

Shop for unique antiques and crafts at places like the **NC Crafts Gallery**, which features - the original works of North Carolinian artists and craftspeople and **Womancraft Gifts**, which was founded by a handful of local women more than 40 years ago and continues to carry on the tradition of being owned & operated by local artists. There are numerous shops and restaurants at the growing 300 East Main Street development. Don't forget the popular **Open Eye Café** with **Carrboro Coffee Roasters** on site and award-winning **Neal's Deli** on S. Greensboro Street.

Historic Hillsborough, just north of Chapel Hill and Carrboro, is sometimes referred to as "a museum without walls." In Hillsborough, you'll find an entire downtown district that has been named to the National Register of Historic Places, with more than 100 late 18th and early 19th century structures still standing today. Guided and self-guided tours of Hillsborough's historic district are available. Find the historic **Colonial Inn** (1838), which reopened in November 2020 after a multi-year renovation.

You'll also find the nationally recognized **Montrose Gardens** (open for tours September – May), which was started in the mid-1800's, the Old Burwell School Historic Site, a 19th century Presbyterian school for young ladies, the 18th century Alexander Dickson House and the 1815 Ayr Mount federal-era plantation,. Can't miss attraction is the 1.8 mile **Riverwalk** hiking, walking and biking trail which runs along the Eno River through Hillsborough and is part of the statewide Mountains-to-See Trail.

In Hillsborough, visitors can stroll the charming downtown district along Churton Street for unique treasures as well as chocolates, wine and much more.

Orange County has a wealth of parks in the community ranging from small city parks with playground equipment to larger city and county parks with picnic shelters, baseball fields, swimming pools and tennis courts. Two area lakes spring through fall weekend opportunities for fishing, canoeing, kayaking and picnicking. And don't forget Eno River State Park straddling Durham and Orange counties near Hillsborough. The park provides canoeing, fishing, camping, nature study programs and more than 18 miles of beautiful hiking trails. Hikers will also enjoy the beautiful views from **Occoneechee Mountain State Natural Area**, the highest point in Orange County.

For information about Orange County call the Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau call (919) 245-4320. Ask for an Official Visitors Guide and map or visit the bureau's web site at www.visitchapelhill.org. When in town drop by the new downtown Welcome Center at 308 W. Franklin Street, Monday – Saturday. See a video by singer, songwriter, Grammy-winner and Rock and Roll Hall of Fame member, James Taylor, who spent his childhood in Chapel Hill from age 3 to 17.

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