



Chapel Hill: A Cool
College Town to
Experience Year
Round

Chapel Hill in central North Carolina, is home to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the nation's first state university. A great place to visit any time of the year, this quintessential college town is a mix of historic sites, unique gardens, wonderful museums and exciting college sports. Its vibrant downtown is home to craft beer, comedy, live music, vintage clothing and boutiques, a wide variety of dining and more. Don't forget our neighbors, former mill and railroad town Carrboro, home to the famous Cat's Cradle and Hillsborough, a small town getaway full of historic charm which has the popular 1.8 mile **Riverwalk** beside the Eno River (part of the Mountain-to-Sea Trail) through town and the historic Ayr Mount Plantation (1815).

Chapel Hill Orange County Visitors Bureau has a new app **Visit Chapel Hill** for apple and android. Also promoting agritourism App VisitNC Farms.

Hotel News

[AJ Capital Partners](#) has acquired the Franklin Hotel in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. The property's renovations will begin in January 2020 and will relaunch in Spring/Summer 2020 as the **Graduate Chapel Hill**, a 70-key, five-story addition to the [Graduate hotels](#).

Coming - 97-room, four-story **TRU Hotel by Hilton**, plus potential for 100 more rooms in a second building coming to east side of Chapel Hill. 2020 groundbreaking. A two-story, 136-space parking deck would be built behind the hotel.

The historic [Colonial Inn](#), which dates to 1838 in downtown Hillsborough, NC is coming back to life. Anticipate completion in summer 2020. Current plans call for 28 elegant sleeping rooms, a large event space, wedding lawn and a limited menu restaurant and bar. The Colonial Inn's restaurant closed in 2001.

Possible two more hotels coming to downtown Chapel Hill.

Carolina Inn, AAA Four Diamond property planning renovations in next couple of years. www.carolinainn.com Also Sheraton Chapel Hill planning renovations beginning in 2020.

Signature Attractions

The first planetarium in the South is getting an \$8.5 million facelift expected to be complete in Fall of 2020. Celebrating its 70th anniversary in 2019, the ongoing [Morehead Planetarium and Science Center's](#) re-imagines the North Carolina icon as a modern-day, technology, and science hub. **Morehead renovation plans include:** 1-Moving the main entrance to the building's west end facing McCorkle Place. 2-An exhibit hall that will pay tribute to UNC's history as a pioneer of science exploration. More than early 60 astronauts between 1959 and 1975 trained in celestial navigation at the Planetarium, including 11 of the 12 men who walked on the Moon! 3-An interactive "maker space" that is part exhibit, part program 4-An updated science demonstration stage and 5-Expanded exhibit galleries (increasing space from 1,000 sq ft to 5,000 sq ft) showcasing the advances researchers are making in science, health and technology and more. Upgrades to fulldome theatre and gift shop.

The Ackland Art Museum at UNC is the only public university art museum in the United States to own a collection of Rembrandt's drawings. Seven drawings from the Museum's Peck Collection, celebrates the legacy of Rembrandt. The drawings in the Ackland's collection, which were created over 20 years from about 1635 to 1656, depict biblical and genre scenes, figure studies and the Dutch landscape. Recent special display marked the 350th anniversary of the artist's death in 1669.

[Cat Tales Cat Café](#) recently opened on West Franklin Street in downtown Chapel Hill.

Dining & Food Updates – What’s New?

Check out [Blue Dogwood Public Market](#) (public Food Market/Hall) The Triangle’s first food market with a focus on vegan and vegetarian options. Find Persian dishes, empanadas, vegan wraps, vegan soul food, organic produce, tea, coffee, fresh juices, beer, and more. On site new cooking classes. New vendor - **Big Belly Que** from chef **Garret Fleming**, who was the chef at the acclaimed **Motto** restaurant in downtown Durham and Burlington’s **Smitty’s Homemade Ice Cream**. **Downtown Chapel Hill, 306 West Franklin Street. Open Wed – Sun. Small with six vendors but room for more.** Outdoor beer garden

Chef Brandon Sharp the North Carolina native, Michelin star winner, and former chef at Crossroads at the Carolina Inn, has his first restaurant, [Hawthorne & Wood](#), at Chapel Hill’s East 54 development. The menu draws much of its inspiration from California where the chef has spent the majority of his career. He collected seven prestigious Michelin stars along the way.

[Blue Spoon Microcreamery’s](#) homemade in-house cryogenic ice cream is open in downtown Chapel Hill on Franklin Street.

Chapel Hill - Dame's Chicken & Waffles plans to open in the former BSkis at 147 E. Franklin Street. [Deli Edison](#), a project from Sam Suchoff, owner of Lady Edison hams will open in the Bagel Bar location on Weaver Dairy Road near The Pig and The Neighborhood Bar.

Carrboro is home to North Carolina’s only Roman-style pizza restaurant with the recent addition of [Coronato Pizza](#) by **Chef Teddy Diggs**. Located in the new South Green shopping center at 501 S. Greensboro St. Enjoy cold craft beers, prosecco on tap and select Italian wines by the glass, alongside affordable bottles of wine and bubbles that pair perfectly with pizza.

Carrboro - [401 Main Bar](#), an upscale dive bar is just opened in Carrboro with a large front patio for your dog to lounge.

Coming Soon to Hillsborough - Rasoi Ventures announced they are opening a new global tapas-style bistro and cocktail bar at 122 W King St. called [Nomad](#). In **West Hillsborough**, Carrboro restaurants [Napoli pizza](#) and [Glasshalfull](#) wine bar will partner on a new restaurant slated to open in the space that formerly house Mystery Brewing Public House on 230 S. Nash Street. It will feature small plates and entrees, some of which will also be cooked in the wood oven.

Anniversaries

The 60,000 square foot gourmet emporium, [Southern Season](#). It’s the South’s premiere specialty food marketplace and has been a Chapel Hill Landmark since 1975 (nearly 45 years old). Featuring over 70,000 unique products, including a huge North Carolina products section, an expansive cooking school, ice cream shop and wine tasting area. It is truly a food lover’s paradise with tasty souvenirs to take home.

Two downtown popular food venues nearing 100th anniversaries – Carolina Coffee Shop in 2022 and Sutton’s Drug Store in 2023. [Sutton’s Drug Store](#) is an old fashioned soda fountain on Franklin Street serving shakes, burgers and cherry cokes since 1923 and check out the wall of photos. Vintage candy and sodas.

The Carolina Inn, signature iconic Chapel Hill hotel celebrates 100 years in 2024.

UNC’s **North Carolina Botanical Garden** is 70 in 2021 The **Botanical Garden**, one of the largest natural **botanical gardens** in the southeast, features nature trails, carnivorous plant collections, perennial borders, aquatics and herb **gardens**.

What’s New in Brews & Spirits

New Brewery in Fall 2019 - New small batch nano-brewery and bottle shop, **Craftboro Brewing Depot** is open. This onsite craft brewery will also have a beer garden and wine, beer and spirits store. Opened in the Carrboro’s new development [South Green](#). <https://www.facebook.com/Craftboro-Brewing-Depot-267495500393612/>

Will bring Orange County’s total to 5 breweries with on-site tap rooms to visit – currently Carolina Brewery, Top of the Hill Restaurant & Brewery, Vecino Brewery and Steep String Brewery.

Gizmo Works is bringing a beer tap room to downtown Chapel Hill in Amber Alley (former Rathskeller location) in late 2019.

Orange County is home to [Dingo Dog Brewing Company](#), North Carolina's first "non-profit" brewery. Located in an up-fitted horse barn on PlowGirl Farm, Dingo Dog strives to craft locally-conscious beers in its "zero waste" facility. Dingo Dog will funnel all of its profits into providing capital and operational grants to independent, "no-kill" animal sanctuaries and rescue organizations in North Carolina. **Dingo Dog Taproom** in Carrboro, NC opening in 2020. – Ongoing project.

Carrboro's Steel String Brewery has announced plans to build **Pluck Farms**: a 6,000 square foot production brewery, working farm, destination event site, festival site, culinary pop up venue and disc golf course seated on 57 acres of pasture and woodlands ten miles west down HWY 54 from their current brewery. Beers will be created with foraged, forgotten and unique ingredients found on the land in their small ecosystem. Expected completion **2020**.

BROTHER AND SISTER TEAM LEAD ORANGE COUNTY'S FIRST WINERY & CIDERY- [Botanist and Barrel](#) in Cedar Grove, NC in northern Orange County with Dry Fruit Wines, Farmhouse Ciders & Spirituous Barrels. They are beautifully situated on certified organic Cedar Grove Blueberry Farm just north of Hillsborough, NC which features organic blueberries. They craft a variety of barrel aged and stainless steel dry wines, ciders and sours, using only the finest fruits, blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, peaches and apples. Tasting room open Friday – Sunday. Tours available for groups at other times.

FEW FOOD ACCOLADES

Chapel Hill is home to two 2011 James Beard Award Winners **Andrea Reusing** (Best Southeast Chef) of Lantern and the restaurant **Crook's Corner**, An American Classic. Lantern was a semi-finalist for 2013 Outstanding Restaurant in the James Beard Competition and In 2017 Reusing was a semi-finalist for Outstanding Chef in the Country. **Aaron Vandemark, a six-time James Beard Best Southeast Chef nominee (2011-2016) and chef of Panciuto in Hillsborough** (pop 6,600). IN 2018 - **Gabe Barker, of the Pizzeria Mercato** in Carrboro, for the second year in a row was a semi-finalist for Rising Star Chef. Bon Appetit named Pizzeria Mercato one of their three best new pizza joints in America in Fall 2016.

Downtown Chapel Hill's [Als' Burger Shack](#) voted best burger in America by Trip Advisor/Food and Wine in 2018.

[CHAPEL HILL IS AMONG 15 SOUTHERN CITIES ALL FOOD LOVERS SHOULD VISIT NOW](#) (SOUTHERN LIVING) - August 1, 2017

**Media Contact: Patty Griffin, Communications Director, Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau,
501 W. Franklin Street, Chapel Hill, NC 27516; 919.245.4321**

pgriffin@visitchapelhill.org, [@PattyGriffinNC](#), www.visitchapelhill.org [@visitchapelhill](#)

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