

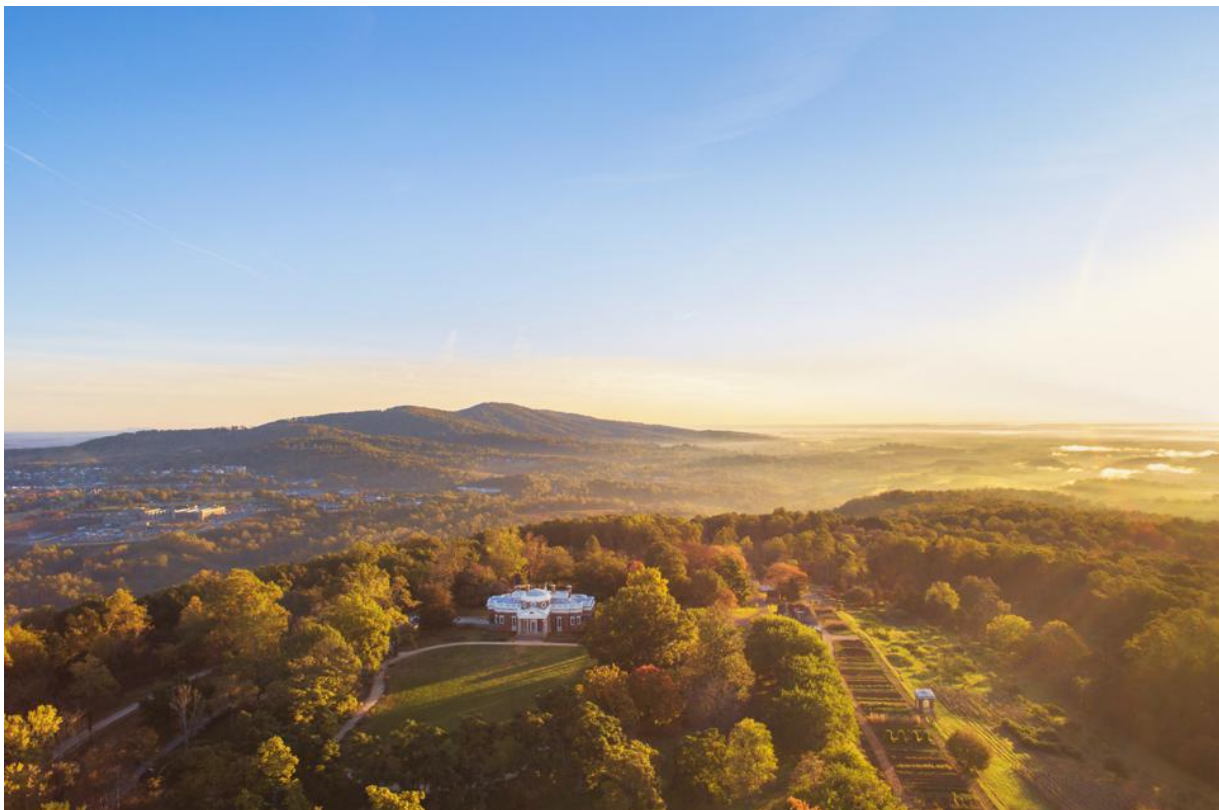
Nov 23, 2020, 09:00am EST | 3,326 views

Why You Should Plan A Road Trip To Charlottesville, VA



Katie Chang Contributor ⓘ

Travel



THOMAS JEFFERSON FOUNDATION AT MONTICELLO

Editor's Note: If you're traveling, please check local government restrictions and safety measures related to COVID-19, and consider your health and comfort levels before departure.

Charlottesville might be best known for being the home of University of Virginia and Thomas Jefferson's famed estate, [Monticello](#), but there's far more to the destination than a prestigious college and rich history.

For starters: did you know the region has gained recognition in recent years for its noteworthy wines? “Charlottesville is quickly becoming known as the Napa of the East Coast,” says Dean Andrews, who co-founded [Pippin Hill Farm & Vineyards](#) with his wife Lynn Easton in 2011. “The wineries around Charlottesville all produce high quality, award-winning wines that pay homage to Thomas Jefferson’s vision of winemaking.”

And because the area is blessed with a mild climate, local farms are able to supply quality meat and produce no matter the time of year – which translates into plenty of good eating in town. Even better? Many of Charlottesville’s top restaurants continue to offer outdoor dining and food to-go.

In addition, Charlottesville has taken COVID-19 seriously from the beginning to ensure peace of mind for visitors and residents alike. Masks are required in all public places – including outdoors when social distancing can’t be maintained – but for the most up-to-date news regarding the city’s policies on the pandemic, click [here](#).

Ahead, how to make the most of a safe and relaxing visit to Charlottesville.

Where to Stay

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BETTY CLICKER

Quirk Hotel Charlottesville

Opened earlier this year, the 80-room [Quirk](#) uses contemporary art and design to connect – as evidenced by the bi-level gallery and original room accents like splashy headboards by Charlottesville-born Kiki Slaughter. The accommodations feel more like hip studios than staid hotel rooms, and there's plenty to eat and drink on-site. Tucked in an adjacent 19th-century house, Quirk Café whips up pitch-perfect coffee in a laid-back setting, while the hotel's signature restaurant, Pink Grouse, lets guests indulge in a gastronomic ten-course dinner. But it's tough to top the Rooftop Bar. Marrying breathtaking views of Blue Ridge Mountains with well-crafted libations and pizzas, the indoor/outdoor lounge just unveiled its “party bubbles,” clear igloos that lets guests safely and comfortably socialize no matter how chilly the air gets.



GRADUATE CHARLOTTESVILLE

Graduate Charlottesville

As a member of Graduate Hotels – a collection of lively properties celebrating the distinctive personalities of the college towns they’re located in – [Graduate Charlottesville](#) offers a wallet-friendly stay within a short distance to UVA and the city’s best restaurants and shopping. Even at the entry level category, the accommodations are spacious, and decked out with a quirky, colorful accents like silhouette-screened cabinets, tartan plaid carpeting, and trophy lamps. Special rates are available for area students seeking extended stays during COVID-19, and if you’re in town next month: check out the “Handcrafted with Kare” pop up on December 12 for organic, small-batch skin and bodycare that also makes thoughtful gifts.

Where to Relax



NEROLI MED SPA & BEAUTY LOUNGE

Neroli Med Spa & Beauty Lounge

After relocating to Charlottesville from Washington DC, Suzanne Owen found herself missing the luxury spa offerings widely available in the nation's capital. To that end: she unveiled [Neroli](#) in 2006, and four years ago, moved into a larger space in the trendy West Main Street Corridor. Now, the current facilities dazzle with 3,000 square feet, and a bevy of cutting-edge aesthetic treatments such as CoolSculpting, hydrafacials, and injectables. "We combine medical spa treatments with day spa treatments, so you can get a massage after getting Botox," says Owen. "And our goal is to create a modern, relaxing environment by pairing our carefully curated services and products with five-star hospitality service."

Where to Wine



PIPPIN HILL FARM & VINEYARDS

Pippin Hill Farm & Vineyards

Drawing inspiration from Thomas Jefferson’s vision of winemaking, the Monticello Wine Trail – often dubbed the birthplace of American Wine – is comprised of over 30 wineries, all within easy driving distance from Charlottesville. But if you only have time to visit one, make it [Pippin Hill Farm & Vineyards](#).

Co-owned by husband-and-wife Dean Andrews and Lynn Easton, this one stands out from the rest as the region’s only culinary winery. In addition to producing world-class wines – today, there’s 20 in the portfolio, including terrific Viognier and Rosé – Pippin Hill has a full-time culinary team dedicated to preparing locally-sourced cuisine for the [Tasting Room](#) and leading cooking classes. Plus, the serene natural backdrop, with sweeping views of the rolling Blue Ridge Mountains, just can’t be beat.

Where to Dine



PUBLIC FISH & OYSTER

Public Fish & Oyster

Opened in 2014 by Daniel Kaufman, this [seafood-centric spot](#) might be most famous for its pristine raw bar offerings – Virginia oysters are \$1 off everyday for happy hour – but the cooked seafood dishes are no slouch. While you'll find familiar favorites like jumbo crab cakes and New England clam chowder on the menu, why not try something original like the Yucatan moule frites? Bathed in a broth made with chorizo, cilantro, and lime, the plump mussels pack a subtly spicy, zippy bite.



MARIEBETTE CAFÉ & BAKERY

MarieBette Café & Bakery

Owned by Patrick Evans and Jason Becton (partners in work and life), this [beloved bakery](#) brings old world European charm to the corner of Dale Avenue and Rose Hill Drive. Though it's currently only open for take-out, online ordering is a breeze and absolutely worth it for the legendary Brioche Feuilletée, almond croissants, and crusty baguettes.



MAS TAPAS

Mas Tapas

Situated in Charlottesville's popular Belmont Neighborhood, this [bustling eatery](#) led by chef Mike Ketola specializes in ingredient-driven – Mas Tapas partners with many area farms – wood-fired cuisine inspired by Spain. You can order anything off the menu as a tapa or full-sized portion (ración), but no meal would be complete without the bacon-wrapped dates, papas bravas smothered in garlicky alioli, and tangy Cantabrian white anchovies.



LAMPO NEAPOLITAN PIZZERIA

Lampo Neapolitan Pizzeria

A delicious homage to authentic Neapolitan-style pizza, [Lampo](#) cooks in a way that's refreshingly transparent and free of fuss. In true Naples fashion, the restaurant is a stickler for ingredients (think "00" flour and San Marzano tomatoes), and all the pies are quickly fired in a Neapolitan wood oven and properly speckled with leopard spotting.



THE WHISKEY JAR

The Whiskey Jar

This [casual concept](#) is part of Ten Course Hospitality, a family of local bars and restaurants envisioned by Will Richey, and fits the bill when you're seeking something hearty and comforting. The menu skews Southern – so expect excellent buttermilk biscuits, po'boys, and fried chicken – and wash it all down with a shot of housemade apple pie whiskey.



KATHY PLUNKET VERSLUYS

Michie Tavern

If you're headed to Monticello, grab lunch [here](#) on the way. A Virginia Historic Landmark established in 1784, this historic tavern offers a self-serve buffet (masks and gloves are required) of homestyle fare, like its famous fried chicken, cornbread, and stewed tomatoes. The tin plates and costumed servers, whom move around the dining areas with platters of more food, just add to the nostalgic experience.

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Katie Chang

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Travel's my beat, but I love nothing more than being home in Brooklyn. I got my "accidental" start as a writer contributing for T: The New York Times Style Magazine, and... **Read More**

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