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Get Lost: 72 Hours in Charlottesville, Virginia's Hidden Gem

A TRAVELER'S GUIDE TO WHAT TO SEE AND DO WHILE SOCIAL DISTANCING IN
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA.



BY KIMBERLY WILSON · AUGUST 26, 2020

If Virginia is for lovers, then Charlottesville is its heart and soul.

The city, which sits atop the Blue Ridge Mountains, is as beautiful as it is complicated, and perfect for those seeking a quick social distanced escape. Nestled just hours between Washington D.C. and Charlotte, North Carolina, Charlottesville is a naturally stunning city with a burgeoning culinary scene, unique accommodations and plenty of outdoor activities that make you feel comfortable getting away amidst a pandemic.

Whatever you're looking for in a getaway, Charlottesville has it, so here's a guide to help you plan your next visit.

Day One

Road tripping through Virginia's beautiful landscape is perhaps one of the best parts of your Charlottesville visit. Depending on if it's a baecation, or a family-cation, the 2020 Toyota C-HR Limited is the best option for all, so all you'll need to do is put together that playlist and go! The vehicle is surprisingly spacious, distinctive, does great on mileage and will make you look good on the road. Its cabin is also stylish and well-made, and its features list is huge, boasting standard accident-avoidance tech among its niceties.

You'll know you've reached Charlottesville when you approach miles and miles of hilly and green landscape (along with a few Trump signs) that entrance you in its beauty. You'll finally find yourself in downtown Charlottesville where you'll land at the **Quirk Hotel**, which is the first boutique art hotel to open in Charlottesville's historic downtown. In a word, it's gorgeous.



When you walk into the main lobby, you'll be charmed by its pink decor, which is just as chic as it is vintage. Quirk Hotel uses art and history as central design elements to spark curiosity and draw guests into the present moment. The main hotel is adjacent to two historic homes dating back to the

18th century — a juxtaposition to the minimalist, contemporary design and modern art inside Quirk. After some quick exploring of the property before you get settled, you'll find two restaurants, a rooftop bar, and an art gallery — all to be enjoyed by guests at Quirk. The centerpiece of Charlottesville, you'll be surprised just how much you'll fall in love with this hotel.

After some rest and relaxation, you'll want to jump back in your C-HR Limited and embark on **Monticello**, which is quite possibly what Charlottesville is most known for. Why? It's a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the destination of Thomas Jefferson's plantation home. Though a difficult "attraction" you'll learn more about slavery in Charlottesville and the life of Sally Hemings, that you may not have know previously. Two-hours of exploration through the house, gardens and in the domestic quarters, won't seem like enough time, but should give you some answers that you may not have learned in the history books and during school. What's unique about Monticello, is the relationship that the property and foundation have with Hemings descendants, as they are the backbone of the property and the disgusting history of the former president who owned more than 600 slaves during his lifetime. Even better, is that Monticello has developed a brilliant system for offering tours that are safe and socially distant, so you won't feel hesitant in experiencing the house and tours.



After an emotionally exhausting day, the only obvious choice is to grab some food and drinks. Head back downtown to the newly opened Pink Grouse. This bright and warm restaurant is sleekly designed to welcome locals to experience Charlottesville fare a whole new way. A local of the community, Chef Dennis Merritt is at the helm of the culinary experience, serving a refined marriage of rustic and local hyper-seasonal ingredients sourced from local Charlottesville farmers.

Day 2

You'll wake up and want to quickly grab some pastries and nourishment from **MarieBette Cafe and Bakery** before a full day of exploration, and wine drinking, of course! Offering only take-out due to COVID, it's not only Black owned, but a staple in the community, so it's definitely worth supporting.

The next stop is the University of Virginia. You're probably wondering why you're visiting a college campus, but as soon as you step foot on the 1,682-acre campus you'll understand why. Also known as being Jefferson's pride and joy, the white-column-adorned buildings surrounded by gorgeous lawns make this an Instagrammable wonder. Be sure to venture to the Memorial for Enslaved Laborers during your visit (because Black people built the joint for free), before heading to one of the most beautiful venues in the Charlottesville area.

Located along Virginia's Monticello Wine Trail, you'll find **Pippin Hill Farm & Vineyards** and instantly be left in amazement. Besides it's gorgeous scenery (are you noticing a trend in Charlottesville?), Pippin Hill creates distinguished boutique wines and pairs it with elevated farm-to-table food that leaves guests with a welcoming sense of relaxed elegance.



After leaving Pippin, you're up for some fun in the er... sun, for an afternoon of picking peaches and apples, homemade cider and an unbeatable atmosphere overlooking Charlottesville, the Piedmont, and the Blue Ridge Mountains at **Carter Mountain Orchard**. For those looking to drink their apples, stop by Bold Rock Cider's cellar, located on the property. You can sample the different varieties and purchase bottles on-site, but be sure to leave room because there's plenty more deliciousness where that came from.

Last but not least on the day two agenda: dinnertime! And of course, soul food is on the menu. You'll stop by Shaun Jenkin's **Soul Food Joint**, which is centrally located in Charlottesville's Downtown Mall. Sample a little bit of everything, but make it a point to try the fried chicken, which is unofficially the best in Charlottesville. You can't go wrong with the pulled pork or ribs either — it's all *that* good. Great vibes, good music and friendly staff make this a must-visit on your itinerary.

Day 3

Add some adventure to your Charlottesville trip by waking up early to drive 30 minutes to the southern entrance of Shenandoah National Park. A local wonder and 200,000 acre nature preserve, you can explore hidden falls and some of the best hiking along the east coast.

You can't leave Charlottesville without indulging in more wine — just make sure there's a designated driver for the ride home! For just as much ambiance and scenic views, go to **King Family Vineyards**. If you'd need more options, try **Veritas**, **Keswick**, **Jefferson**, or **Barboursville** before you exit city lines.

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