



A Weekend Guide to Danville

Courtesy of Our State Magazine

Joyce Wilburn won't say what country she was in — "I don't want to speak badly" — but she remembers the exact moment she took a tour bus and, out of boredom, closed her eyes and fell asleep. "When I woke up, my first thought was, 'Danville has so much to show off, and we're not doing it.'"

As soon as she returned to her Virginia home, a town just across the border from Rockingham and Caswell counties, Wilburn got to work researching Danville's rich textile and tobacco heritage. Since hosting her first tour of Millionaires' Row 15 years ago, Wilburn's expanded her offerings to include two additional [walking tours](#). Participants from 42 states and 22 countries can attest to her story-telling chops.

At the start of her Tobacco Warehouse Tour, Wilburn catches a glimpse of the Dan River. It's her favorite view in Danville. "The farmers would arrive on flat-bottomed riverboats to sell their tobacco. The river also provided power to run the machines so the tobacco could be processed — and later the textiles could be made," she explains. "Another stop is the train station, where our Danville products were sent out to the rest of the world. I love the convergence of the products, the river, and the train station, all in one place."

From historic buildings-turned hotels to its restaurants, shops, and attractions nestled along the river, Danville promotes a go-with-the-flow vibe that leaves you with an unshakeable feeling of Zen. Read on to plan your stay.

Drop Your Bags

You'll feel right at home at the mid-century [Holbrook Hotel](#). Built in 1957 as a doctors' practice, the two buildings bridge the Old West End district with Holbrook-Ross, the historically Black professional neighborhood, placing them on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Holbrook's interiors lean into its mid-century beginnings, with bright and colorful art by Frank Stella and Alexander Calder. Choose from a King, King Deluxe, or King Suite complete with a pull-out couch and fully stocked kitchenette.

Located downtown, [The Bee](#) hotel took its name and historic building from its past life as headquarters of the *Danville Register* and the *Danville Bee*, the city's major newspapers that merged in 1989 as the *Danville Register & Bee*. In contrast with the building's historic exterior, the rooms boast sleek, contemporary decor.

Find Arts and Culture

Housed in the Historic Southern Railway Building, the [Danville Science Center](#) gives children and adults world-class access to STEM exhibits. Consider reservations for the Creativity Lab, where guided activities change weekly but include activities like building a car powered by a rubber band. Before you leave, settle into a show about the cosmos under The Dome's gigantic 40-foot screen.

"If you really want to get a flavor of the background of Danville, be sure to visit the [Danville Museum of Fine Arts and History](#)," advises Wilburn. From its home in the 1859 Sutherlin Mansion, the museum features two art galleries, including an exhibit on Camilla Williams, the first Black soprano to perform with a major American opera company, a gift shop, and permanent Civil War and Civil Rights exhibits. Learn about the history of the house itself — spoiler: This is where Confederate President Jefferson Davis signed his last official proclamation.

"This was a private residence for Major Sutherlin, built before the Civil War," Wilburn says. "You can see rooms that have been recreated to show what the Sutherlin Mansion would have looked like." Even if you stumble into Danville on a Monday when the museum isn't open, swing by the side lawn to read its granite

signs that give more information about Danville's outdoor art and oddities, the Riverwalk, and the surrounding counties.

Shop on Main Street

Danville's Main Street makes it easy to park your car and explore the local shops in the historic River District on foot. You could shop for hours at the array of independent stores and boutiques; here are a few favorites:

[Rippe's](#) is a must-visit stop for a women's clothing store. Complete with every accessory imaginable — shoes, handbags, furs, coats, and jewelry — the bold colors and tasteful flair shine throughout the boutique. For stylish dresses, skirts, and accessories for a night out or special occasion, pop by [Glitz and Glamour Boutique](#). With a selection that ranges from casual leisurewear to formal attire, you can be stylish both at home and out on the town.

If your itinerary leans more into rugged recreation instead of city-slicking, pop into [Moss Mountain Outfitters](#), a store with everything you and your family need to explore the great outdoors.

From here, you can walk to [Chestnut Lane Antiques & Interiors](#), which specializes in antiques, luxury textiles, and wallpaper. If you're not sure which piece best fits your space, ask owner Shelley Blackwell to lend her expert eye. Not looking for anything in particular? Chestnut's still worth a stop just to see Wes, the one-year-old German Shepherd pup in residence.

If you're looking for oldies-but-goodies of a different sort, you can shop for retro-chic apparel at [The Vintage Boutique](#). Pick up accessories to match your next special occasion or fun statement pieces to make your outfit pop, like vintage heels and suede boots, hats, and purses. More than just a shop,

The Vintage Boutique serves as a gathering space, hosting regular book clubs and holiday parties.

Grab a Bite

In Danville's River District, [Mucho Taqueria](#) is your destination for tacos and, thanks to its bar stocked with 85 tequilas, a delicious margarita. Not sure what difference your choice of tequila makes? Try a flight of three tequilas, along with their fruity and refreshing house-made sangrita (margarita meets sangria).

At [Crema & Vine](#), the moment Wilburn walks through the door, the barista begins making her coffee before she even reaches the counter. “It’s like when Norm walks into Cheers, and everybody yells his name,” she laughs. “The owners are always on-site, and you can count on things being done right — and that’s the same for many of our restaurants.”

One of those is the literary-themed [Me’s Burgers & Brews](#), where the burger menu changes quarterly. According to co-owner and bookworm Emily Tomlinson, the only permanent fixture is the Emyl Jenkins, “named after my mentor, a classy Southern lady,” made classically with a beef patty, American cheese, lettuce, tomato, pickle, red onions, and a choice of mayo, ketchup, and mustard.

In the Tobacco Warehouse District, the buzzy [Golden Leaf Bistro](#) offers live music Thursday through Saturday nights, plus a patio that’s sought-after in the spring and summer. Try their brunch, where the menu boasts classics like chicken and waffles and your new favorite order: the Philly cheesesteak omelet.

If you take a stroll on the [Danville Riverwalk Trail](#), be sure to hop off at [2 Witches Winery & Brewery](#), the first of its kind in Virginia and an ideal laid-back gathering spot to end your day. While away the hours listening to

live music, and when you get hungry, grab a smash burger, wings, or a salad from The Cauldron food truck. If the crowds really start rolling in, you’ll know you’re just in time for Karaoke Night.