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LIST

DIG IN: 10 FOOD & DRINK TRAILS IN NORTH CAROLINA

Grab your favorite foodie friends and visit culinary trails around our state that include barbecue, wine and beer, cheese and sweets.



Whole hogs are smoked on site at Sam Jones BBQ


North Carolina is a culinary behemoth. Not only are we known for some of the best restaurants in the country, but hyperlocal food and drink trails allow visitors to explore some of the tiny culinary gems you might miss on a trip to some of our state's signature attractions. From craft beer and barbecue to fine wines and gourmet cheese, it's easy to find a trail for every palate.

1

JOHNSTON COUNTY BBQ TRAIL



Johnston County

See on map 

Tucked into Johnston County's (<https://www.johnstoncountync.org/>) less-than 800 square miles are about 10 barbecue restaurants (<https://www.johnstoncountync.org/joco-bbq-trail-map/>) serving up true Eastern-style barbecue: chopped pork mixed in a vinegar-and-pepper sauce. The result is a spicy tartness enhancing the flavor of the crispy, juicy pork. In JoCo, your plate of barbecue will be served alongside piping hot hushpuppies, and perhaps fried okra or coleslaw. Try the Redneck BBQ Lab (<https://www.johnstoncountync.org/listing/the-redneck-bbq-lab/1616/>) for pulled pork, brisket, ribs, smoked chicken, and sides like collard greens and jalapeno mac and cheese, or Stormin' Norman's (<http://www.storminnormansbbq.com/index.html>) in Kenly for hand-chopped barbecue and fried chicken alongside baked beans and potato salad. And while you're in JoCo, grab a drink on the Beer, Wine and Shine Trail (<https://www.johnstoncountync.org/things-to-do/beer-wine-and-shine-trail/>).

WEBSITE ([HTTPS://WWW.JOHNSTONCOUNTYNC.ORG/JOCO-BBQ-TRAIL-MAP/](https://www.johnstoncountync.org/joco-bbq-trail-map/))


DIRECTIONS ([HTTPS://WWW.GOOGLE.COM/MAPS/SEARCH/?API=1&QUERY=35.5084935,-78.33944550000001](https://www.google.com/maps/search/?API=1&QUERY=35.5084935,-78.33944550000001))

2

YADKIN RIVER WINE TRAIL



Yadkin Valley

See on map 

Named North Carolina’s first American Viticultural Area – a prestigious designation given to specific regions with distinguished features such as climates, soil and elevation – in 2003, Yadkin Valley (<http://yadkinvalleywinecountry.com/>) sits in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains and is as diverse as it is scenic with its four different wine trails. Try the Yadkin River Wine Trail (<https://www.ncwine.org/winetrail/E5c6/yadkin-river-wine-trail>), home to five wineries – including Divine Llama Vineyards (<https://www.divinellamavineyards.com/>), where you can drink award-winning wine on the Southeast’s largest llama farm – an organic vegetable farm and a Century Family Farm, making it the perfect escape for a day trip.

WEBSITE ([HTTPS://WWW.NCWINE.ORG/WINETRAIL/E5C6/YADKIN-RIVER-WINE-TRAIL](https://www.ncwine.org/winetrail/E5c6/yadkin-river-wine-trail))

DIRECTIONS ([HTTPS://WWW.GOOGLE.COM/MAPS/SEARCH/?API=1&QUERY=36.2210139,-80.46753690000003](https://www.google.com/maps/search/?API=1&QUERY=36.2210139,-80.46753690000003))


3

SWAN CREEK WINE TRAIL



Laurel Gray Vineyards

Yadkin Valley

See on map 

Located within the Yadkin Valley wine region is the Swan Creek Wine Trail (<https://www.ncwine.org/winetrail/nCW9/swan-creek-wine-trail>) in central North Carolina. The rocky, mineral-rich soils, cooler climate, higher elevation and longer growing season of this area help produce vinifera wine grapes, making the wines from Swan Creek unique and distinctive. The four wineries on this trail are all within close proximity to one another, but we suggest exploring them over the course of a weekend so you can enjoy the peaceful countryside setting. Sip some wine in a converted 1930s milking parlor at Laurel Gray Vineyards (<https://www.ncwine.org/listing/laurel-gray-vineyards-winery>), and on cooler days at Dobbins Creek Vineyards (<https://www.ncwine.org/listing/dobbins-creek-vineyards>), relax with a full-bodied glass of cabernet sauvignon in front of the stone fireplace.

WEBSITE ([HTTPS://WWW.NCWINE.ORG/WINETRAIL/NCW9/SWAN-CREEK-WINE-TRAIL](https://www.ncwine.org/winetrail/nCW9/swan-creek-wine-trail))


DIRECTIONS ([HTTPS://WWW.GOOGLE.COM/MAPS/SEARCH/?API=1&QUERY=36.1665995,-80.8246977](https://www.google.com/maps/search/?API=1&QUERY=36.1665995,-80.8246977))

4

PITT COUNTY BREW & 'CUE TRAIL



Pitt County

See on map 

Grab your “PassPork” and make your way through the Pitt County Brew & ‘Cue Trail (<https://www.visitgreenvillenc.com/restaurants/pitt-county-brew-and-cue-trail/>), centered in Greenville. Created to celebrate the county’s beloved barbecue joints and breweries, guests can pick up a PassPork at any of places on the trail, collecting official stamps from each establishment to fill their book. Once completed (either the BBQ section, brewery section or both), return it to the Pitt County Visitors Center for prizes, including either a T-shirt or pint glass, and to get your picture taken for the Brew & ‘Cue Wall of Fame. Nationally recognized barbecue restaurants Skylight Inn BBQ (<https://www.skylightinnbbq.com/welcome>) and Sam Jones BBQ (<http://www.samjonesbbq.com/>) are must-visits, and for a taste of the past (a la no phone or website), enjoy an undisturbed meal at B’s Barbecue, housed in an old general store.

WEBSITE ([HTTPS://WWW.VISITGREENVILLENC.COM/RESTAURANTS/PITT-COUNTY-BREW-AND-CUE-TRAIL/](https://www.visitgreenvillenc.com/restaurants/pitt-county-brew-and-cue-trail/))


DIRECTIONS ([HTTPS://WWW.GOOGLE.COM/MAPS/SEARCH/?API=1&QUERY=35.612661,-77.36635380000001](https://www.google.com/maps/search/?API=1&QUERY=35.612661,-77.36635380000001))

5

CRAFT YOUR OWN BARBECUE TRAIL IN LEXINGTON



Lexington

See on map 

As opposed to the barbecue mentioned in Johnston County, Lexington-style barbecue is synonymous with Western-style barbecue. In Lexington, pork shoulders are hickory-smoked and pit-cooked but coarsely chopped and never “pulled.” It’s usually served as part of a tray or as a sandwich, with the celebrated Lexington-style sauce, made with ketchup, vinegar, sugar, salt and pepper. There are more than a dozen Lexington-area barbecue restaurants (<https://www.visitnc.com/story/70q3/plan-a-flavorful-lexington-barbecue-tour>) to explore, with some dating as far back as the 1930s. Speedy’s Barbecue (<http://speedysbbqinc.com/>) has the gift of longevity, having opened as Tussey’s in the 1930s. The Barbecue Center (<https://www.facebook.com/barbecuecenter/>), which opened in 1955, is well-known for its barbecue chicken. Or pick up dinner on the go and take advantage of Lexington Barbecue’s (<http://www.lexbbq.com/>) curb service.

WEBSITE ([HTTPS://WWW.VISITNC.COM/STORY/70Q3/PLAN-A-FLAVORFUL-LEXINGTON-BARBECUE-TOUR](https://www.visitnc.com/story/70q3/plan-a-flavorful-lexington-barbecue-tour))


DIRECTIONS ([HTTPS://WWW.GOOGLE.COM/MAPS/SEARCH/?API=1&QUERY=35.8441169,-80.2536609](https://www.google.com/maps/search/?API=1&QUERY=35.8441169,-80.2536609))

6
RALEIGH BEER TRAIL



Neuse River Brewing

Raleigh

See on map 

The greater Raleigh area has dozens of craft breweries spread across Wake Forest, Raleigh, Holly Springs and Fuquay-Varina. As breweries keep popping up over the years, it's no surprise our capital city compiled them into an easy-to-follow trail (<https://www.visitraleigh.com/foodie/drinks/raleigh-beer-trail/>) for imbibers. Download the printable map and plan your course of action to grab a beer at one of the nearly 40 stops (several of which are in walking distance of one another).

WEBSITE ([HTTPS://WWW.VISITRALEIGH.COM/FOODIE/DRINKS/RALEIGH-BEER-TRAIL/](https://www.visitraleigh.com/foodie/drinks/raleigh-beer-trail/))


DIRECTIONS ([HTTPS://WWW.GOOGLE.COM/MAPS/SEARCH/?API=1&QUERY=35.7795897,-78.63817870000003](https://www.google.com/maps/search/?API=1&QUERY=35.7795897,-78.63817870000003))

7

ASHEVILLE ALE TRAIL



Asheville

See on map 

First things first, Asheville is near the top of the list of most breweries per capita in the ccountry, so pace yourself. Lucky for beer lovers, the Asheville Ale Trail (<https://ashevillealetrail.com/>) is the most comprehensive guide to breweries and craft beer in western North Carolina, so it's easy to create your own path through the huge number of breweries available. For self-guided walking and bike tours – including a tour of the South Slope, home to Wicked Weed (<https://www.wickedweedbrewing.com/>), Hi-Wire (<https://hiwirebrewing.com/>), Twin Leaf (<http://www.twinleafbrewery.com/>) and Greenman (<http://www.greenmanbrewery.com/>) breweries – use the free Asheville Ale Trail app or pick up a printed field guide at more than 150 locations.

WEBSITE ([HTTPS://ASHEVILLEALETRAIL.COM/](https://ashevillealetrail.com/))

DIRECTIONS ([HTTPS://WWW.GOOGLE.COM/MAPS/SEARCH/?API=1&QUERY=35.5950581,-82.55148689999999](https://www.google.com/maps/search/?API=1&QUERY=35.5950581,-82.55148689999999))


8

WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA CHEESE TRAIL



Looking Glass Creamery in Columbus

Western North Carolina

See on map 

A wide variety of the ultimate comfort food is expertly crafted across western N.C., offering some of the best cheeses made in the South. The Western N.C. Cheese Trail (<https://www.wnccheesetrail.org/>) allows visitors the chance to connect directly with cheesemakers, support local and small businesses, and learn about how your favorite styles of cheese are made. You will find cow and goat milk cheese, fresh to aged, pasteurized and raw, as well as artisan and farmstead producers. Although there is a Cheese Trail map (<https://www.wnccheesetrail.org/the-map.html>) available, the map has no beginning and no end, so take your time savoring the varying terrains along the journey as well as the 15+ stops.

WEBSITE ([HTTPS://WWW.WNCHEESETRAIL.ORG/](https://www.wnccheesetrail.org/))

DIRECTIONS ([HTTPS://WWW.GOOGLE.COM/MAPS/SEARCH/?API=1&QUERY=35.5182495,-82.3989028](https://www.google.com/maps/search/?API=1&QUERY=35.5182495,-82.3989028))


9

SURRY SONKER TRAIL



Miss Angel's Heavenly Pies sonker

Surry County

See on map 

Sonker is a kind of deep-dish cobbler in a crust that’s popular around here. The dessert’s history is murky, but three things are pretty clear:

- Sonker is often served with what’s called a “dip,” a sugar-cream sauce poured over when serving.
- Fruit filling is commonly used, although sweet potato variations are also made.
- It’s delicious.


The Sonker Festival (<https://sonkertrail.org/sonker-festival>) has been held annually near Mount Airy since 1980, with music and competitions for the best sonker. Get your fix the rest of the year on the Surry Sonker Trail (<https://www.sonkertrail.org/>), which highlights sonker-friendly bakeries, general stores and country restaurants.

WEBSITE ([HTTPS://WWW.SONKERTRAIL.ORG/](https://www.sonkertrail.org/))

DIRECTIONS ([HTTPS://WWW.GOOGLE.COM/MAPS/SEARCH/?API=1&QUERY=36.3743453,-80.6770787](https://www.google.com/maps/search/?API=1&QUERY=36.3743453,-80.6770787))



Winston-Salem

See on map 

We saved the sweetest trail for last. Winston-Salem is known for its deep Moravian roots thanks to a group of German-speaking Protestants (aka Moravians) who erected a settlement on the land in 1753 that eventually became Winston-Salem. In addition to their religious beliefs, the Moravians brought their culinary traditions, including the popular Moravian cookie: a simple, wafer-thin cookie served in flavors such as ginger, lemon and chocolate. Sample all styles along the Moravian Cookie Trail (<https://visitwinstonsalem.com/things-to-do/attractions/#/blog/nibble-nosh-your-way-through-winston-salems-moravian-culinary-trail>), a collection of bakeries and restaurants that serve the tasty treat. Mrs. Hanes’ Moravian Cookies (<https://www.hanescookies.com/>) just outside of the city is a popular place for the hand-rolled cookies (Quincy Jones is a fan).


WEBSITE ([HTTPS://VISITWINSTONSALEM.COM/THINGS-TO-DO/ATTRACTIONS/#/BLOG/NIBBLE-NOSH-YOUR-WAY-THROUGH-WINSTON-SALEMS-MORAVIAN-CULINARY-TRAI](https://visitwinstonsalem.com/things-to-do/attractions/#/blog/nibble-nosh-your-way-through-winston-salems-moravian-culinary-trail)

DIRECTIONS ([HTTPS://WWW.GOOGLE.COM/MAPS/SEARCH/?API=1&QUERY=35.9769445,-80.3217697](https://www.google.com/maps/search/?API=1&QUERY=35.9769445,-80.3217697))

Debbie Moose contributed to this story.

Craving more delicious adventures? Head on over to The Official 2022 North Carolina Travel Guide (<https://www.visitnc.com/travel-guides>) for other foodie experiences and much more.

Updated April 26, 2021

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