

# Raleigh

NORTH CAROLINA



Chef Cheetie Kumar's fusion-fueled itinerary through the City of Oaks reveals time-honored favorites and hidden hot spots.

As told to  
Jacob Hollifield

Contemporary Art Museum  
Raleigh. Opposite clockwise  
from top left: Anisette Sweet  
Shop, Cheeni Chai + Coffee  
+ Tiffin, Poole's Diner

## Fuel Up

There are two locations of **Cheeni Chai + Coffee + Tiffin**—both in YMCAs. The one that opened first is downtown and they've always had a space for a coffee shop, which is part of why it is here. They're one of the few places that I've been to that has filter coffee, which is a Madras way of drinking coffee.

## Don't Pass on the Punjabi

I discovered **Vaishno Bhog** by accident because I was starving at the Indian grocery store and I'm always looking for places that have Indian street food. They have very traditional Punjabi items and it's homestyle. I always get the dahi bhalli, which is a soft, fermented fritter that then gets all the water squeezed out and then it's smothered in yogurt, chutneys, and tamarind and has potatoes.

## Classic Creole Fare

I have gotten **Jacks Seafood's** fried trout before, and the fried chicken is so good. It's just an odd, catty-corner building on a very sort of busy boulevard, but it's excellent.

## Time for Tapas

**Centro** is a Mexican restaurant and they have a very authentic touch. The chicken tortilla soup is perfect, and then a few years ago, upstairs, they opened a mezcaleria where they feature excellent cocktails and an awesome snack menu.

## NOLA up North

**St. Roch Fine Oysters + Bar** is named after the neighborhood in New Orleans where the chef is from. They have a raw oyster bar and have things with a little bit of a Vietnamese or Asian influence, which kind of makes sense for modern New Orleans.

## Get Outside

There's an entrance to **the Greenway** close to my house and once you get in, you kind of forget where you are. You leave your house in the middle of downtown and then you're surrounded by trees and babbling brooks.

## Soul of the City

The actual location of **Poole's Diner** has been a restaurant for more than fifty years, maybe even longer. Ashley Christensen's version of Poole's is a celebration of Southern, local ingredients. It was the first restaurant in this area in Raleigh that was like a chef's voice and it gave me and a lot of other people permission to express themselves through food without having a traditional culinary background.

## Souvenir Spot

**Nice Price Books & Records** always has fresh, used records, and then new vinyl. It's just a rock solid, reliable, good, old-fashioned used bookstore with great records.

## Sweets with a View

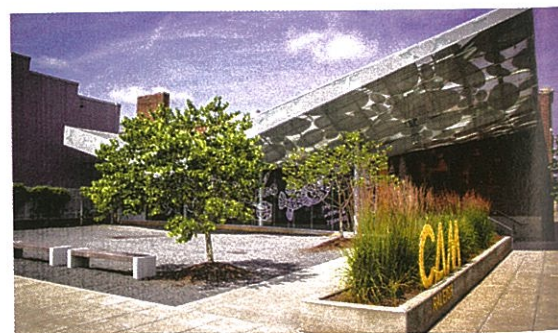
**Anisette Sweet Shop** is in a little building with a courtyard in the back and an awesome view of downtown. It's run by a couple, and they've developed it into a place that is serious about coffee. They feature a lot of vegan confections, too, which are not very easy to find.

## Local Artisans

As the name implies, **Pocket Gallery** is very small, and they feature local artists only. They also have works by local jewelers and metal workers.

## Modern Muses

The **Contemporary Art Museum (CAM Raleigh)** is kind of like our Guggenheim. They have very thought-provoking installations and shows, with artists from all over the world, with everything from fabric and fashion to mixed media that is talking about Indigenous culture.



FROM LEFT: JOE PAYNE; COURTESY OF CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM. OPPOSITE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY OF ANISETTE SWEET SHOP; COURTESY OF CHEENI CHAI + COFFEE + TIFFIN; ANGIE MOSIER