

101 THINGS TO DO

NORTH CAROLINA

**A Comprehensive
List of Attractions
and Fun Things
to See and Do**





101 Things to do in North Carolina

How great is **North Carolina**? Putting together this list was easy. Just a simple list of the hundreds of waterfalls in the state would have sufficed (at least for me). But it isn't just the volume. It's the sheer variety of entertainment, educational and natural wonders for all ages and interests that is never-ending. We've put together a list that attempts to find a bit of something for everyone. We guarantee you'll find more than enough things on the list to grab your attention and entice you to explore all four corners of the Tar Heel state.



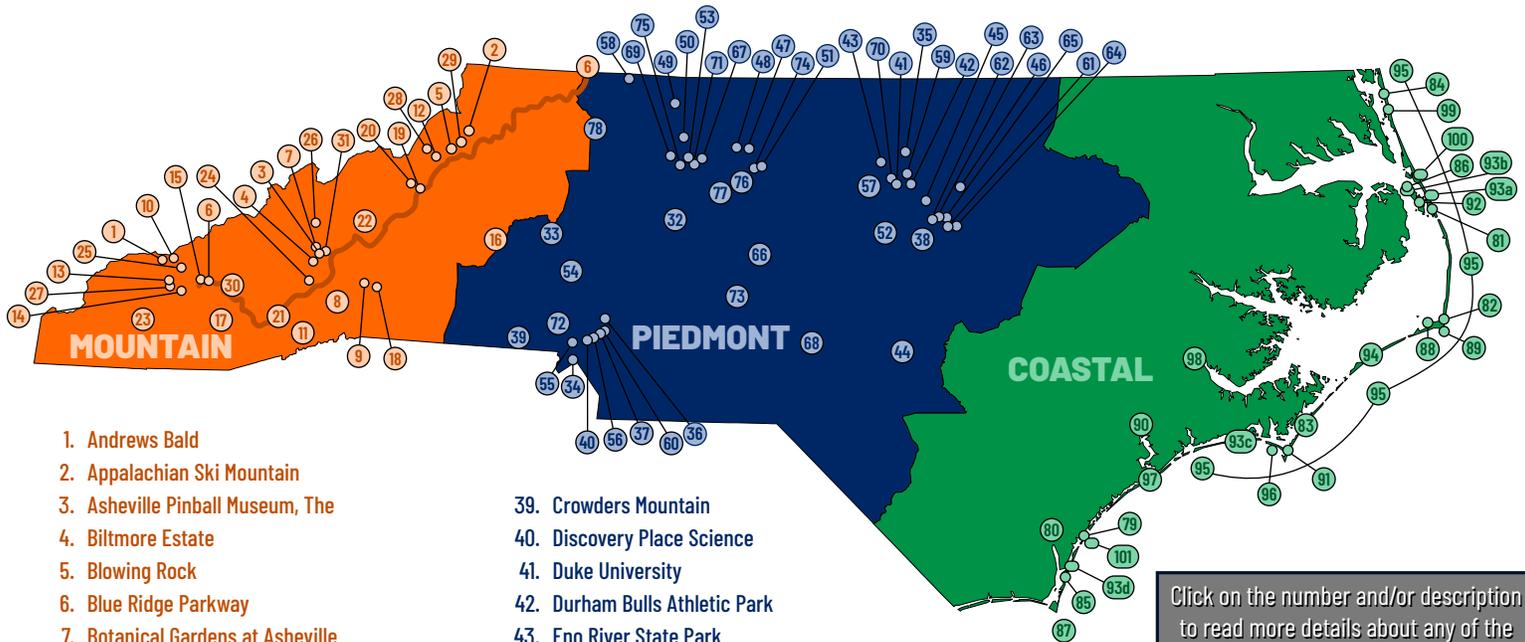
We've organized our list of 101 alphabetically within each of North Carolina's (3) regions, Mountains, Piedmont and Coastal and have included a map with links to more detail about each stop. As previously mentioned, our goal was to list a variety of destinations that would include something for everyone. There are outdoor activities, museums, fun parks, historical venues, sports and even off-the-wall quirky attractions. There are things you can do alone, with friends or entire families. There are activities for the active, the sedentary or whatever mood you're in on any given day.



Many of the sites have links to either a complete article or additional information. Start with the map on the next page and enjoy our list of the 101 things to do in North Carolina!



101 Things to do in North Carolina



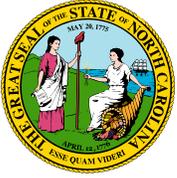
1. Andrews Bald
2. Appalachian Ski Mountain
3. Asheville Pinball Museum, The
4. Biltmore Estate
5. Blowing Rock
6. Blue Ridge Parkway
7. Botanical Gardens at Asheville
8. Carl Sandburg Home
9. Chimney Rock
10. Clingmans Dome
11. Dupont State Forest
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13. Great Smoky Mountain National Park
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58. Mount Airy
59. Museum of Life and Science
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61. NC Sports Hall of Fame
62. NC State Fair
63. North Carolina Museum of Art
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65. North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences
66. North Carolina Zoo
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69. Reynold House Museum of American Art
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72. U.S. National Whitewater Center
73. Uwharrie National Forest
74. Weatherspoon Art Museum

75. West End Historic District
76. Wet 'n Wild Emerald Pointe
77. World's Largest Chest of Drawers
78. Yadkin Valley Wine Country
79. Arlie Gardens
80. Battleship North Carolina
81. Bodie Island Lighthouse
82. Cape Hatteras Lighthouse
83. Cape Lookout National Seashore
84. Currituck Beach Lighthouse
85. Fort Fisher
86. Fort Raleigh
87. Frying Pan Tower
88. Futuro House
89. Hatteras Island
90. Lejeune Memorial Gardens
91. Lookout Lighthouse
92. The Mother Vine
93. North Carolina Aquariums
94. Ocracoke Lighthouse
95. Outer Banks
96. Shackleford Banks
97. Topsail Island
98. Tryon Palace
99. Wild Spanish Mustangs
100. Wright Brothers National Memorial
101. Wrightsville Beach

Click on the number and/or description to read more details about any of the 101 North Carolina attractions.

Click on any of the photos in the left margins to bring you back to this page.



101 Things to do in North Carolina

MOUNTAIN REGION

1. Andrews Bald

Swain County



Tucked in the Great Smoky Mountains, straddling both North Carolina and Tennessee, Andrews Bald reaches an elevation of 5,920' (1,800 m) and is the highest grassy bald in the [Great Smoky Mountains National Park](#). It is a double peak that is located just south of Clingmans Dome and, while intersecting with the Appalachian Trail, can be accessed with a 2 mile (3 km) walk from the Forney Ridge parking lot. While grassy balds were originally attributed to cattle grazing, how they remain today continues to confound experts and enthusiasts alike.

2. Appalachian Ski Mountain

Boone, NC in Watauga County



While North Carolina will never become a ski mecca it does have some slopes worthy of note. The best is the Appalachian Ski Mountain located between [Blowing Rock](#) and Boone. It features (11) trails with the full range of beginner, intermediate and advanced trails. With elevations reaching 4,000' (1,200 m) and vertical drops 365' (111 m) the resort also has (3) terrain parks for the daredevils in your group. The resort also features a 6,000 sq ft (557.4 sqm) outdoor skating rink, a slope side restaurant, a gift shop and a ski shop where you can rent or buy equipment.

3. The Asheville Pinball Museum

Asheville, NC in Buncombe County



We promised quirky and the Asheville Pinball Museum delivers! This is a must visit for any ancient Pinball Wizards or anyone into a bit of nostalgia. There are more than 20 vintage tables and 20 classic video arcade games some dating back to the 1940's. You can just peruse or pay a one-time fee and play to your heart's content. The museum is located inside the Old Battery Park Hotel, which is on the National Register of Historic Places.

4. The Biltmore Estate

Asheville, NC in Buncombe County



If you're a fan of Downton Abbey a visit to the [Biltmore Estate](#), the largest privately owned home in the U.S., is definitely in order. The home and grounds are a reminder of the Gilded Age replete with a magnificent 178,926 sq ft (16,622.8 m²) of floor space (135,280 sq ft of living area) mansion, gardens, conservatory and grounds of forest, creeks and rolling hills comprising over 8,000 acres (3,237 ha). Tours are available inside the 250-room home and you can freely walk the grounds at your own pace. If you can, visit during the Christmas holiday season as they spare no expense both inside and outside the grounds. There is also Biltmore Village which includes a working farm, a hotel, a winery and the Antler Hill Village. Worth getting tickets for a few days to fully enjoy all the splendors of this 19th Century home of the Vanderbilt's.



101 Things to do in North Carolina

MOUNTAIN REGION

5. Blowing Rock

Boone, NC in Watauga & Caldwell Counties

Blowing Rock is a hidden little gem that is a great place to spend a few hours if you're visiting the nearby **Grandfather Mountain**. You can venture in between utterly unique rock formations or walk out onto a few platforms to see breathtaking views of the Johns River Gorge 3,000' (914 m) below. It is not uncommon to witness a shelf of clouds as you look down that are literally blown away within an hour or two. If you're there in the winter you could witness the distinctive phenomenon of snow falling upward as the air currents thrusting upward form a flume through which the winds travel.



6. Blue Ridge Parkway

While the Blue Ridge Parkway is not a stop, per se, it is consistently the most visited National Park System attraction for the past half-century. Many of the Mountain Region stops in this guide can be accessed directly off the parkway including Mount Mitchell State Park, the **Pisgah National Forest**, Looking Glass Rock, **Dupont State Forest** and Waterrock Knob, to name just a few. In total it encompasses 469 miles (755 km) as it runs through Virginia and North Carolina linking the Shenandoah National Park to the **Great Smoky Mountains National Park**. The reason for its popularity is simple . . . the views. Because it does not directly connect to any interstate traffic much of your drive is in wilderness where you'll experience wildlife, forest, scenic overlooks and sprawling vistas.



7. Botanical Gardens at Asheville

Asheville, NC in Buncombe County

If you are a lover of nature and enjoy a good stroll the Botanical Gardens are a pleasant excursion. Covering approximately 10 acres (4 ha) the gardens feature over 700 species of native and exotic trees, mosses, aquatic plants, vines, herbs, wildflowers, grasses, sedges, shrubs, ferns, and lichens native to the southern Appalachian Mountains. The gardens are free (though a donation is appreciated) and mid-April and mid-August are the peak blooming times each year. Enjoy the colorful Carolina Rose, Yellow-Fringed orchids, Black-eyed Susans and Eastern Redbud bushes.



8. Carl Sandberg Home

Flat Rock, NC in Henderson County

For our lovers of poetry there is the Carl Sandburg National Historic Site. The irony is that only one-third of Sandburg's published work was produced here but he, along with his wife and daughters, chose to live out his last decades in the splendor of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The site hosts more than 85,000 visitors per year and they are treated to a residence that remained unchanged since Sandburg's death in 1969. In addition to the home you can also walk the grounds including around 15 goats that have been designated an "historic herd" by the U.S. government.





101 Things to do in North Carolina

MOUNTAIN REGION

9. Chimney Rock

Chimney Rock, NC in Rutherford County

Chimney Rock is an amazing state park with one of the East Coast's most iconic natural wonders, the Chimney Rock, a 315' (96m) granite monolith. The park itself has walking trails (many are actually steps) and an endless array of natural variety (including a little cave) and some of the most spectacular views in the state. They have done a remarkable job creating pathways and hiking trails through, and above, the rocks so visitors can experience an assortment of overlooks, rock formations, cliff bird watching and the 404' (123 m) tall **Hickory Nut Falls**. There is even a nature center for kids with live animals. **Chimney Rock Village** is an absolute delight as is the **Lake Lure Flowering Bridge** just a few miles out of town.



10. Clingmans Dome

Swain County

Clingmans Dome is best known for its remarkable Observation Tower which allows for a 360° view of the surrounding forests and mountains. It is the most accessible mountain top in the **Great Smoky Mountains National Park** with a short trail from the parking lot to the tower which is a spiral 375' (114 m) ramp with a 12° grade rising to 45' (14 m) above the base. Visibility can be upwards of 100 miles (160 km) on a clear day. There are trails that connect to the Appalachian Trail that join Andrews Bald and Fontana Lake. The mountain itself is at 6,643' (2,025 m) elevation and is the 3rd highest point on the East Coast.



11. Dupont State Forest

Henderson & Transylvania Counties

If you love waterfalls then a day in the **Dupont State Forest** is a day well spent. Inside the 10,473 acre (4,238 ha) forest are some of the best waterfalls in the state. To start, there is a 3-mile (4.8 km) loop that has **Hooker Falls** (picture a swimming area with waterfalls on one end), **Triple Falls** and the appropriately named **High Falls**. The latter two have multiple vantage points of observation, each outdoing the other, especially at the top of the trail looking down on High Falls. The other gem of Dupont is the spectacular **Bridal Veil Falls** featured in *Last of the Mohicans* and *The Hunger Games*. You can climb the smooth rocks all the way to the top to see the original falls that feeds the primary cascades. Along the way make sure to explore the **Lake Julia Spillway**.





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MOUNTAIN REGION

12. Grandfather Mountain

Avery, Caldwell & Watauga Counties



At 5,946' (1,812 m), **Grandfather Mountain** is one of the highest points along the Blue Ridge Mountains. The most popular feature of the mountain is the Mile High Swinging Bridge, the highest suspension bridge in the U.S. Once you cross it you'll be treated to awe-inspiring 360° panoramic views. Grandfather Mountain is named for its Profile Rock which, when seen from the proper angle, looks like an elderly man's bearded face. It is appropriate since it is estimated to be 750,000,000 years old. There is also a museum, a small zoo and a chance to interact with certain animals with park staff.

13. Great Smoky Mountain National Park

Swain & Haywood Counties



The world famous Smoky Mountains is the most visited national park in the United States with well over 10,000,000 visitors per year. Covering 522,419 acres (211,415.47 ha) the park can be accessed from both North Carolina (Cherokee) and Tennessee (Gatlinburg) and can be hiked entirely on the Appalachian Trail. The highest point is at Clingmans Dome, over 100 species of trees can be found in the park along with 200 species of birds, 39 species of reptiles, 50 species of fish and 43 species of amphibians. You may also see wildlife including coyote, bobcats, woodchucks, white-tailed deer and even an occasional skunk.

14. Great Smoky Mountain Railroad

Bryson City, NC in Swain County



While the Great Smoky Mountain Railroad line occasionally transports freight its primary purpose is tourist excursions. It runs between Bryson City and Nantahala (22 miles or 35 km in length) and between Bryson City and Dillsboro (16 miles or 26 km in length) covering approximately 52 miles. The views are spectacular as it works its way inside winding tunnels, through valleys and across amazing gorges of the Great Smoky Mountains. You'll also see the remains of The Fugitive train wreck used in the 1993 thriller. There is also the Smoky Mountain Trains Museum, which features a collection of over 7,000 Lionel model engines, a children's activity center, a large model train layout, cars and accessories, and a gift shop.

15. Harrah's Cherokee Casino Resort

Whittier, NC in Jackson & Swain Counties



For a bit of adult fun there is Harrah's Cherokee Casino Resort in Cherokee. Because of a compact with the state the games offered at Harrah's are unique each needing to possess some element of skill. This affects everything from slots to card games. There are over 100 card games including a non-smoking poker room with 20 tables. The casino hosts several World Series of Poker circuit events every year. There is also a 1,108 room hotel with (3) towers, a 15,000 sq ft (1,400 m²) conference center, a 3,000-seat events center, an indoor (and outdoor) pool, 24-lane bowling alley, a workout room, an arcade, a lobby cafe, and a food court with four restaurants.



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MOUNTAIN REGION

16. Henry River Mill Village

Icard Township, NC in Burke County



Ghost towns are interesting, especially if they are connected to some event or have a fascinating history. Henry River Mill Village has the unique distinction of becoming famous after it was abandoned. If you're familiar with *The Hunger Games* you'll recognize "District 12" as you amble through the town. But be aware that several reports of paranormal activity have been reported . . .

17. Judaculla Rock

Cullowhee, NC in Jackson County



The Judaculla Rock is an important archeological artifact that dates back as much as 350,000,000 years ago. The 240 sq ft (22 m²) boulder is covered with scars left by soapstone bowl extraction as well as petroglyphs. In fact over 1,500 distinctive shapes or motifs have been identified on this rock that help special spiritual significance to the Cherokee who once lived in this area.

18. Lake Lure

Rutherford County



North Carolina is known for its many finger lakes and Lake Lure is one of the more distinctive ones. The town of **Lake Lure** was recently named one of the Top 10 Lake Towns in North America. There are countless outdoor activities to enjoy including swimming, boating, jet skiing, canoeing and fishing. The Lake Lure Flowering Bridge is an amazing display of gardens, crafts, flowers and seasonal displays. The popular film *Dirty Dancing* features Lake Lure prominently.

19. Linville Gorge Wilderness

Morganton, NC in Burke County



The so-called "Grand Canyon of North Carolina", Linville Gorge Wilderness covers 11,786 acres (47.7 km²) inside the **Pisgah National Forest**. It includes the Linville Falls (with multiple viewpoints), Wiseman's view and the Linville Caverns. Hiking in and out of the gorge itself is doable but recommended only for serious hikers. There are plenty of other hiking trails available as well as camping sites and plenty of opportunities for hunting, fishing and rock climbing. You'll also get to see a wide variety of plant and animal life including rhododendron, Carolina hemlock and heavy forests plus keep an eye out for copperheads, wild turkey, vultures, owls, bear and fox.



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MOUNTAIN REGION

20. Linville Caverns

Linville Falls, NC in McDowell County



If you love caves then the Linville Caverns are a must see. Discovered in the early 19th-century by a local fisherman, legend has it that Civil War deserters used the caverns to hide from detection. Today guided tours are available to see the Blue Ridge Mountains subterranean realm. Formed in a deposit of Shady Dolomite at the base of Humpback Mountain, the cave features stalactites, stalagmites as well as other formations. If you visit in the fall or winter keep an eye out for tri-colored bats and little brown bats.

21. Looking Glass Rock

Transylvania County



One of the more unique features of the [Pisgah National Forest](#) is the Looking Glass Rock. Rising almost 4,000 feet (1,200 m) above sea level, the rock has a ring of exposed granite that appears to shine like glass when hit directly by the sun. You can traverse to the top using one of two different trails or, if you have the interest (and skill), you could choose to climb the South Face, North Face, Nose Area, Sun Wall, Invisible Wall and Hidden Wall to the top of the mountain. There is even a flat area at the top that has been used as a helipad.

22. Mount Mitchell State Park

Yancey County



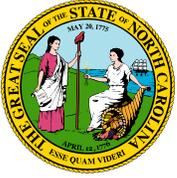
In 1915 Mount Mitchell became the first state park established in North Carolina. The park is most renowned for being the highest point east of the Mississippi River rising to an elevation of 6,684' (2,098m). But unlike most lookouts, the summit is accessed primarily by car followed by a steep walk on a paved path. The payoff is an observation platform with a breathtaking 360° view. The park also has several other peaks that are over 6,000' (1,829 m) in elevation, Camp Alice, the site of a logging camp and Lower Creek, one of the highest perennial streams in the Appalachians.

23. Nantahala National Forest

Macon County



The Nantahala National Forest is home to virtually any outdoor activity there is to enjoy from hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding to whitewater rafting, kayaking, swimming, camping and off-roading. It is the largest national forest in the Tar Heel state encompassing 528,000 acres (213,674 ha) with elevations reaching 5,800' (1,768m). There are (3) Cherokee named districts, Cheoah in Robbinsville, NC, Tusquitee in Murphy, NC, and the Nantahala in Franklin, NC. One of the most memorable areas of the forest is the Panthertown Valley, which is known locally as "the Yosemite of the East" for its unique landscape.



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MOUNTAIN REGION

24. North Carolina Arboretum

Asheville, NC in Buncombe County



With (10) gardens to choose from, the North Carolina Arboretum offers a wide variety of beautiful, botanically-diverse plant life. The Arboretum covers 434 acres (176 ha) and includes more than 10 miles (16m) of trails where you'll see a variety of colorful wildflowers, including azaleas, yarrows, bloodroots and more. Of particular note is the Bonsai Exhibition Garden with its assortment of Chinese elm, Japanese maple, limber line and bougainvillea and the Blue Ridge Quilt Garden where the gardens are arranged like colorful quilts.

25. Oconaluftee Indian Village

Cherokee, NC in Jackson & Swain Counties



If you have an interest in history the Oconaluftee Indian Village is a fascinating glimpse into late 18th century life for the Cherokee people. You'll get a tour of the "living" village where you'll experience their culture, beliefs and customs including making clothes, blowguns (used for small game hunting), baskets and arrowheads. You'll learn about their language, see demonstrations of pottery and basket weaving and learn more about their governance and religion. There are also traditional dances twice a day at Noon and 3 pm.

26. Pisgah National Forest

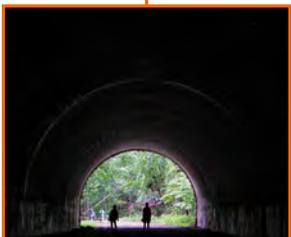
Asheville, NC in Buncombe County



The 500,000 acre (202,343 ha) [Pisgah National Forest](#) has a little something for everyone. There are miles and miles of hiking trails for all levels of hiker. There are opportunities for backpacking, rock climbing, fishing and biking. There are multiple rivers and streams, 46,600 acres (18,858 ha) of old-growth forests within the 12 western North Carolina counties the forest encompasses. Pisgah is right in the heart of the "Land of the Waterfalls" and home to [Looking Glass Falls](#), [Daniel Ridge Falls](#) and the world famous [Sliding Rock](#).

27. The Road to Nowhere

Bryson City, NC in Swain County



The Road to Nowhere in Bryson City is exactly what it sounds like. In the 1940's, with the deliberate flooding created by the new Fontana Dam, several communities were forced to leave their homes and had to be relocated. There was to be a new road constructed to help the displaced population but, unfortunately, environmental issues caused the construction to stop and it was never continued.



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MOUNTAIN REGION

28. Sugar Mountain Resort

Banner Elk, NC in Avery County



When one hears of skiing in North Carolina the first thought is water skiing, not snow. There are a few excellent ski resorts in the state that take advantage of the state's western mountains. The largest ski area in the state is the Sugar Mountain Resort in the Blue Ridge Mountains. In addition to the (21) trails, (9) lifts and 115 acres (48 ha) of skiable terrain, the resort also has an outdoor skating rink, a snow tubing park, a ski school and snowshoeing.

29. Tweetsie Railroad

Boone, NC in Watauga County



Nestled in between Boone and [Blowing Rock](#) is the Wild West theme park, Tweetsie Railroad. While it is primarily designed for families with little ones, there is much to be enjoyed by all. In addition to amusement rides and a zoo there are also special events throughout the year including Halloween and Christmas. The main attraction is the train itself, which runs on a 3-mile course pulled by one of Tweetsie Railroad's two historic narrow-gauge steam locomotives. An interesting side note . . . they have their own locomotive workshop for maintenance not only on their own trains but also for other amusement parks like Six Flags, Busch Gardens and Walt Disney World.

30. Waterrock Knob

Haywood & Jackson Counties



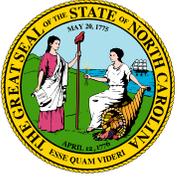
Near the southern end of the Blue Ridge Parkway is the lesser known Waterrock Knob. This wonderful gem is touted by locals as one of the best spots in the state for sunrises and sunsets. From the parking area there is a 1.2 mile (1.93 km) steep trek to the summit with several overlooks along the way. There are also several excellent picnic areas, public restrooms and a visitor center. At its peak Waterrock Knob reaches 6,292' (1,918 m) in elevation.

31. Western North Carolina Nature Center

Asheville, NC in Buncombe County



The Western North Carolina Nature Center has a focus on the wildlife indigenous to the Southern Appalachian Mountains. The center is ever evolving (three name changes with another in the works) and expanding into more than just a traditional zoo experience. But, in the end, it is about the animals and there is no shortage of variety from Red Pandas, Oberhasli Goats, Sicilian Donkeys and Dorset Horn Sheep to White-tailed Deer, Cougar, Gray Wolf and Black Bear. Future expansion will include prehistoric animals in the region during the Ice Age.



101 Things to do in North Carolina

PIEDMONT REGION

32. BBQ Festival

Lexington, NC in Davidson County

In 1984 the town of Lexington, NC held its first Barbecue Festival that drew almost 30,000 visitors who enjoyed 3,000 pounds (1,361 kg) of meat. Today the event not only draws five times the crowds it has become a month long celebration of barbecue with events as varied as a 5K run, a fishing tournament, a golfing tournament and the Tour de Pig-the annual cycling event. On this day there is an antique car show, racing pigs, a bicycle stunt show and a 50-ton (45 mt) pig themed sand sculpture of the event in addition to a Barbecue Carnival & Family Area with rides and games for the kids. There is also the best BBQ on the eastern seaboard!



33. Bunker Hill Covered Bridge

Claremont, NC in Catawba County

In 1895 Andrew Loretz Ramsour built a wooden bridge using Haupt truss construction. It now represents only one of two remaining covered bridges (Pisgah Covered Bridge in Randolph County) in the state. It is also the very last wooden bridge of this design in the U.S. The bridge, which crosses over Lyle Creek, is a National Civil Engineering Landmark and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



34. Carowinds Amusement Park

Charlotte, NC in Mecklenburg County

The slogan for Carowinds is "Where the Carolinas come together" and it's hard to argue with the over 2,000,000 visitors they average per year. The 407-acre (165 ha) amusement park has (9) areas including Carolina Boardwalk, Carousel Park, Thrill Zone, Camp Snoopy and the marquis water park, Carolina Harbor. There are (14) different roller coasters ranging from mild to "aggressive", a 262' (80 m) tower with great views of Charlotte, a reverse bungee ride and Snoopy's Junction, a wonderful miniature train ride for the little ones.



35. Castle Mont Rouge

Rougemont, NC in Durham County

If you're interested in the eclectic then a stop to see the Castle Mont Rouge needs to be on your list. The castle was built by artist, Robert Mihaly, but interior construction stopped when his wife passed away. While you can't go inside (a 'no trespassing' sign has been posted outside the property) you can get some good pictures from Mountain Brook Road.





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PIEDMONT REGION

36. Charlotte Liberty Walk

Charlotte, NC in Mecklenburg County

The Charlotte Liberty Walk is a history buffs dream. The 18-stop tour serves as a living history of Charlotte. You'll learn about the origins and early expansion of Charlotte through a combination of the modern city and a unique mobile device delivery app. You'll see the site of Queens College, the Captain Jack home site, the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence and the Queen Charlotte statue.



37. Children's Theatre of Charlotte

Charlotte, NC in Mecklenburg County

Established in 1948, the Children's Theatre of Charlotte has performed for more than 1.2 million people. In addition to performances the theatre also has a wide range of education programs and camps throughout the year. Shows typically run from 2 weeks to a month and each are geared toward specific age groups but can certainly be enjoyed by all.



38. Chinese Lantern Festival

Cary, NC in Wake County

If you're near Cary, NC in the early winter, reserve an evening to visit the [Chinese Lantern Festival](#). The "lanterns" are different every year but never disappointing. The exhibits are larger than life and light up the evening with a wide array of bright colors. You can expect to see Chinese cultural symbols plus an assortment of international representation among the lanterns on display. To top it off there are live events every night.



39. Crowders Mountain

Gastonia, NC in Gaston County

North Carolina has no end of natural wonders throughout the state. Crowder's Mountain is no exception. While technically not a mountain at all it nonetheless provides one of the more spectacular morning views in the state. The 100' - 150' (46 m) sheer rock face turns a memorable golden color when reflecting the morning sun. For the outdoors enthusiast there is plenty to do with (5) different trails, two of which brings you to the pinnacle, some 1,700' (520 m) above sea level.





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PIEDMONT REGION

40. Discovery Place Science

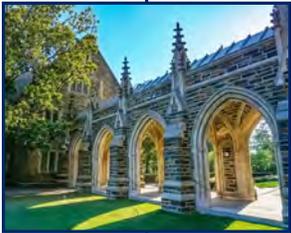
Charlotte, NC in Mecklenburg County



The preeminent state-of-the-art science and technology museum in the state is located in Uptown Charlotte. Part of a (3) location science center, Discovery Place Science has exciting activities and experiments, hands-on interactive exhibits, an IMAX Dome Theatre, and tons of other educational opportunities and programs. They have live shows like “Nose-to-Nose” where you can get up close and personal with live animals. They also feature hour-long IMAX shows like “Superpower Dogs” about the astonishing valor of some of the world's most remarkable dogs.

41. Duke University

Durham, NC in Durham County



There is so much history and sheer accomplishment associated with the hallowed halls of Duke University. Since its humble beginnings in 1838 as Brown's Schoolhouse to its illustrious place in academia today, Duke has produced Presidents, world-renowned scientists, journalists, authors and athletes. Known for its landmark spires of near century old Duke Chapel (which seats nearly 1,600 people and has a 5,200-pipe organ) the entire campus has a unique mix of Gothic and Georgian architecture.

42. Durham Bulls Athletic Park

Durham, NC in Durham County



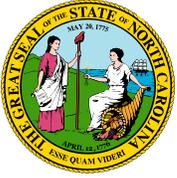
If you've ever seen Bull Durham (starring Kevin Costner and Susan Sarandon) then you're familiar with the Triple-A Durham Bulls minor league baseball team and their home park. Famous for their “snorting bull” that celebrates home runs and the 32-foot-high (9.8 m) “Blue Monster” left-field wall that resembles Fenway Park's “Green Monster” right down to the manual scoreboard. A summer night under the lights is a wonderful local experience.

43. Eno River State Park

Eno, NC in Durham & Orange Counties



If you enjoy the outdoors then State Parks are a godsend. Eno River State Park is no exception. There are (10) trails to choose from, each with their own charms. The Eno Quarry trail is an old rock quarry that has been converted into a 4-acre (16,000 m²) pond with several excellent fishing spots. The Shakori Trail leads to an old saw mill site and the remains of a 19th-century house. In addition to the 24 miles (38.6 km) of hiking trails there are also picnic areas, canoe launches and the infamous Eno Park Footbridge.



101 Things to do in North Carolina

PIEDMONT REGION

44. 82nd Airborne Division War Memorial Museum

Fort Bragg, NC in Cumberland County

Located on the Fort Bragg Army base, this fascinating war museum chronicles the 82nd from its origins in 1917 to present day. You'll see weapons used, and captured, from wars spanning WWI and the Vietnam War to campaigns in Panama and Operation Enduring Freedom. As with entry to all military bases, have your picture ID available and be prepared to have your car searched.



45. Frankie's Fun Park

Raleigh, NC in Wake County

Frankie's Fun Park is exactly what the name claims . . . a whole lot of fun. There is a full range of indoor and outdoor attractions with something for all ages. For the speed enthusiasts there are bumper car rides (and bumper boats) and go-cart courses. If rides are your thing there is the nerve-racking Sky Trail, Drop Zone, Sidewinder and the more pleasant hang-gliding Windstarz. There are also arcades, batting cages, laser tag, mini-golf and the interactive movie experience of The Dark Ride.



46. Galaxy Fun Park

Raleigh, NC in Wake County

The Galaxy Fun Park is geared more for the younger members of the family. There is the Soft Play maze that has levels and is forgiving of any slip-ups. There is the challenging Spacewalk Ropes Course, the always entertaining trampoline park Jump Zone and the laser tag arena of Galactic Laser Battle. The Moonwalk Mini Golf features 18 holes is out-of-this-world fun or you could choose Galaxy Speedway go-kart racing. There are bumper cars, arcade games, virtual reality as well as a bar (wine and beer) and lounge featuring pizza, burgers and hot dogs.



47. Greensboro Science Center

Greensboro, NC in Guilford County

The Greensboro Science Center doubles as a science museum and zoological park. Established in 1957 the park has (4) main sections: Animal Discovery Zoological Park has live animals like crocodiles, monkeys and red pandas; the Museum has many interactive and educational displays, labs and galleries; OmniSphere Theater has shows in 2D and 3D within its full dome theater; Wiseman Aquarium features moon jellies, sharks, penguins and stingrays. Don't miss Skywild, a tree top adventure park that allows you to experience a variety of animal behaviors.





101 Things to do in North Carolina

PIEDMONT REGION

48. Guilford Courthouse National Military Park

Greensboro, NC in Guilford County

The Guilford Courthouse National Military Park commemorates the site of one of the most important Revolutionary War's battles, the Battle of Guilford Court House. If you are a buff of warfare in general, or of the Revolutionary War in particular, you will really enjoy the park and specifically the attention to detail and accuracy made by the contributing historians. There are several walking, biking and driving options available, (28) monuments as well as an historic 18th century colonial farmstead, the Hoskins Farm.



49. Hanging Rock State Park

Danbury, NC in Stokes County

Unlike many of the state's great mountainous attractions the Hanging Rock State Park is located in the Sauratown Mountain Range, one of the most easterly mountain ranges. The remaining rock formations are made-up of erosion-resistant quartzite, which have formed many unique scenic ridges and knobs. There are over 18 miles (29km) of trails, a 73-site tent and trailer campground and ten vacation cabins for overnight accommodations. There is also a lake, a bathhouse and (5) significant waterfalls to explore.



50. Bethabara Historic District

Danbury, NC in Stokes County

The Bethabara Historic District site was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1999. It is where (12) men from the Moravian Church first settled in 1753 in the area now known as Salem. Much of the village has been excavated including a cellar where over (50) kinds of herbs were stored from their locally infamous medicine garden. The park also features the restored Bethabara Moravian Church and the recreated palisade and colonial gardens.



51. International Civil Rights Museum

Greensboro, NC in Guilford County

The International Civil Rights Museum sits, appropriately enough, on the site of the infamous Woolworths sit-in protest of February 1, 1960. The museum has 30,000 sq ft (2,800 m²) of exhibit space spread over two stories. You can take a tour by guide or by yourself. The main floor has a replica of the lunch counter with original signage as well as a reenactment of the sit-in on life-sized video screens. Other exhibits include a "Hall of Shame" showing some of the atrocities against civil rights protestors, a pen used to sign the Voting Rights Act of 1965, a Ku Klux Klan robe and hood and so much more.





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PIEDMONT REGION

52. Jordan Lake State Recreation Area

New Hope, NC in Chatham County



Jordan Lake is a series of finger lakes encompassing 13,940 acres (56 km²) spread out over 4,558 acres (18.45 km²) of woodlands. If you love the outdoors you will find paradise. There are (9) access areas, more than 1,000 sites for single/group camping and RVing, (7) swim beaches and (14) miles of hiking trails. There are endless opportunities for picnicking, boating, fishing, sailing, kayaking, canoeing, jet skiing or just lounging on the beach.

53. Kaleideum

Winston-Salem, NC in Forsyth County



Kaleideum is the convergence of the previously named Children's Museum of Winston-Salem and SciWorks, the Science Center and Environmental Park of Forsyth County. There are (2) locations, Kaleideum Downtown and Kaleideum North, the primary museum. North features 30,000 sq ft (2,800 m²) of exhibit space, a 15-acre (61,000 m²) environmental park, and a planetarium. The exhibits range from a Foucault pendulum and North Carolina geography and geology to white-tailed deer, a miniature horse and river otters.

54. Lake Norman

Catawba, Iredell, Lincoln & Mecklenburg Counties



Like many of North Carolina finger lakes, Lake Norman is man-made. It has 520 miles (840 km) of shoreline, a surface area more than 50 square miles (130 km²), reaching a depth of 760 feet (230 m) above mean sea level making it the largest man-made body of fresh water in the state. The lake is renowned for its hunting and fishing and also features almost 90 recreation sites along with campgrounds and picnic areas.

55. Metalmorphosis

Charlotte, NC in Mecklenburg County



For the truly bizarre, but equally mesmerizing, there is Metalmorphosis. It is located in the front of the Whitehall Technology Park submerged in a reflecting pool. When still Metalmorphosis resembles a human head complete with the spitting of water from its mouth. But when its 40 steel pieces, assembled into (7) segments which rotate 360° independently, is activated the result needs to be seen to be truly appreciated. The distortions are amplified by the reflection off the water.



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56. Mint Museum

Charlotte, NC in Mecklenburg County



The Mint Museum is split into (2) locations: Mint Museum Randolph and Mint Museum Uptown. Randolph sits on the site of North Carolina's first art museum and features around 900 works from American artists from late 18th-century to the mid-20th-century, art from the ancient Americas back some 4,500 years, a decorative arts collection with more than 2,000 objects dating back to 2000 BC and the pre-Columbian Delhom collection. At the Uptown location you'll find the Mint Museum of Craft + Design which showcases crafts like wood, fiber, glass, metal and clay. Uptown has over (5) floors covering 18,000 sq ft (1,700 m²).

57. Morehead Planetarium and Science Center

Chapel Hill, NC in Orange County



Located on the UNC-Chapel Hill campus, the Morehead Planetarium and Science Center is one of the largest, and oldest, planetariums in the country welcoming more than 7,000,000 visitors since its opening in 1949. It has been used to train the crews of (5) different space explorations in celestial navigation including Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin. The planetarium can seat 240, features a 68' (21 m) in diameter and 44' (13 m) tall dome onto which super-high-definition image resolution is projected for its shows and for UNC students.

58. Mount Airy

Mt. Airy, NC in Surry County



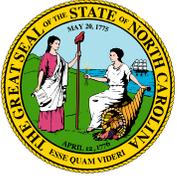
If you're a fan of the Andy Griffith Show then a visit to Mount Airy is a must. The birthplace of Griffith became the model for the show's town of Mayberry. Since the town itself has slowly evolved to resemble Mayberry. You can literally visit Floyd's Barbershop, the Mayberry Courthouse and Goober's Filling Station. You can even take a tour in one of their vintage police cruisers.

59. Museum of Life and Science

Durham, NC in Durham County



Encompassing 84-acres (340,000 m²) the Museum of Life and Science specializes in hands-on exhibits that bring science to life. The exhibits cover a wide range of interests for all ages. There is Aerospace, which highlights the early NASA program and has a life-sized replica of a Lunar Module, an actual moon rock and Launch Lab, a hands-on aerodynamics space. There is a Dinosaur Trail, the 3-story glass Magic Wings Butterfly House and Hideaway Woods, a 2-acre, nature discovery environment featuring a flowing stream bed, (8) tree houses and whimsical nature-themed sculptures.



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PIEDMONT REGION

60. NASCAR Hall of Fame

Charlotte, NC in Mecklenburg County



From Richard Petty and Dale Earnhardt to Buddy Baker and Waddell Wilson, the NASCAR Hall of Fame is home to the greatest stock car racers, crew chiefs, owners and broadcasters in the sports history. The museum itself is a goldmine of artifacts, historical video and showcase for each of the hall's (50) inductees. There are (4) floors in total along with a gift shop, the Hall of Fame Café and a Buffalo Wild Wings.

61. North Carolina Sports Hall of Fame

Raleigh, NC in Wake County



A visit to the [North Carolina Sports Hall of Fame](#) will impress upon anyone the quality of athletes the Tar Heel state has produced. From Michael Jordan and Carl Eller to Raymond Floyd and Jim "Catfish" Hunter every sport is fully represented. There are mementos like Dale Earnhardt's fire suit, Meadowlark Lemon's Harlem Globetrotters basketball uniform and even Richard Petty's race car. The museum is located on the 3rd floor of the North Carolina Museum of History.

62. North Carolina State Fair

Raleigh, NC in Wake County



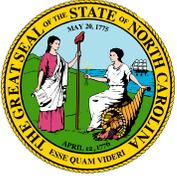
As state fairs go the North Carolina State Fair is a humdinger. Running for (10) days in late October, the fair features everything from fireworks and livestock competitions to concerts and a flower and garden show. There are historical exhibits like the Antique Farm Machinery exhibit, Heritage Circle and the Village of Yesteryear. There are tons of competitions involving horses, poultry, rabbits, livestock and even bees and honey. There are plenty of rides, roller coasters, games and even an annual Tractor Pull and Demolition Derby. Be sure to enjoy the State Fair Flyer, a 40' (12 m) high sky lift that has 126 seats that suspend from a cable that stretches more than 1,400' (427 m) across the fairgrounds. It's quite a view!

63. North Carolina Museum of Art

Raleigh, NC in Wake County



The North Carolina Museum of Art features over (40) galleries in the country's largest museum park covering 164-acres (16 ha). The museum's permanent collection contains 19th-century Renaissance paintings and art from ancient Greece, Rome and Egypt. There are collections from Africa, Britain, Italy, Spanish, Scandinavian and Judiac. An outdoor Museum Park is the largest of its kind in North America and displays sculptures by Chris Drury, Thomas Sayre and Barbara Kruger.



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64. North Carolina Museum of History

Raleigh, NC in Wake County



Your first site upon entering the [North Carolina Museum of History](#) is Wilbur Wright gliding the Wright Flyer across the lobby. In interesting contrast, to your left is Dale Earnhardt's #3 car. The museum itself is very visual as it steps you through the Tar heel state's history in chronological order from the early settlers to the Woolworth's sit-in. There are endless artifacts from Civil War swords and diaries to an Oliver typewriter and "Carbine" Williams rifles. There are also rotating exhibits like Freedom! A Promise Disrupted and QuiltSpeak. Did I mention that admission is free?

65. North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences

Raleigh, NC in Wake County



Located directly across the quad from the Museum of History is the [North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences](#) with its famous exterior globe facing West Jones St. The museum is split into (2) sections, the Nature Research Center and the Nature Exploration Center both connected by a 3rd-floor skywalk. The research center features exhibits focused on the natural universe like climate and weather, the ocean, bones and skeletons and Beyond Our Planet. The exploration center emphasizes animals both current and prehistoric. There are flowing dioramas of various indigenous wildlife and the Terror of the South, an Acrocanthosaurus skeleton, the only of its kind in the world.

66. North Carolina Zoo

Raleigh, NC in Wake County



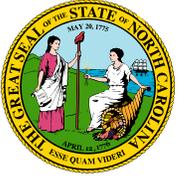
The [North Carolina Zoo](#) is the world's largest natural habitat zoo with 2,600 wooded and 500 developed acres that is home to over 1,800 animals and 250 species. The zoo is broken into (2) primary habitats, North America and Africa. In North America you'll find animals as diverse as alligators, bison and polar bears to grizzly bears, owls and ocelots. Africa features such exotic exhibits as elephants, lions, gorillas, zebras, giraffes and baboons. There is the Watani Grasslands Reserve, an open vista with rhinoceros, oryx, gazelles and waterbucks. It is very well laid out with plenty of facilities, gift shops, picnic areas and restaurants.

67. Old Salem Museums & Gardens

Winston-Salem, NC in Forsyth County



Old Salem, similar to Williamsburg, VA, is a quaint village that has been restored as a living museum of the mid-18th-century. It was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1966 and again in 2016. The historic district features churches, houses, communal buildings, and shops. Of particular note are the Single Brothers' House where the unmarried men would live and the Salem Tavern, one of the oldest surviving brick tavern buildings in the country and the sleeping quarters for George Washington for a few nights in 1791.



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68. Pinehurst Resort

Mineral Springs, NC in Moore County



Home to one of the more iconic golf courses in the world, Pinehurst #2, the Pinehurst Resort is more than just a day on the links. Since its opening in 1895 as a health resort, the resort has expanded into (3) hotels, a spa, extensive sports and leisure facilities. But the main draw is still golf and there are now (9) courses in total to choose from. #2 has hosted several major tournaments including both the Men's and Women's Open in 2014. Not as well known, Pinehurst is also the home of a lawn bowling court and (3) championship croquet courts.

69. Reynolda House Museum of American Art

Winston-Salem, NC in Forsyth County



Housing a collection of some of the country's finest American paintings, the Reynolda House Museum of American Art has been a staple in Winston-Salem since 1917 and became affiliated with Wake Forest University in 2002. Founded by tobacco magnate R. J. Reynolds and his wife, the museum has a permanent collection dating back three centuries and includes works by Georgia O'Keefe, Mary Cassatt and Gilbert Stuart. There is also a wing for traveling exhibits that has featured Grandma Moses, African American art, the photographs of O. Winston Link and local artists.

70. Sarah P. Duke Gardens

Durham, NC in Durham County



Located within the grounds of Duke University, the Sarah P. Duke Gardens cover around 55 acres (22 ha) including 5 miles (8km) of pathways and allées. The gardens are split into (4) primary sections: Historic Gardens featuring the Azalea Court and Iris Bridge; the Doris Duke Center with Page-Rollins White Garden / Gothic Pavilion; the H.L. Blomquist Garden includes the 36th Parallel Latitude Marker; and the W.L. Culberson Asiatic Arboretum with the Chinese Garden and the Japanese Pavilion & Garden.

71. Shell Oil Clamshell Station

Winston-Salem, NC in Forsyth County



In the early 20th-century, R.H. Burton built multiple Shell gas stations in the literal shape of a large scallop shell. It was meant as a gimmick but was so popular he had at least (8) built in the Winston-Salem area. The one on the corner of Sprague and Peachtree Streets is the last one that remains. No longer an operating gas station, the icon now serves as a satellite office and a museum for Preservation North Carolina.



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72. U.S. National Whitewater Center

Charlotte, NC in Mecklenburg County



In 2006 an outdoor recreation and athletic training facility, the U.S. National Whitewater Center, was opened to the public. The center covers 1,300 acres (530 ha) of property that includes over 45 miles (72 km) of trails. The name is a bit misleading as the facility has operations for rock climbing, mountain biking, whitewater rafting, kayaking, canoeing, ice skating, aerial sports and hiking. The centerpiece is the 12-million gallon (45,425 m³) recirculating river with 3,750 feet (1,140 m) of whitewater that serves as one of the official Olympic Training Centers for whitewater slalom racing.

73. Uwharrie National Forest

Montgomery, Randolph & Davidson Counties



Though the smallest of North Carolina's (4) National Forests, the Uwharrie National Forest still encompasses a total area of 50,650 acres (205 km²). The Uwharrie was the site of the first significant U.S. gold strike late in the 19th-century along with another mini-rush during the Great Depression. You can still pan for gold today but are more likely to enjoy the boating, fishing, hiking, mountain biking, camping, and horseback riding. There are also seasonal trails for off-road vehicles.

74. Weatherspoon Art Museum

Greensboro, NC in Guilford County



The Weatherspoon Art Museum, located on the UNC-Greensboro campus, focuses on modern and contemporary art. Founded in 1941, the Weatherspoon began as a teaching gallery but has evolved into a fully accredited professional museum. Its permanent collection now numbers close to 6,000 artworks from artists like Alexander Calder, Louise Bourgeois, Willem de Kooning and even Andy Warhol. A favorite is the sculpture garden featuring 7,000 sq ft (650 sqm) of space filled with flowers, shrubs and plants mixed with works of art.

75. West End Historic District

Winston-Salem, NC in Forsyth County



On the west end of Winston-Salem is a national historic district once a streetcar suburb developed at the turn of the 20th century. If you are a fan of architecture you will revel in the sheer variety of styles from Bungalow/American Craftsman and Colonial Revival to Queen Anne and Classical Revival. Highlights include the St. Paul's Episcopal Church designed by Ralph Adams Cram, built between 1928-1929, the Friends Meeting House built in 1927 and Joyner's West End Grocery.



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76. Wet 'n Wild Emerald Pointe

Greensboro, NC in Guilford County



Wet 'n Wild is one of (2) major water-themed amusement parks (Carowinds Carolina Harbor being the other) in the state. It has (36) water park rides and attractions including (14) slides, (5) pools, (2) children-specific areas, Splash Island and Happy Harbor. Founded in 1983 as Aqua Gardens, the park today features over 3,000,000 gallons (11,356 m³) of water inside 41 acres (16.6 ha) of grounds. Also available is shopping, dining, facilities for birthday parties and even cabanas for relaxing.

77. World's Largest Chest of Drawers

High Point, NC in Guilford County



High Point, NC has long been known as the "Furniture Capital of the World". In 1926, to commemorate this moniker, a 20' (6 m) replica chest of drawers was constructed with two socks dangling out of one of the drawers acknowledging the city's hosiery industry. It was rebuilt a few times and is 38' (11.5 m) tall Goddard-Townsend block front chest. There is also a second chest of drawers (albeit only the façade) that is over 80' (24 m) tall located about 3 miles south at a Furnitureland.

78. Yadkin Valley Wine Country

Yadkin County



The Yadkin Valley AVA covers an area around 1,400,000 acres (5,666 km²) in the Yadkin River valley. In what originally served as land for growing tobacco, the area has grown from a few local wineries to almost (70) vineyards and wineries. The industry has expanded to the point where the local Surry Community College even offers certificate and degree programs in viticulture and enology. There are also several wine festivals every year in the area.



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COASTAL REGION

79. Arlie Gardens

Wilmington, NC in New Hanover County



Arlie Gardens was created in the late 19th-century as a private garden and named after a family home in Scotland. Over the years the gardens were expanded, most significantly in the early 20th-century by German landscape architect Rudolf Topel, to their current size of 67 acres (27 ha). Despite losing over 300 trees during Hurricane Florence, the gardens remain vibrant and lush. The highlight of the gardens is the 128' (39 m) tall and 104' (32 m) crown spread (width), Arlie Oak, estimated to be over 500 years old.

80. Battleship North Carolina

Wilmington, NC in New Hanover County



If you're a World War II enthusiast a stop at the Battleship North Carolina is mandatory. This authentically restored World War II battleship was opened to the public in 1961 and serves as a memorial honoring the 11,000 North Carolinians of all branches of service who died in WWII. There are (9) decks to explore including the engine rooms, the CIC (Combat Information Center), berthing areas and the mess decks. Make sure to wear appropriate non-slip footwear.

81. Bodie Island Lighthouse

Nags Head, NC in Dare County



The **Bodie Lighthouse** (pronounced Body) is located opposite the **Coquina Beach** just south of **Nags Head** center. Rising 156' (47.5 m), it is the 3rd lighthouse constructed in the area and the only remaining one. The main light still works and projects a beam up to 19 miles offshore while making 360° rotations every 27.5 seconds. During the summer months you can climb the 214 steps to the top and be rewarded with a spectacular view of the Roanoke Sound and the Atlantic Ocean.

82. Cape Hatteras Lighthouse

Buxton, NC in Dare County



The most photographed spot along the Cape Hatteras National Seashore is the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse. Made of approximately 1,250,000 bricks and standing at an impressive height of 210' (64 m), this one-time guardian of the so-called "Graveyard of the Atlantic" section of shore is the tallest brick lighthouse structure in the country and 2nd in all the world. Due to erosion of the shoreline the lighthouse was moved 2,900 feet (880 m) to the southwest in 1999. It takes 257 steps to reach the top but the view is worth the effort.



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83. Cape Lookout National Seashore

Harkers Island, NC in Carteret County



At the southernmost portion of North Carolina's Outer Banks is the protected Cape Lookout National Seashore. Covering a 56-mile (90km) strip running from Ocracoke Inlet on the northeast to Beaufort Inlet on the southeast the seashore is made up of (3) barrier islands. The area has several highlights including the Cape Lookout Lighthouse, famous for its diamond shaped black-and-white pattern, (2) historic villages and the **wild horses** on Shackleford Banks.

84. Currituck Beach Lighthouse

Corolla, NC in Currituck County



The Currituck Beach Light is the only lighthouse on the Outer Banks that does not have some variation of a black-and-white color scheme. Rising to a height of 162' (49 m) there are 220 steps up the spiral staircase to reach the outdoor gallery for a 360° view of Whale Head Bay, Whole Head Bay, Raccoon Bay, Mary island and the Atlantic. At the base the home of the 3rd light keeper has been restored and serves as a museum shop. The grounds also have a few cisterns for rainwater storage and a 2-hole privy.

85. Fort Fisher

Wilmington, NC in New Hanover County



The most significant battle fought in the Tar Heel state during the Civil War took place at Fort Fisher. Strategically located at the ocean outlet of Cape Fear River, by 1862 it had become the main Confederate port on the Atlantic Ocean and a vital military presence. When the fort finally fell in 1865 the south's supply lines were cutoff and the war ended just 2 months later. Today the site is home to the main fort complex, a visitor center and a museum. There is also a 32-lbs (14.5 kg) seacoast cannon that is still fired on special occasions.

86. Fort Raleigh

Manteo, NC in Dare County



Fort Raleigh is the site of the first English settlers in what is now the United States. There is still great mystery to this day as to the fate of the "Lost Colony". There is a museum that does an excellent job of detailing what is known but to really gain a better understanding the site's amphitheater has live shows re-enacting the story of the doomed settlers. On the grounds is also the **Elizabethan Gardens**, a 10 acres (4.0 ha) site featuring hundreds of species of wildlife and plants from both the local region and all over the world.



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COASTAL REGION

87. Frying Pan Tower

Brunswick County



The Frying Pan Tower is an excellent example of converting something obsolete into something useful. The site was originally a Coast Guard lighthouse built on an oil-drilling platform in the 1960's. Constructed 32 miles off the coast to help ships better navigate the "Graveyard of the Atlantic", the platform was abandoned in 2004. A few years later it was converted into a functional bed-and-breakfast that unfortunately closed in 2019. The owner continues to raise money for future uses.

88. Futuro House

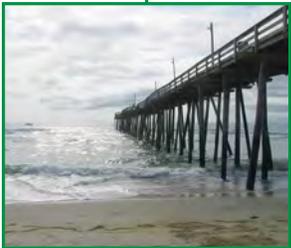
Frisco, NC in Dare County



In the late 1960's there was a novelty portable home construction made of fiberglass-reinforced polyester plastic called Futuro houses. They didn't really "take-off", only around 100 were actually sold, but one of the few remaining ones sits in a lot on the Outer Banks. It passed hands a number of times over the years and even was a hot dog stand briefly. Today its owner has put alien heads in the windows and occasionally wanders outside in a green alien suit to entertain tourists. Definitely worth a quick look . . .

89. Hatteras Island

Buxton, NC in Dare County



The Outer Banks are a 200-mile-long (320 km) string of barrier islands and splits off the eastern coast of southern Virginia and, primarily, North Carolina. Located at about the halfway point is Hatteras Island. Measuring 42 miles (68 km) from end-to-end, the so-called "the blue marlin capital of the world" is one of the longest islands in the contiguous United States. Known for its surfing, kiteboarding, windsurfing and fishing, Hatteras has (3) communities, Rodanthe, Waves and Salvo. While there is a bridge that connects from the north, the only way to access Hatteras from the south is by ferry.

90. Lejeune Memorial Gardens

Jacksonville, NC in Onslow County



The Lejeune Memorial Gardens consists of (4) memorials commemorating those who have served in past conflicts. The Beirut Memorial memorializes the 273 Marines lost to terrorism on October 23, 1983 in Beirut, Lebanon. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial pays tribute to the 58,229 men and women who lost their lives in the Vietnam War. The Montford Point Marine Memorial Honors the first Black Marines admitted into the Marine Corps between 1942 and 1949. The 9/11 Memorial includes a beam from the Twin Towers, presented by the first responders, to the troops who invaded Iraq in response to the terrorist attack.



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91. Lookout Lighthouse

Harkers Island, NC in Carteret County

Also known as the Cape Lookout Lighthouse, this black-and-white diamond covered lighthouse sits on the southernmost point of North Carolina's Outer Banks. To get your bearings, note that the center of the black diamonds point in a north-south direction, while the center of the white diamonds points east-west. The lighthouse is 163' (49.6 m) tall and takes 207 steps to reach the top and see the fantastic views.



92. The Mother Vine

Roanoke Island, NC in Dare County

The **Mother Vine** is one of the more obscure yet fascinating items on this list. Don't be surprised if you drive by it a few times before actually seeing it. The vine is on private property but the family is OK with you getting a closer look so long as you don't damage anything. The Mother Vine, believed to be the oldest grape vine in all of North America, takes up approximately 30' x 120' (9m x 37m) of land and still produces wine for a local winery.



93. North Carolina Aquariums

Moving north-to-south we start with the **North Carolina Aquarium on Roanoke Island**. This 68,000 sq ft (6,317sqm) complex has interactive exhibits like Close Encounters with stingrays but is best known for its 285,000-gallon shark tank located in the Graveyard of the Atlantic section. **Jeanette's Pier** has (2) large tanks. One is a 240°, 3,000-gallon tank that replicates the underwater coquina rock shelf and the other has more exotic sea life including red snapper, triggerfish and a few species of eels. The **North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores** not only features thousands of animals but also a Living Shipwreck, Blackbeard's infamous ship, the Queen Anne's Revenge and a replica of a German U-352 submarine. At the **North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher** you can climb along Adventure Reef, see an albino alligator, observe baby sea turtles and come face-to-face (sort of) with eels and sharks.



94. Ocracoke Lighthouse

Ocracoke Island, NC in Hyde County

The smallest of the Outer Banks lighthouses, the Ocracoke Light is the oldest operating light station in North Carolina. It stands at 75' (23 m) and was built to help guide ships through Ocracoke Inlet into Pamlico Sound. In the summer months you may access the base of the lighthouse but cannot go up to the top. The Ocracoke is unique for the Outer Banks lighthouses due to its proportionately wider base and single solid white color. The best view is from Silver Lake as you look south over the small pier that dots the shoreline.





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COASTAL REGION

95. Outer Banks

Dare County



The Outer Banks covers a lot of territory, 200 miles (320km) from top to bottom. To navigate all of it you would need to cross numerous bridges, hop on a ferry and drive (with tires deflated) right on the beach. This list of things to do is endless and includes seeing **Wild Mustangs**, visiting (5) unique lighthouses, swimming in the warm North Carolina waters or just relaxing on the clean beaches. You can go hang-gliding, surfing, fishing off **Jennette's Pier** or visit the Wright Brother's Memorial and see where manned flight first took wing. Visit alligators, see a show, stroll exotic gardens or touch a stingray. There is fun to be had by all age groups and interests.

96. Shackleford Banks

Harkers Island, NC in Carteret County



Shackleford Banks is one of the many barrier islands on the Outer Banks. Renowned for its remote beaches, campsites and sea shells, this unique barrier strip is best known for the feral ponies that wander freely. Shackleford Banks is ideal for a relaxing day with little to no distractions. Aside from horse watching and the beach, there really isn't anything else to do so you have no choice but to relax and unwind.

97. Topsail Island

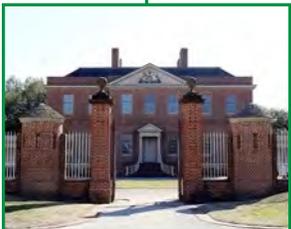
North Topsail Beach, NC in Onslow County



About halfway between Bald Head Island and Cape Lookout is Topsail Island. Situated off the mainland by a series of small sounds and channels, Topsail encompasses (3) communities and is reputed to have gotten its name from the nefarious pirate raids of, among others, Blackbeard. Today it is better known for its thick maritime forests, incredible beaches and as a sanctuary for sea turtles.

98. Tryon Palace

New Bern, NC in Craven County



Tryon Palace was the hub of the British governance in North Carolina from 1770-1775. The main building was burned down in 1792 but was faithfully recreated in 1959 and is now open to the public. This also includes the 16 acres (6.5 ha) palace gardens, which reflects (3) centuries of landscape and gardening heritage, a 60,000-sq ft (5,600 m²) history center, which includes (2) interactive museums as well as 6 acres (2.4 ha) with outdoor exhibits. (3) episodes of the TV show *Sleepy Hollow* were filmed on the Palace grounds.



101 Things to do in North Carolina

COASTAL REGION

99. Wild Spanish Mustangs

Corolla, NC in Currituck County



One of the coolest gems of the Outer Banks are the feral Banker horses or, as more commonly known, **Wild Spanish Mustangs**. There is much speculation as to how the horses found their way onto land but it is believed they swam their way to shore after either shipwrecks or from being thrown overboard to lighten the vessels load. Either way you can enjoy them primarily on Corolla, Ocracoke Island or Shackleford Banks. Though not as accessible there are viewing opportunities on Cedar Island and Carrot Island.

100. Wright Brothers National Memorial

Kill Devil Hills, NC in Dare County



The Wright Brothers National Memorial is unique in that you can walk the same ground where the first historic flight occurred. There are markers indicating the take-offs and landings of all (4) successful flights. There is also a 60' (18 m) granite monument atop the 90' (27 m) Kill Devil Hill that commemorates the lifetime achievements of the Wright Brothers, a visitor center, a replica of the world's first airplane hangar as well as a sculpture playground where you can get your picture in a replica plane right next to Wilbur Wright.

101. Wrightsville Beach

Wilmington, NC in New Hanover County



Wrightsville Beach is in many ways the quintessential beach town. It has perfect beaches, a thriving downtown area filled with great little local restaurants, surf shops and eclectic tourist traps. Obviously the best part of town is the beaches . . . the water is warm, the sand pristine and the air is clean. The ocean waters are great for surfing and the interior channels are ideal for standup paddle boarding, canoeing and exploring the different inlets and tributaries. For the more adventurous you can scuba dive to historic shipwrecks, run a triathlon or learn to sail from a certified instructor.