

Things to Do in Asheville

Recommended Activities:

Hiking, running or mountain biking on the numerous trails is a fantastic way to enjoy Asheville. There are 100's of trails that branch off the Blue Ridge Parkway www.blueridgeparkway.org, the Pisgah National Forest www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/nfsnc/recarea/?recid=48114 roads and the Bent Creek Research Forest www.srs.fs.usda.gov/bentcreek/products-pubs/bc-map.html. There is also DuPont Forest (film location for the Hunger Games) www.dupontforest.com and the Shining Rock Wilderness area to explore. Waterfalls and swimming holes are plentiful, so plan to swim and cool off while out. Berry-picking is another common way to enjoy the trails, so keeping a plastic container in your day pack is recommended. I will have trail maps at the workshop for you to check out as needed or you can pick up the map you prefer at any of the bookstores or outdoor shops downtown.

With 50+ local brews from 9 brewing companies (and a few local liquor distilleries), Asheville has been voted Beer City USA, for the third year in a row. Be sure to visit the brewery of your choice or get "flights" of tasters from any of the restaurants to find the drinks you prefer best. Take an Asheville Brews Cruise—a bus tour with multiple stops to taste locally brewed beers all around the downtown area ashevillebrewscruise.com or ashevillebrewerytours.com or ashevillealetrail.com.

Join the LA Zoom Bus tour to learn the history of Asheville in a uniquely Asheville manner. Humorous and a bit bizarre, this tour prepares you with mood music and local beer while touring in an open-air bus. Background information on the buildings, setting, industry and modernization of Asheville is delivered in a bawdy, zany style consistent with the eclectic culture of Asheville www.lazoomtours.com.

There are dancing fountains in front of the courthouse downtown where the water turns on and off in a patterns and the children can run through guess where it will come up next. The fountain draws kids of all ages every day, so your children will be guaranteed to meet other kids and have someone else with them who will enjoy the fun. You may want to bring a picnic; the kids tend to want to stay for hours www.youtube.com/watch?v=W9vwn_udRD0.

Shingdig on the Green is a Saturday night summer tradition where bluegrass and old time musicians accompany cloggers (a type of tap-step dancing common in this area) from 7pm-10pm at the amphitheater downtown in front of the courthouse. Concerts are free and a picnic dinner is recommended. <http://www.folkheritage.org/shindigonthegreen.htm>

Each Friday night drummers will spontaneously begin making music in Pritchard park (downtown near Wells Fargo bank). The crowd of dancers and percussionists increases to somewhere near 500 people most weeks and the atmosphere is lively and inclusive. The weekly drum circle is free and an excellent stopping point on your way out to dinner or for people watching afterwards.

Each Monday night at the Grey Eagle and each Thursday night at Warren Wilson College there is a live contra dance band and dancing from 8pm-10pm. The cover

charge is \$6 and if you come at 7pm your cover includes a free dance lesson. Children are welcome and the kids from middle school age and up usually join in on the line dancing and can often out dance the adults. Bring a water bottle and a sense of humor, the crowd is lots of fun and welcomes new dancers. www.danceasheville.com

Tuesday night is open mic blues night at the Westville Pub. If you play the piano, harmonica, guitar, or any other instrument in the blues style you will surely have an audience and dancers who encourage you to let it all out. There is no cover charge, dinner and snacks are tasty here and the local beers are on tap. If tango is your thing there is also a tango night and swing night at other bars and dance halls around town, each particular type of dance has a regular time and location, and often additional events posted at www.danceasheville.com.

Brevard Music School, one of the most prestigious music schools in the country has a summer camp here for invitation only students and professors. If you are not talented enough to be chosen to attend, you are still invited to come listen to the numerous day and evening concerts that are given to small and large audiences in one of their venues. I recommend going to a concert in the amphitheater on the lake. Bring a picnic dinner, wine and relax during a performance of opera, pops, chamber music or the classics. www.brevardmusic.org

Visit the Biltmore house and grounds to learn about the Vanderbilt estate home and the history of building and maintaining this massive dwelling www.biltmore.com. It is pricey, but admittedly fascinating. If you tell them you are teacher, they offer a slight discount.

The Western North Carolina Arboretum on the Blue Ridge Parkway has three “quilted” gardens made of plants blooming in each season, rotating orchid and mushroom exhibits, beautifully constructed paths through different ecotones with fountains and metal sculptures and an awe-inspiring collection of bonsai trees. Running paths are woven throughout the park and about the Pisgah National Forest and the Bent Creek trail systems www.ncarboretum.org

The Folk Art Center on the Blue Ridge Parkway offers a peek at the work produced from 100’s of guild artists in the Appalachian area with beads, glasswork, quilts, wood crafts, ceramics, leather pieces, instruments and furniture traditional to the region as well as masterful modern versions that reflect the beauty and culture of the Appalachian area www.southernhighlandguild.org.

Fresh Tailgate Markets occur throughout the week in numerous locations throughout Asheville. Check the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project website for the location nearest to you (there is one downtown on Biltmore Ave each Wednesday afternoon and another at the Chamber of Commerce each Saturday morning) asapconnections.org.

Day Camps for Kids:

Odyssey Clay Studio classes for children (and adults)
<http://www.odysseyceramicarts.com/>

Asheville Community Theater summer camps www.ashevilletheatre.org

The Health Adventure interactive science museum www.thehealthadventure.org

The Colburn Geology and Gem Stones Museum www.colburnmuseum.org

The Asheville Art Museum has weekly classes in 2D and 3D art
www.ashevilleart.org

The Jewish Community Center runs the best summer camps in town with a swimming pool and sing-a-longs as part of their daily activities, great supervision and adult interactions with the kids www.jcc-asheville.org

Asheville YMCA has weekly summer programs that include swimming and field trips.
<http://www.ymcawnc.org>

The Nature Center has a docent program where young scientists are trained to interact with the visitors and teach people about the various animals at the center.
www.wncnaturecenter.com

There are also 100's of the best known and best rated traditional and no-traditional sleep-away camps in Brevard and Pisgah National Forest, which are about 30-45 mins from Asheville. You can use Peterson's Guide to Summer Camps to find more about each program. My personal recommendation is Eagle's Nest where my daughter went and Camp highlander where my son attended and then later worked as a counselor.

Great Restaurants:

Worth going to within walking distance:

Mela – Indian buffet at 70 N. Lexington Ave.

Chai Pani – Indian at 22 Battery Park Ave.

Rosetta's – vegetarian and vegan food, excellent at 116 N. Lexington Ave.

The Gourmet Chip Co. – sandwiches and potato chips at 43 Broadway St.

Wasabi – sushi and tempura at 19 Broadway St.

Thai Orchid – fresh, gourmet at 11 Broadway St.

Green Sage – healthy salads, sandwiches, smoothies 5 Broadway St.

Bouchon – crepes and such 62 N. Lexington Ave.

Worth going to but will have to drive to make it back in time for lunch break (or is a good place to go for dinner):

12 Bones great BBQ at intersection of 12 Riverside Dr and Lyman St (only open for lunch)

White Duck Taco – you have never had tacos like these at 1 Roberts St.

Mamacitas – fresh burritos, very good at 77 Biltmore Ave (about 6 blocks from hotel, not far, but just far enough to be late from lunch)

Doc Chey's – great Asia food at 37 Biltmore Ave.

Tupelo Honey – Southern food at its best 12 College St.

Salsa's – delicious Caribbean/Mexican cuisine 6 Patton Ave.

Asheville Pizza and Brewery – 77 Cox Ave or 675 Merrimon Ave (for movies)

Lexington Ave Brewery – 39 N. Lexington Ave.

French Broad Chocolate Lounge – not for a meal, but really good anytime for chocolate lovers at 10 S. Lexington Ave.

Mellow Mushroom, - great pizza, great salads, but they take forever, so please don't go for lunch