



Free Spirit | Cultural Cool | Beautiful Blue Ridge

Layers of lush mountains that abound with adventure; profound cultural roots from literary giants to American royalty; and inspired locals whose passion projects jump from pop-up kitchens to performance art. Asheville, N.C., has been a point of pilgrimage since the 1800s as a destination for inspiration, rejuvenation and self-expression. It doesn't take long to see why George W. Vanderbilt chose this Blue Ridge city for his greatest legacy, Biltmore.

New Downtown Hotels Bring Rooftop Bars and Restaurants

Current hotel development and future plans will more than double the number of downtown hotel rooms within the next several years. ► **JUST OPENED: AC Hotel**, one of the first in the U.S. from the Marriott boutique brand, opened August 2017 with a rooftop restaurant and bar, Capella on 9. ► Also under construction, the city's tallest building is being transformed into **Arras**, a boutique hotel and condo project, with a 2018 opening date. The complex will also house retail space and two independent restaurants to be designed and operated by the owners of Posana, a downtown restaurant with a strong local-food mission. ► **NEW: Hyatt Place Asheville Downtown** (March 2016) and **Hilton Garden Inn City Center** (August 2016), both featuring rooftop bars. ► **ALSO COMING DOWNTOWN: Cambria Downtown Asheville** (fall 2017) and **The Asheville Foundry Inn, Curio Collection by Hilton** (2018).

Asheville Beer Boom

Beer is big in Asheville and only continues to grow. With 29 breweries in the city and 35 in Buncombe County, Asheville has the most breweries per capita in the country. ► **JUST OPENED: Turgua Farmstead Brewing**, set on a 5-acre farm in Fairview and utilizing fruits and root vegetables, and **Archetype Brewing**, focused on true-to-style American and Belgian-inspired ales, in West Asheville. ► **NEW: Habitat Brewing Co.**, next to Moog Music Factory, and ginger-beer brewery **Ginger's Revenge** at the new River Arts Makers Place (RAMP) Studios. ► **COMING SOON: Burial Beer Co.** will open its second location in a 1920s New Deal building that once housed the young men of the Civilian Conservation Corps, builders of the Blue Ridge Parkway. The rest of the buildings and 1.4-acre property will be transformed into a two-story taproom and lounge, restaurant, urban gardens and an outdoor event venue preserving elements of the site's legacy.



Two New Biltmore Exhibitions for 2018: Titanic + Chihuly

Set for February 9 through May 13, 2018, Biltmore's newest exhibition "**Glamour on Board: Fashion from 'Titanic' the Movie**" marks the first large-scale display of fashions from the Oscar-winning film, celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. In addition to 45 costumes showcasing the elaborate wardrobes of early-1900s transatlantic voyagers, details of the Vanderbilts' extensive travels will be revealed - including George Vanderbilt's courtship of Edith Stuyvesant Dresser while at sea on a similar "floating palace."

"**Chihuly at Biltmore**" brings breathtaking glass sculptures to the historic house and gardens May 17 -

October 4, 2018. "**Chihuly Nights at Biltmore**" will showcase Dale Chihuly's glass sculptures with dramatic lighting.

Music Notes: Asheville Radio Station + A Band on Wheels + New Venues + Benefit Concert by Gladys Knight

► **Stream the Sounds of Asheville:** Check out ExploreAsheville.com's new streaming radio station featuring indie legends and Appalachian songbirds - all with Asheville ties. ► **Band & Beer:** LaZoom Tours, known for BYOB irreverent comedy tours of Asheville, now offer a weekend bus tour that plays host to a live band and stops at breweries. ► **NEW VENUES:** The Salvage Station, The Guitar Bar, Jargon Restaurant with jazz "blunches" and new breweries Archetype and Whistle Hop. ► **An Evening with Gladys Knight and Friends**, an October 29 benefit concert for the Reynolds Community Center in nearby Canton, features performances by Knight, Little Big Town, Asheville's own Lyric and surprise guests. Knight (who owns a home in Candler) married William McDowell, who once attended school in the building. The new center will offer music, arts and wellness classes for youth.



River District Renaissance

Asheville's creative arts community by the French Broad River, known for its visitor-friendly art studios and galleries set in old industrial buildings, has an influx of new experiences for travelers. In addition to **New Belgium** moving in, other new neighbors include **The Salvage Station** (large riverside music venue), **Asheville Guitar Bar** (cozy bar and music-themed art installations), **RAMP Studios** (home to artists and a ginger-beer brewery, with a spice factory by local restaurant Chai Pani and NEW French Broad Chocolate Factory on the way) and **The Foundation** (new public art-filled home for 12 Bones and a second Wedge Brewing location). Artist Akira Satake's new **Gallery Mugen** offers hand-made ceramics, local pastries and authentic Japanese shaved ice. The area has a transformative multi-year plan that includes connected greenway spaces, bike trails and new adventures on the French Broad River. **NEW TOUR: Asheville Art Studio Tours** offers behind-the-scenes walking tours of the River Arts District. The tours, led by glass artist John Almaguer, can be upgraded to include hands-on art creation and custom assistance in purchasing art.

Adventure Gateway: Forest Bathing, Retro Camping, New Watersports and a Hollywood Trail

► **NEW:** Land & Lore Ecotours offers **private natural history tour** options, including hikes to waterfalls and other unique spots while local guides discuss wildlife, plants and the rich Appalachian history. ► **NEW: Ascend Adventure Wellness** combines hiking and outdoor spa treatments for the **ultimate forest bathing experience**. ► Travel back in time and **stay in a vintage trailer** at Junebug Retro Resort, a 50-acre property with restored 1950s campers and also available for retro weddings and parties ► Wai Mauna has added a **six-person paddleboard and whitewater SUP lessons and tours**. ► **Bellyak tours** on the French Broad River. Invented in Asheville, this watersport takes place on a face-first kayak that you ride on your belly. ► The **popular skyline trail that leads to the top of 404-foot Hickory Nut Falls** at Chimney Rock is slated to reopen this year after being closed almost 10 years. The final fight scene in the 1992 film "The Last of the Mohicans" was filmed here.



► **Food Scene. FAST:**

250+ independent restaurants; **6** James Beard-nominated chefs; **30+** breweries; **14** farmers markets; **1** spice factory (coming soon); **1** vegan butcher; **1,000+** family farms; **1** wild-foods market, the first in the nation; **1** butcher bar (coming soon); **3** craft hard cideries using local apples; the **fifth** micro sake brewery in the nation; **1** rum distillery (the only one in Western N.C.); **1** kombucha bar, all local; **1** honey bar/boutique; **1** underground supper club with wild themes and secret locations; **2** insanely creative donut shops; **2** locations to get bean-to-bar local chocolate (a third coming soon!); **1** mushroom man tour guide; and the **first** woman to legally distill moonshine.

NEW BITES/SIPS: ► **Beacham's Curve**, at the bend on Haywood Road in West Asheville, is a growing food hub. OWL Bakery (specializing in naturally leavened artisan breads and European-inspired pastries) and Hole (serving up fried-to-order doughnuts) have been joined by Pizza Mind and Archetype Brewing. Gan Shān Station's soon-to-open second location will also call this area home. ► **MORE FOOD NEWS:** Sunshine Sammies, an ice-cream-sandwich food truck, opens a storefront downtown. Local Provisions (with a menu boasting intricately designed dishes and highlighting Chef Justin Burdett's love of fermenting), Pete's Pies (scratch-made, locally inspired British pub food), En La Calle (a sister concept from the owners of local favorite Limones) and tearoom and apothecary Alchemy are also recent additions to downtown's dining scene. Jargon (from a film-industry vet and food lover) is brand new in West Asheville.

More at ExploreAsheville.com/Foodtopia.