

RALEIGH, N.C. — Spring's travel landscape comes into view with new sights, celebrations, and ways to revel in the natural beauty of [North Carolina](#). Vintage Mustangs and military aircraft, a monumental celebration of studio glass, and pirate revelry of the Blackbeard tricentennial heighten the pleasures of a season full of Minor League Baseball, NC Beer Month and flourishing festivals.

Below are starting point for spring travel planning.

Greenville sets the stage for the Blackbeard tricentennial, the best year for the buccaneers since the Golden Age of Piracy. [PirateFest](#) (April 13-14), the state's first major pirate festival of 2018, features costumed pirates, swordplay, black powder demonstrations and an encampment along with music, a beer and wine garden, and mermaids (thank "Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides" for their presence). For the record, Blackbeard's connection to Greenville is real if posthumous. In 1718, he ran the Queen Anne's Revenge aground near Beaufort, set up residence in Bath, then resumed pirating on Ocracoke Island, where he died in battle. Artifacts from the Queen Anne's Revenge are conserved in a lab at East Carolina University, whose athletic teams are called the Pirates. [Pirate festivities](#) continue through fall in various coastal locations.

Warbirds, Cubs and Staggerwings will be among the vintage World War II planes on view April 27-29 at the inaugural [Festival D'Avion](#), sponsored by Pinehurst Resort & Country Club. Morning fly-ins, precision military skydiving and helicopter tours will be featured along with displays representing all five branches the military. Festival-goers can also enjoy live music, a barbecue cook-off, and North Carolina craft beer and wine. Festival D'Avion coincides with the 100th anniversary of Fort Bragg, home of the Army Special Operations Command, which is about 30 miles from the event staging area at Moore County Airport.

Drivers have been infatuated with the Ford Mustang since its debut on April 17, 1964. Filmed with Steve McQueen, Sean Connery, Kevin Costner and other leading men behind the wheel, the Mustang has inspired one of the largest and most loyal fan bases in the automotive world. Enter the soon-to-open [Mustang Owner's Museum](#) in Concord, which will offer a preview April 12-15, the nearest weekend to the Mustang's birthday. Festivities include a chance for owners to rev their engines on Charlotte Motor Speedway's new 13-turn, 2.4-mile road course as well as see the museum-in-progress.

Brevard-based Mountain Song Productions inaugurates the Songsmith Gathering in one of the Southeast's most idyllic venues, Whittington-Pfohl Auditorium at Brevard Music Center. The festival crosses genres with the Wood Brothers, Darrell Scott, Greg Brown and others taking the stage of the open-air venue, which set in a cove in Pisgah National Forest. Leading up to the April 21

performances is a two-day Songsmith School led by performers Beth Wood and Sarah Siskind. Mountain Song Productions also stages the three-day Mountain Song Festival with Brevard's own Steep Canyon Rangers as hosts. www.songsmithgathering.com

Awards season and landmark anniversaries align neatly with the season's travel appeal. Signs point to Sylva and neighboring Blue Ridge Mountain towns for "[Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri](#)" fans who want to see where the award-winning film was shot. The trip crosses paths with locations for "[The Fugitive](#)" (1993), for which Tommy Lee Jones won an Oscar. In the Piedmont, the opening of baseball season inspires a trip to see the [Durham Bulls](#), made famous by 1988's "Bull Durham" (that's a 1968 Shelby Mustang GT350 ragtop Kevin Costner's driving). "[Dawson's Creek](#)" (1998) and "[One Tree Hill](#)" (2003) add reason to visit Wilmington and its island beaches. On the Outer Banks, "Brainstorm" (1983) flashes on the [Ocracoke Light Station](#) and [Wright Brothers National Memorial](#) while "[Nights in Rodanthe](#)" draws fans of the film to numerous sites.

NC Beer Month returns in April for a statewide salute to craft beer and destinations with Pint Hounds appeal. With about 250 breweries dotting the map from Andrews to the Outer Banks, beer lovers can go with the flow of their wanderlust to major festivals and tiny taprooms in well-known beer towns and yours-to-discover places. Anchor a trip with a lodging package, festival, dining event or once-a-year tour using details found at NCBeerMonth.com.

Find more inspiration plus trip-planning tools at VisitNC.com.

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