

RALEIGH, N.C. — Research has built the case that travel improves health and productivity. [National Plan for Vacation Day](#), observed the last Tuesday in January, serves as a call to action for workers to claim the benefits by mapping out how they'll use their 2020 paid time off.

Joining the U.S. Travel Association in observing Plan for Vacation Day, [Visit North Carolina](#) has created a roulette-style game that lets players bet on a sure thing: a trip-worthy idea for vacation building. The #PlanForVacation game can be accessed at [Facebook.com/visitNC](#) and [Twitter.com/visitNC](#).

National Plan for Vacation Day is designed to reverse the failure of 55 percent of American workers to take their full time-off benefits. U.S. Travel's most recent data, which covers 2018, shows 768 million unused vacation days with 236 million days completely forfeited.

"Those mind-bending numbers become meaningful when they're broken down to the 6.5 days the average worker left on the table," said Wit Tuttell, executive director of Visit NC. "Our goal with National Plan for Vacation Day is to encourage people to spend their paid time off as deliberately as they spend their paychecks."

As the country's sixth most-visited state, Tuttell said, North Carolina teems with possibilities for daytrips, long weekend getaways and extended vacations. He offers the following idea starters for discovery, relaxation and fulfillment on trips throughout 2020.

Eat your way through a city. New and soon-to-open food halls serve as starting points in dining destinations that value local production and sustainability. [Durham Food Hall](#) and Asheville's [S&W Market](#) will join and Chapel Hill's [Blue Dogwood Public Market](#), Raleigh's [Transfer Co. Food Hall](#) and [Morgan Street Food Hall](#), and Charlotte's [Optimist Food Hall](#) and the veteran [7th Street Public Market](#).

Claim your first. Crossing the Mile-High Swinging Bridge at [Grandfather Mountain](#). Standing at the site of mankind's [first powered flight](#). Tasting the old-fashioned sweetness at [Britts Donut Shop](#) on the Carolina Beach Boardwalk. Qualifying for the [NASCAR Hall of Fame](#) simulator. Taking the plunge at [Sliding Rock](#). If you've missed a quintessential North Carolina experience, make it the centerpiece of a 2020 trip.

Get ahead of the curve. Be among the first at a new attraction, such as the [Wilderness Run Alpine Coaster](#) in Banner Elk. North Carolina's first Alpine coaster, which should open before the spring thaw, will zip riders along mountain curves in two-person carts at speeds up to 27 mph. For another wild ride, Carowinds adds the [Boogie Board Racer](#), the Southeast's longest mat-racing slide, and its Carolina Harbor waterpark.

Be part of history. Celebrate the centennial of women's right to vote. In [Edenton](#), travelers can channel the spirit of [Penelope Barker](#) (America's first woman activist) and [Harriet Jacobs](#) (who escaped slavery to become an abolitionist author) while enjoying inns, restaurants and shops owned by women entrepreneurs. In [Winston-Salem](#), women have been part of the story since the Moravians arrived in the 1700s. Their stories, which are told at [Old Salem Museum & Gardens](#) and [Reynolda House Museum of American Arts](#), frame the contributions of modern women at [Sweet Potatoes](#) restaurant, the [Cobblestone Farmers Market](#) and elsewhere.

Embrace change. If it has been awhile since you visited Fayetteville, your jaw might drop. [Segra Stadium](#) (home of the [Woodpeckers](#)) and the restored Prince Charles Hotel make headlines for the [Cool Spring Downtown District](#), and the story continues with a new streetscape that sets off innovative shops, breweries and restaurants. In [downtown Kannapolis](#), a [new ballpark](#) opens

April 16 as part of a municipal reinvention that loosens ties with the city's textile past and syncs with the [North Carolina Research Campus](#), its new economic driver.

Create your own quest. The endless options for recreation, relaxation and scenic beauty make a compelling case for bucket lists, DIY passports and old-fashioned goal-setting. Climb [six lighthouses](#) between Corolla and Bald Head Island. Pursue the rewards and recreation at all [34 state parks](#). Check off the joints on the North Carolina Barbecue Society's [Historic Barbecue Trail](#) (and welcome the reopening of Wilber's Barbecue in Goldsboro). Catch games at all [11 Minor League ballparks](#) plus BB&T Point, home of the [Rockers](#), High Point's indie pro team. Drive the full North Carolina stretch of the [Blue Ridge Parkway](#) with frequent stops along its 250 miles.

Want more inspiration? Go to <http://VisitNC.com> VisitNC.com for a feast of information and galleries to help set your course.

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<https://media.visitnc.com/Plan-for-Vacation-Day-Heres-Inspiration>