

Chapel Hill, NC: A College Town Worth the Trip



Chapel Hill in central North Carolina, is home to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the nation's first state university. A great place to visit any time of the year, this quintessential college town is a mix of historic sites, unique gardens, wonderful museums and exciting college sports. Its vibrant downtown is home to craft beer, comedy, live music, vintage clothing and boutiques, a wide variety of dining and more. Don't forget our neighbors, former mill and railroad town Carrboro, home to the famous Cat's Cradle and Hillsborough, a small town getaway full of historic charm. Has the popular River Walk beside the Eno River through town and the historic Ayr Mount Plantation (1815).

What's New in Accommodations?

Coming - 97-room, four-story **TRU Hotel by Hilton**, plus potential for 100 more rooms in a second building coming to east side of Chapel Hill. 2020 timeframe. A two-story, 136-space parking deck would be built behind the hotel.

The historic [Colonial Inn](#), which dates to 1838 in downtown Hillsborough, NC is coming back to life. Anticipate groundbreaking in December 2019 with completion in 2022. Current plans call for 28 elegant sleeping rooms, a large event space, wedding lawn and a limited menu restaurant and bar. The Colonial Inn's restaurant closed in 2001.

What's New in Attractions What?

The first planetarium in the South is getting a facelift. Celebrating its 70th anniversary is 2019, the upcoming [Morehead Planetarium and Science Center's](#) \$5.2 Million Building project will re-imagine the North Carolina icon as a modern-day, technology, and science hub. **Morehead renovation plans include:** 1-Moving the main entrance to the building's west end facing McCorkle Place. 2-An exhibit hall that will pay tribute to UNC's history as a pioneer of science exploration. More than early 60 astronauts between 1959 and 1975 trained in celestial navigation at the Planetarium, including 11 of the 12 men who walked on the Moon! 3-An interactive "maker space" that is part exhibit, part program 4-An updated science demonstration stage and 5-Expanded exhibit galleries showcasing the advances researchers are making in science, health and technology and more. **The first work begins on the planetarium from May 4 – June 17 with an upfit of its Fulldome Theater. Planetarium shows will return as part of its expanded summer schedule when it reopens in June.**

What's New in Food – New Food Market Expands in Downtown Chapel Hill?

[Blue Dogwood Public Market](#) (new public Food Market/Hall) The Triangle's first food market continues to expand with now 8 permanent food vendors (with more added all the time) providing prepared food to go, retail vendors, and pop-up vendors. Find Persian dishes, empanadas, vegan wraps, Italian baked goods, vegan soul food, organic produce, butcher with charcuterie, tea, coffee, fresh juices, beer chocolate and more. On site chocolate demonstrations and new cooking classes. Outdoor beer garden to come. **Downtown Chapel Hill, 306 West Franklin Street. Open Wed – Sun.**

Top Chefs, New Restaurants in Chapel Hill and Carrboro

Chef Brandon Sharp the North Carolina native, Michelin star winner, and former chef at Crossroads at the Carolina Inn, left the flagship hotel last year to build a restaurant that's all his own. His first restaurant, [Hawthorne & Wood](#), opened April 15 at Chapel Hill's East 54 development. The menu draws much of its inspiration from California where the chef has spent the majority of his career. He collected seven prestigious Michelin stars along the way.

Chef **Teddy Diggs**, formally of Il Palio Restaurant at The Siena is set to open in late spring, **Coronato**, a Roman-style pizza concept in the Triangle. [Coronato](#) is being built in the South Green shopping center in Carrboro, at 501 S. Greensboro St. Another must try item will be the CACIO E PEPE FRIES. Enjoy cold craft beers, prosecco on tap and select Italian wines by the glass, alongside affordable bottles of wine and bubbles that pair perfectly for pizza-loving wine enthusiasts.

[Justin Burdett](#), took over for the iconic Chef Bill Smith, upon Smith's retirement in January 2019 at the James Beard- winning restaurant Crook's Corner in downtown Chapel Hill. 35-year old Burdett is only the third chef at Crook's since it opened in 1982. Burdett was recognized from Food & Wine and [StarChefs](#) as one of the [up and coming chefs](#) in the South and won an episode of the Food Network's "Chopped." Crook's Corner is now owned by small group that includes Gary Crunkleton of The Crunkleton cocktail bar in Chapel Hill and Charlotte and former Crook's GM Shannon Healy, of Alley Twenty Six in Durham.

[Blue Spoon Microcreamery's](#) homemade in-house cryogenic ice cream is open in downtown Chapel Hill on Franklin Street.

Brew, Spirits and Wines & Farms

Orange County has 7 breweries, with number 8 coming in 2019. New small batch nano-brewery and bottle shop, **Craftboro Brewing Depot** is opening in late 2019. This onsite craft brewery will also have a beer garden and wine beer and spirits store. Opening in the Carrboro's new development [South Green](#). **Gizmo Works is bringing beer tap room to downtown Chapel Hill in location under Franklin Street in Amber Alley.**

Orange County is home to [Dingo Dog Brewing Company](#), North Carolina's first "non-profit" brewery. Located in an up-fitted horse barn on PlowGirl Farm, Dingo Dog strives to craft locally-conscious beers in its "zero waste" facility that features Orange County, NC produce, much of which is grown right outside our doors on the farm. Dingo Dog will funnel all of its profits into providing capital and operational grants to independent, "no-kill" animal sanctuaries and rescue organizations in North Carolina. **Taproom** in Carrboro, NC opening in 2020. – Ongoing project.

Carrboro's Steel String Brewery has announced plans to build [Pluck Farms](#): a 6,000 square foot production brewery, working farm, destination event site, festival site, culinary pop up venue and disc golf course seated on 57 acres of pasture and woodlands ten miles west down HWY 54 from their current brewery. Orange County Government will purchase a portion of the land for the North Carolina Mountain to Sea Trail. Beers will be created with foraged, forgotten and unique ingredients found on the land in their small ecosystem. Expected completion **winter 2019**.

BROTHER AND SISTER TEAM LEAD ORANGE COUNTY'S FIRST WINERY & CIDERY- [Botanist and Barrel](#) in Cedar Grove, NC in northern Orange County with Dry Fruit Wines, Farmhouse Ciders & Spirituous Barrels. They are beautifully situated on certified organic Cedar Grove Blueberry Farm just north of Hillsborough, NC which features organic blueberries. They craft a variety of barrel aged and stainless steel dry wines, ciders and sours, using only the finest fruits, blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, peaches and apples. Tasting room open Friday – Sunday. Tours available for groups at other times.

Come visit Chapel Hill's Award-winning [TOPO Organic Spirits](#), the first organic distillery in the deep south is dedicated to supporting local organic farming. The base of all of their spirits—except the Rum—comes from locally grown (within 100 miles) organic soft red winter wheat. Products organic vodka, Moonshine Carolina Whiskey, Piedmont Gin, Eight Oak Carolina Whiskey, Reserve Carolina Straight Whiskey and Spiced Rum.

Food Events

Chapel Hill's 10th annual [TerraVita Food & Drink Festival](#) returns **Oct 16-19, 2019** <http://www.terravitafest.com/index.php> This multi-day event was named one of the **"10 Southern Food Festivals You Need to Taste"** by *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and **"4 Can't Miss Southern Food Festivals"** by [PeterGreenberg.com](#). Far more than a chance to indulge, TerraVita has earned its reputation as a premier culinary event in the Southeast because of its commitment to **spreading the gospel of sustainable food and drink**. This event brings together top chefs, food artisans, sommeliers, baristas, brewers, educators, distillers, farmers, cookbook authors and industry luminaries. Dinners, tastings, educational classes, and more.

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