

## 12 Things to Do in Chapel Hill and Orange County, NC

CHAPEL  
HILL

HILLSBOROUGH  
& CARRBORO

Check out historic walking tours, UNC Campus, music, shopping, gardens, art galleries, museums and our local food scene.

ORANGE COUNTY  
VISITORS BUREAU



Wander **Historic Franklin Street** in downtown Chapel Hill is home to more than 250 restaurants, bars, pubs, retail shops and service businesses. Enjoy nightlife, special events, and cultural destinations including the CURRENT ArtSpace + Studio at Carolina Square and the grassy open space. Multiple guided tours leave from Franklin Street featuring history, the campus and ghosts. Visit [Visit Chapel Hill](#) and [Experience Downtown Chapel Hill](#).

Visit the **University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's campus**, the first state-supported university in America to open its doors and graduate students in the 18th century. Guided and self-guided tours are available. <https://www.unc.edu/visitors/>

### Major Attractions

The [Morehead Planetarium & Science Center](#) features star shows, exhibits, live science shows, launch lab and gift shop. Learn about the early NASA astronauts who are training in celestial navigation at the planetarium. \$

**Ackland Art Museum's** permanent collection consists of more than 20,000 works of art, featuring North Carolina's premier collections of Asian art and works of art on Paper, as significant collections of European masterworks, twentieth-century and contemporary art, and North Carolina pottery. FREE <https://ackland.org/>



**North Carolina Botanical Garden** is known for its nature trails, carnivorous plant collections, aquatics, herb gardens, display gardens featuring an ode to habitats across North Carolina and the annual fall Sculpture in the Garden highlighting works of art by North Carolina artists. FREE. <http://ncbg.unc.edu>

**Carolina Basketball Museum** features hundreds of artifacts, videos, photos, interactive statistical and historical panels that highlight the history of the Carolina Basketball program. See memorabilia, trophies, uniforms, rings, balls, books, shoes, and more including a Michael Jordan exhibit. FREE <https://goheels.com/sports/2021/12/10/carolina-basketball-museum>

**Guided and Self-Guided Walking Tours** available. If historical facts are your thing, join the 'Free Walking Tour of Chapel Hill' or 'Heart of the Hill' tours (seasonal) that cover downtown Franklin Street. See dozens of colorful murals with a Mural Map at the Franklin Street Welcome Center. Take a selfie at the popular "Greetings from Chapel Hill" mural behind He's Not Here Bar. Want to wander on your own, there are numerous hiking, walking and biking trails in town.

<https://www.visitchapelhill.org/blog/post/the-10-best-guided-walking-tours-you-should-take-in-orange-county-nc/>

The sounds of **Live Music** can be heard just about any night of the week at many of our local bars and music venues. From our most well-known venue, Cat's Cradle (photo) in Carrboro to the oldest bar and music venue in Chapel Hill, The Cave and also downtown Chapel Hill's Local 506. UNC Music Department hosts music offerings throughout the school year from September - April.

**Performing Arts** - See concerts, ballet, dance, at more at [Carolina Performing Arts](#) Memorial Hall or see a popular play through the professional [PlayMakers Repertory Company](#), both on the UNC Campus. Additionally, see our [calendar of events](#) to see what's happening in town during your visit.

### **Dining, Wine, Breweries & Arcade**

You'll find every type of [cuisine](#) here from Mexican, Italian, Mediterranean, Indian, American, Chinese, French, Thai, and more. Try BLT's from Merritts Grill, pizza at IP3, BBQ at Blues on Franklin. Chapel Hill is home to two century old-restaurants - Sutton's Drug Store (1923) serving up shakes & burgers to southern food with a modern twist at Carolina Coffee Shop (1922). Try local beer at The Carolina Brewery, the oldest [brewery](#) in the Triangle and Top of the Hill Restaurant & Brewery, where you can sit on the patio and over look Franklin Street. Check out the new wine bar Rocks + Acid in Southern Village or play vintage video games at [Baxter Barcade](#).

**Shopping** at University Place, Eastgate Crossing, Franklin Street, Carr Mill Mall. Find handmade jewelry, local pottery, art galleries, antiques, trendy fashions, lots of UNC Memorabilia and more. You'll not find better artisanship than at FRANK Gallery, the North Carolina Crafts Gallery and Womancraft Gifts. <https://www.visitchapelhill.org/things-to-do/shopping/>

Visit [Hillsborough](#), about a 25-minute drive from Chapel Hill. Founded in 1754 see the town's historic quaint downtown with vintage shops, pubs, restaurants and historic sites. Visit the Occaneechi Indian Village Replica Site, stroll the beautiful Riverwalk and visit the 1815 Ayr Mount federal-style plantation home. Start at the Alexander Dickson House Visitors Center.

Chapel Hill/Orange County Welcome Center 308 West Franklin Street, Chapel Hill, NC.  
Mon-Fri 8:30 am - 5 pm and 10 am - 3 pm Sat. [www.visitchapelhill.org](http://www.visitchapelhill.org)