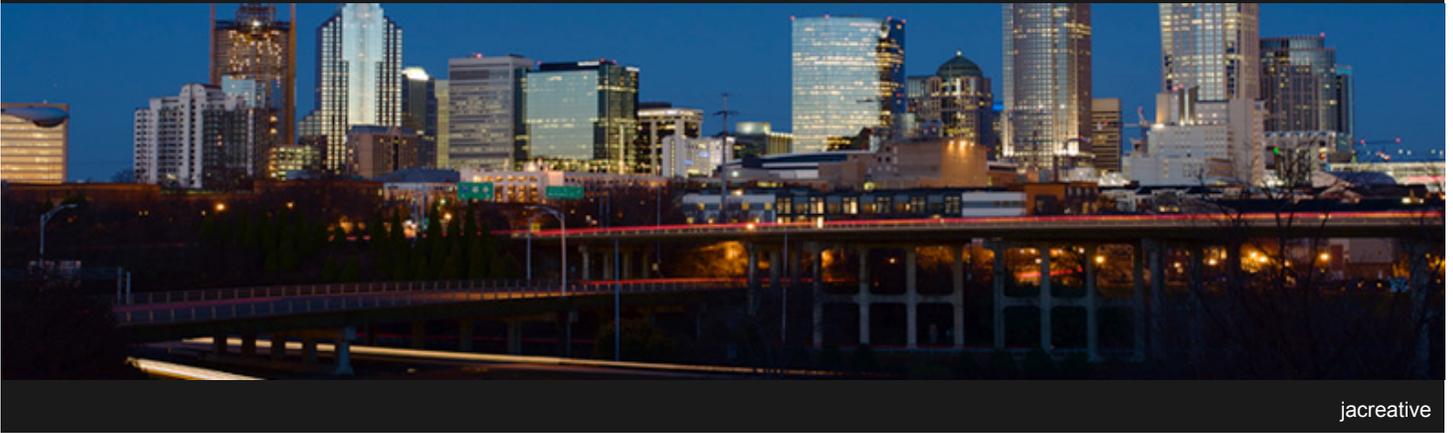




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# Charlotte Where to Stay Guide

## **Charlotte, 7 Days**

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# Guide Description

**AUTHOR NOTE:** Although it can't be said for every metropolitan city in the south, Charlotte offers a little bit of everything when it comes to accommodations. Charlotte features hotels that rise above the landscape, historic mansions converted to bed and breakfasts and even hotel resorts. While in many southern cities you may only find one or the other, Charlotte offers a full gamut of lodging options.

If you're the type of traveler that stays in the big brand luxury hotels, then you'll have no problem finding one to satisfy your taste in Charlotte. Hotels on the luxury side include several Marriotts spread throughout the city and a Westin Hotel. For a complete vacation, the Ballantyne Resort Hotel in Charlotte is a city in itself with a luxurious spa, golf course, tennis, restaurants and other activities. If you want something a little more cozy and down to earth, there are many quaint inns and bed and breakfasts. The Duke Mansion, formerly the home of James Buchanan Duke, is a Charlotte bed and breakfast that has built for itself a reputation of providing outstanding service coupled with elegant accommodations.

**contact:**

tel: +1 703 372 4100  
fax: +1 704 348 4646  
<http://www.theblakehotel.net/>

**location:**

555 S McDowell St  
Charlotte NC 28204

## 1 Blake Hotel (The)

**DESCRIPTION:** Known for its hospitality, this 18 storey hotel located a little away from the Convention Center, boasts of a contemporary interior design. Rooms are welcoming, and fitted with cushy beds, a coffeemaker, hairdryer, iron, Internet access point and more. A hairdresser, coffee shop, 24 hour front desk and room service are some of the comfort facilities at this establishment. To add to these are the excellent meeting and relaxation facilities. With all these features, it certainly stands out as the suitable choice for a traveler of any kind. Call +1 888 664 6835 (Toll Free). © wcities.com



Hotels.com

**contact:**

tel: +1 704 377 0400  
fax: +1 704 347 0649  
<http://www.omnihotels.com/FindAHotel/Charlotte.aspx>

**location:**

132 E Trade St  
Charlotte NC 28202

## 2 Omni Charlotte Hotel

**DESCRIPTION:** The Omni Hotels line is known for its decadent style, and its location in Charlotte is no exception. This hotel boasts over 370 lavish rooms, including one presidential and two penthouse suites. All of these rooms are decked out with the latest in leisure amenities, in addition to the expansive banquet facilities and pool on the rooftop sundeck. It is also connected by a walkway to Overstreet Mall, a popular shopping center with boutiques, salons, and specialty shops. © wcities.com

Hotels.com

**contact:**

tel: +1 704 714 4400  
<http://www.bedandbreakfast.com/north-carolina-charlotte-the-dukemansion.html>

**location:**

400 Hermitage Road  
Charlotte NC 28207

## 3 The Duke Mansion

**DESCRIPTION:** In the midst of one of the city's most prestigious neighborhoods, a completely renovated colonial revival mansion is the grand dame of Charlotte and serves as an historic inn and meeting place. The setting is a page from history, a gracious estate made famous by its former owner James Buchanan Duke. The Duke Mansion is available for overnight lodging, meetings, weddings and other events.



citysearch

**contact:**

tel: +1 704 375 2600  
fax: +1 704 375 2623  
<http://www.starwoodhotels.com/westin/index.html>,<http://www.starwoodhotels.com/westin/property/overview/index.html>

**location:**

601 S College St  
Charlotte NC 28202

## 4 Westin Charlotte (The)

**DESCRIPTION:** Housed in North Carolina's most happening city, the Westin Charlotte is a nice place to stay at with almost all the attractions and dining places situated nearby. The hotel has everything you need while away from home. The rooms are well-facilitated and the staff cater to every whim and fancy of the guests be it day or night. With in-house restaurants like the 'Charlotte's Treats and Eats' and ' Ember Grille'; one need not even step out of the comfort of the hotel to dine. Then there's also 'Bar 10' that makes a good place to socialize over some well mixed cocktails. © wcities.com



Hotels.com

**contact:**

tel: +1 704 377 1500  
fax: +1 704 377 4143  
[http://www1.hilton.com/en\\_US/hi/hotel/CLTHHMF-Hilton-Charlotte-Center-City-North-Carolina/index.do](http://www1.hilton.com/en_US/hi/hotel/CLTHHMF-Hilton-Charlotte-Center-City-North-Carolina/index.do)

**location:**

222 E 3rd St  
Charlotte NC 28202

**5 Hilton Charlotte Center City**

**DESCRIPTION:** The Hilton Charlotte Center City is all about luxury. Located in the city center close to the airport and all the major attractions in the city as well as the Charlotte Convention Center. The hotel guest rooms have 42" wall mounted plasma TV screens which can be connected to DVD players, mp3 players and game consoles. The Hilton has 24 hour room service and a same day laundry service as well. The hotel has a business center with all the required equipment and facilities for meetings. The in-house planners also help organize events like weddings, birthdays at the hotel. The hotel is conveniently located close to major attractions like the North Carolina Blumenthal Performing Arts Center and Mint Museum of Art. For sports enthusiasts, there is the Charlotte Bobcats Arena and the Bank of America Stadium both within walking distance from the hotel. © wcities.com



Hotels.com

**contact:**

tel: +1 704 248 4000  
fax: +1 704 248 4005  
<http://www.ballantynesort.com/>

**location:**

10000 Ballantyne Commons Pkwy  
Charlotte NC 28277

**6 Ballantyne Resort Hotel**

**DESCRIPTION:** Whether it's a leisure holiday or a business trip on your agenda, you can take advantage of the Ballantyne Resort. This luxury accommodation, located 18 miles away from the airport houses an award winning Spa, a sprawling golf course and adequate meeting facilities. Marble bathrooms, cushy beds, plush carpets and strategic lighting are some of the elements of its rich interiors. Indulge in some very delicious preparations at the restaurant, take a few tennis lessons or simply relax with one of their massage treatments. It's all here at this one stop. Call +1 866 248 4824 (Toll Free). © wcities.com



Hotels.com

**contact:**

tel: +1 704 364 8220  
fax: +1 704 365 4712  
<http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/cltph-charlotte-marr>

**location:**

2200 Rexford Rd  
Charlotte NC 28211

**7 Charlotte Marriott SouthPark**

**DESCRIPTION:** Formerly the Park Hotel, this is Charlotte's government-rated four-star hotel. If money is no object, stay here and enjoy the classic styling, with fluted columns and tasteful, luxurious appointments. In SouthPark's commercial center, this six-story hostelry attracts those discriminating travelers who want the ultimate in city comfort. The green marble floors are matched by upholstery in Caribbean sea-green colors -- an effect that is tasteful and stylish. The guest rooms, some of the best in town, often have a set of double beds or sometimes a four-poster king-size bed. Some rooms contain refrigerators. The restaurant is elegant, the service attentive and unobtrusive. A refined and quite sophisticated cuisine is served. In summer, guests can enjoy piano music Thursday to Saturday. © Frommer's



Hotels.com

**contact:**

tel: +1 704 527 9650  
fax: +1 704 527 6918  
<http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/cltnc-charlotte-marri>

**location:**

5700 Westpark Dr  
Charlotte NC 28217

8 **Marriott Charlotte Executive Park**

**DESCRIPTION:** The hotel has garnered the "AAA 3 Diamonds Award", and is well on its way to collecting more gems. Having undergone a nip'n'tuck, the modern façade yields to spacious, well-decorated rooms, each with dual phone lines, toll-free calls, high-speed Internet access and pay-per-view in-room movies to keep guests occupied. Corporate big-wigs favor the business-friendly rooms, amenities and services specially designed with their needs in mind. Tourists and families are not left in the cold either—the indoor and outdoor pools offer ample opportunity to have fun with the kids, while the sauna and jacuzzi help ease those tired muscles. A fitness center with cardiovascular equipment and free weights should allay the fears of those who would like to maintain their svelte figures after a pig-out at Gratz's. There's something for everyone here! Call +1 800 359 7961 (Toll Free). © wcities.com



Hotels.com

**contact:**

tel: +1 704 333 9000  
fax: +1 704 342 3419  
<http://www.dpbolvw.net/click-2005797-10406976>

**location:**

100 W Trade St  
Charlotte NC 28202

9 **Marriott Charlotte City Center**

**DESCRIPTION:** This award-winning hotel lives up to its name, here in the city center. Just a hop, skip and jump away from the city's entertainment, cultural and financial areas, the accommodations are suited to both, the discerning businessman and the family on tour. Settle into opulent rooms with awesome views of the city. Dining options come in the form of the posh Champions Sports Bar and Restaurant or the Savannah Red, which has a southern twist to its cuisine and a classy wine bar. Breakfast at First Light is inevitable, and a quick cup of coffee can be grabbed from the in-house Starbucks counter. A fitness center maintains the regimen of workout freaks, while the swimming pool is an ideal spot for some family fun. © wcities.com



Hotels.com

**contact:**

tel: +1 704 332 4141  
fax: +1 704 376 4117  
<http://www.dunhillhotel.com>

**location:**

237 N Tryon St  
Charlotte NC 28202

10 **Dunhill Hotel**

**DESCRIPTION:** Constructed in 1929, this is one of Charlotte's oldest and most historic hotels. These days, the big names often go elsewhere, but old-timers still prefer the Dunhill's European-style comfort and charm. (The doorman out front often greets returning guests by name.) In the old days, it was called the Mayfair Manor, and some of its most loyal clients still refer to it that way. The artwork in the public areas is by North Carolinian Philip Moose, and a piano player entertains in the stylish lobby. The restored guest rooms have a warm, cozy feeling; they're furnished with handsome reproductions and often with four-poster beds. **Monticello's** is the hotel restaurant, offering excellent cuisine throughout the day. Health-club privileges can be arranged. © Frommer's



Hotels.com

# Charlotte Snapshot

## Local Info

The largest city in North Carolina, Charlotte was famous as a major gold producer in the 18th century. Today it's better known for NASCAR and for the thriving industry and commerce the city has developed. Charlotte is a place where travel for pleasure is often mixed with business--and it shows. The city in the last decade has sprouted numerous skyscrapers and huge shopping malls that keep its economy humming.

## Dining and Shopping

Charlotte has a beautiful night skyline that serves as a backdrop for dining and drinking at the EpiCentre, which claims it's "where Charlotte nightlife begins." Located in the uptown area, close to many business headquarters, the complex includes dozens of restaurants, shops and clubs spread over half a million square feet. The hub is accessible by the Lynx light rail line and is an ideal place for a business dinner, happy hour drinks or a night of clubbing. Restaurant options here include American, Mexican, Japanese Italian and more. The EpiCentre also houses an assortment of boutiques and shops selling everything from designer fashions to electronics.

## Sports

Sports lovers find Charlotte a haven. There are places to play and places to watch, with many events happening here year-round. The PGA makes a regular stop in Charlotte and there are numerous golf courses spread over the area. There are also the NFL Panthers and the NBA Bobcats. There's a major NASCAR event at Charlotte Motor Speedway and racing fans will want to visit the NASCAR Hall of Fame located downtown.

## Sights

As in any ambitious city that aspires to national prominence, the arts are well represented in Charlotte, with regular

performances of ballet, Broadway shows and the symphony orchestra. Uptown, the Mint Museum has a well-regarded collection of American art, crafts and design, all housed in a building of dramatic architecture. If you're an aviation buff, the Carolinas Aviation Museum, adjacent to the airport, is a must-see. It has displays of historic planes, fighter jets, helicopters and more. Photographers and aspiring filmmakers will enjoy the Light Factory, one of only four museums in the U.S. dedicated to contemporary film and photography.

Kids will be riveted by the performances at ImaginOn, where new educational programs and exhibits open weekly. Also popular with young travelers is the Discovery Place science museum. There are hands-on exhibits, a massive aquarium and a tropical rainforest. The crowd favorite here is the hair-raising static-electricity demonstration. Also make sure to check out the IMAX Dome Theatre, which shows those amazingly immersive movies on its three-story screen.

If the kids get restless, take them to Carowinds, an amusement park that dubs itself "the thrill capital of the Southeast." Located near the south state line, it has 13 roller coasters, various other thrill rides, children's rides, a water park, family shows, restaurants, and numerous concession stands for corn dogs and cotton candy.  
© NileGuide

## History

### The Crossroads

Charlotte was born in the mid-Eighteenth century, at the crossroads of two great Native American trade routes. Scots-Irish, German, English, and French Huguenot settlers followed the Great Wagon Road into the Carolina foothills, where the Catawba Indians made their home. The settlers set up shop at the aforementioned intersection of trade routes, recognizing the potential of the fertile land and central location.

### Early Political Maneuvering

To further that potential, upon the settlement's incorporation in 1768, settlers christened their home Charlotte Town, after Charlotte Sophia of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, wife of King George III. As their community grew in size and importance, the settlers were itching for a county of their own. So as to expedite the fulfillment of their wishes, they dubbed the prospective county Mecklenburg. Before long, it became apparent that Mecklenburg County needed a county seat, and Charlotte was so designated in 1774, thanks to the timely construction of a modest log cabin courthouse. **Revolution**

Despite those early efforts to honor and respect the monarchy, the citizens of Charlotte soon yearned for independence. It is said that in May 1775, they drafted the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, pronouncing the sovereignty of their city and county. While no concrete record of this mysterious "Meck-Dec" exists, the people of Charlotte recall the story proudly, and the date of its signing is commemorated on the North Carolina state flag. When the American Revolution began in earnest, Charlotte proved to be a key location. Both American and British forces set up camps in the vicinity, and many a bloody battle was fought nearby. The people of Charlotte fought alongside Catawba Indians, both parties working together to defeat the Brits. Their wily efforts worked: British General Cornwallis famously called Charlotte "a damned hornet's nest of rebellion."

### Gold!

After independence, Charlotte became the site of one of the first confirmed gold finds in U.S. history. The year was 1799, and a young boy returned from a fishing trip with a curious 17-pound chunk of rock. It was used as a doorstep for three years before a jeweler happened upon the chunk and declared it solid gold! Throughout the next century, gold was the talk of Charlotte. Fortune seekers from all over the world poured into the city, and the federal government saw fit to construct a new branch of the U.S. Mint here. While the Charlotte Gold Rush was severely overshadowed by the more famous gold discoveries out West, this episode forever remains an integral part of the city's rich history.

## Charlotte Snapshot continued

### Boom

With the gold rush and the Civil War having lured people and resources into the area, Charlotte expanded greatly in the years that followed. In the latter half of the Nineteenth Century, the city grew into an important ginning and distribution center for the region's cotton industry, thereby becoming an integral hub for the nation's burgeoning railroad system as well. Charlotte was soon an ideal place for textile manufacturing, and by the turn of the century, over half of all U.S. textile production occurred in and around the city. After the First World War, the growth of interstate highways like I-85 and I-77 added to Charlotte's transformation into an all-around distribution powerhouse. To keep up with the economic boom, a branch of the Federal Reserve Bank was instated.

### Charlotte Today

In recent decades, Charlotte's distribution networks and control over high finance have done nothing but grow. While the city has become an international banking capital(home to Fortune 500 companies like Bank of America and Wachovia), the people of Charlotte have not forgotten their rich and tumultuous history. Locals cherish General Cornwallis' characterization of their city, and continue to celebrate Charlotte's revolutionary reputation. Contemporary reminders of this section of the city's storied past include major transit corridors like Independence Boulevard and Freedom Drive, commercial hubs such as the Independence Center, community gathering places like Freedom Park and Independence Park, and, of course, the NBA's long-time Charlotte Hornets. The old mint no longer functions as such, but in its place, the Mint Museum of Craft and Design and the Mint Museum of Art stand as prominent tributes to Charlotte's fabled gold rush and its subsequent establishment as a city of serious financial weight. Charlotte's people have not lost their Revolutionary War-era fighting spirit either. When the Hornets were hijacked to New Orleans in 2002, Charlotte wasted no time securing a new NBA team to call its own. The Charlotte Bobcats entered the league in 2004, and continue to thrill audiences at Charlotte Bobcats Arena. For NASCAR fans, Charlotte is something of a Mecca as well. It is home to the world famous Lowe's Motor Speedway and

around 75% of the American motor sports industry's employees are headquartered in and around downtown Charlotte.

©

### Hotel Insights

Charlotte is a city rich in history. The city's lodging and hospitality offerings give both the business and leisure traveler countless options ranging from the most humble to the ultra swank. Whether it is four- and five-star hotels, luxe-plush resorts or simple and basic B&B's, Charlotte has them all.

### Plaza-Midwood

Over the years, this neighborhood has developed into a close-knit community that thrives with bohemian culture and business. Many of the stores are homey restaurants or alternative art and music shops that flourish because of the area's diversity. The nearby VanLandingham Estate includes a bed and breakfast at the historic Harwood Home which sits on five acres of well-tended grounds.

### Uptown

Despite the name, this neighborhood is located in the center of Charlotte's business sector and has the majority of the city's skyscrapers. There is also a large selection of hotels and inns featuring 19th century Queen Anne architecture. Decadent interior design and lavish service set the Dunhill Hotel, the Omni Charlotte Hotel, and Charlotte Marriott City Center apart from the bustle of surrounding business. The Blake Hotel is ideal for conferences as it is centrally located to many of the largest attractions.

### Dilworth

A popular choice among young professionals, this former "streetcar suburb" of Charlotte has maintained its popularity because of its traditional atmosphere and architecture. Just minutes outside of the center, the Morehead Inn is known for its unique Southern hospitality and service, and is a favorite for private parties.

### Ballantyne

This area has experienced a great deal of growth in the past few years and is a mix of residential and high-end commercial development. Featuring a spa, exercise facilities, and Golf Club at Ballantyne Resort, the Ballantyne Resort Hotel offers a full range of activities for the business or leisure traveler. The Staybridge Suites Charlotte-Ballantyne provides business travelers all the comforts of home in a convenient location.

### Elizabeth

Formerly the home of Elizabeth College, this neighborhood has preserved many of the impressive houses and buildings that once made it renowned as an exclusive residential area. One such example is Chez Arlaine Bed& Breakfast, a converted home built in 1910 with four private rooms in a verdant garden setting.

### South End

The historic trolley system of Charlotte has its roots in South End. Currently this system is under construction to build a new light-rail called Lynx. Ascot Inn is an ideal choice for a romantic getaway for two, and has the added bonus of being close to shops and restaurants in the Uptown area.

### NoDa

NoDa is the primary arts district for Charlotte, where many galleries and performance arts venues have appeared in place of former textile manufacturing plants. Concentrated on North Davidson Street between 35th and 36th Streets, there is little in the way of accommodations in the area. It may be best to visit during the day and evening and head back to a hotel in nearby Uptown for the night. Days Inn Charlotte Central would be a solid choice.

### South Park

This is the place to go for upscale shopping and luxury services. The Charlotte Marriott SouthPark maintains a one-to-one ratio of employees to guests, making it one of the best places for a relaxing retreat. The Hampton Inn& Suites Charlotte/South Park offers the all the amenities of a full-service hotel, including take-away breakfast

## Charlotte Snapshot continued

baggies for the traveler on the go. Just a few minutes away is Ms. Elsie's Caribbean Bed& Breakfast, which retains tropical tradition and soul in the middle of city bustle.

### University

Deriving its name from its proximity to the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and University Research Park, this area is also close to Concord Mills, one of the largest tourist attractions in North Carolina. Comfort Inn UNCC is a great match for both vacation and commercial travelers and provides amenities for longer stays. The Hilton Charlotte University Place sits on lakefront property and offers extensive meeting space and several ballrooms.

### Myers Park

Considered one of the most desirable residential areas of the city, Myers Park is filled with some of the city's oldest houses, enormous oak trees, and classic architecture. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Duke Mansion is an excellent embodiment of this style and offers personal service in a luxurious setting.

©

## Restaurants Insights

### Uptown

You will find everything that a city center should have in this longtime on-the-go district. Catering to any and all food lovers' taste buds, eat comfort food at Zink American Kitchen, have Spanish appetizers and a glass of up-scale wine at Arpa, or indulge in food from around the world at Blue. For the after-dinner treat swing by Cans Bar and Canteen, but don't expect to order a draft beer as they specialize in canned brews. For a little late-night 80s dancing and a spandex adventure continue on to the Breakfast Club. As if the options don't already span across the board, relish the new-age ambiance at Liquid Lounge.

### Noda

Be swept into vibrant cafés and a bustling nightlife when visiting this fringe district.

Galleries, unique boutiques, and cafes abound, providing passersby with colorful streets to accompany their stroll. Local art lovers frequent The Evening Muse for the creative atmosphere that stems from live music, artwork and stiff cups of Joe. With eateries named the Mellow Mushroom and the Smelly Cat Coffee House, there is no wonder why the sidewalks are full of people on a sunny day. If you have already had a busy day, a number of inexpensive lunch spots like Boudreaux's Louisiana Kitchen and Cabo Fish Taco will give you a chance to rest your feet. **Myers Park**

It is worth a drive through this neighborhood just to admire the beautiful homes that line the curved streets. Park your car and enjoy a walk below the aged oak trees, and for a casual but classy Sunday brunch stop at Providence Café to indulge in everything from sandwiches to prime rib. If you decide to see a show at one of the local theaters, have dinner at Volare, a homey Italian restaurant that uses grade-A products. Most of Myers Park's nightspots double as restaurants. For a nice British breakfast and evening Guinness try Big Ben, while Jackalope Jacks serves up sweet cocktails like the Bikini and Chocolate Martinis.

### Plaza Midwood

While people thought this eastside neighborhood would mature into Myers Park's sister district, it never developed in the same way. Instead, it acts as a bohemian alter ego catering to the international tongue. For the unique atmosphere that only a home/art store turned restaurant can create, try LuLu or Creation. For both veggies and carnivores, Dish serves up inexpensive southern comfort food in a funky, local-influenced atmosphere. In such a transition neighborhood, you will have little trouble finding a creative bar or lounge to enjoy after-dinner drinks. For a sweet treat try the Fire and Ice lounge, while the Thomas Street Tavern is always brimming with locals who stop in for a beer.

### SouthPark

Taking its name from the SouthPark Mall, this upscale area boasts history and class.

Since it is home to the historic trolley, take a ride on an age-old artifact before indulging in a fine dining experience. For a romantic dinner for two eat at La Bibliothèque and be treated to delicious French/American food in an alluring setting. Zebra, also serving up French cuisine, is popular for its delicious, contemporary dishes and a wine list that extends several hundred bottles. With a rustic décor and African wall adornment, make sure to book a table early and avoid the long wait. For Seafood dishes with a high-society crowd, there are an abundance of choices. Upstream offers an always-changing menu, while The Palm is known for its oversized lobster dishes. You can find both wine bars and movie theaters, but this district is generally known for its A-list shops and dainty dining.

### University City

Home to the University of North Carolina, this area is dominated by cheap eats and neighborhood hangouts. The Old Hickory House is a longtime favorite, filling empty stomachs with BBQ ribs, and making sure that everyone is enjoying a Western, finger-licking good time. Catering to the large population and diverse taste buds and ideologies, enjoy new-age Asian cuisine at Udipi Pure Vegetarian Cuisine, curry at Bombay Cuisine and the hot sauce that will surely light your mouth afire at Monterrey Restaurante Mexicano. A university district would not be the same without the businesses that allow young adults to let some steam off. Check out JB'z Beach Club for billiards, blues and cheap beer, or swing by The Wine Vault to share a bottle of wine with someone special.

### Dilworth

Developed in 1890, this was Charlotte's first streetcar suburb. Now, unique architecture and a thriving, youthful neighborhood make Dilworth the perfect place to stroll through shops and choose from dozens of international eateries. For a daytime break eat at Thai Taste, one of the oldest Thai places around. If you want something lighter, grab a quick treat to keep your momentum going at Dilworth Coffeehouse. With an atmosphere that resembles that of

## Charlotte Snapshot continued

the beat generation, and an unforgettable aroma, it's the perfect side stop. Another hip and delicious eatery is a converted house called 300 East. Expect a diverse clientele, menu and plenty of liquor to keep conversations running long. For other eclectic international menus dine at Nikko, Bonterra, and Sole Spanish Grill. With almost as many nightspots as restaurants you will have an easy time finding somewhere to let loose. For Beer, BBQ and Bikes, stop at Mac's Speed Shop and be taken in by the motorbike relics that cover the walls. The Tremont Music Hall boasts live entertainment.

### Elizabeth

In addition to the grits, cornbread, and chitlins that are staples in southern cuisine, Elizabeth is host to some of the finest restaurants in Charlotte. Deriving its name from the local university, Elizabeth College, which has since been incorporated into the local Roanoke College, this area has long been a choice of residence for the local elite. However, these days you don't have to break the bank just to fill your stomach. Southern fare is still alive and well at the The Cajun Queen, where barbeque shrimp, oysters, and the famous Dixie beer can all be enjoyed with live jazz seven nights a week. If you decide to expand your borders, Cuisine Malaya, a short distance from Independence Park, serves up spicy and flavorful curries, sushi, and other dishes from across the Asian continent. Like many of the restaurants in the area, La-tea-da's teahouse is located in a historic home, and offers traditional catering and event hosting. Also capturing the classical limelight is Carpe Diem, where exquisitely presented, time-honored local cuisine is served in a romantic setting. For the younger crowd, the ever-popular Loft 1523 offers many creative libations as well as a high-energy social scene with live music five nights a week.

### Ballantyne

Springing from the creative minds of Charlotte city planners, the Ballantyne area accommodates the acclaimed Ballantyne Resort and Golf Course as well as the

accompanying Ballantyne Village. As a result, most of the dining options Ballantyne has to offer are in these two areas. Villa Antonio located within the village, seeks to transport you back to Northern Italy with an authentic Italian menu, a traveling guitarist and candlelit tables offering the perfect ambiance. For those watching their weight, but still want to be satisfied, Doc Green's Gourmet Salads offers pleasant health-conscious options. Starving after a round of golf? Relax your feet with a glass of wine within the lodge at the Ballantyne Resort, where acclaimed dining choices include the Gallery Restaurant, renowned for its exquisite presentation and service. Back Yard Burger, open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner indulges those with a distinctly American palate.

### South End

South End is a historic part of town that has grown out of the ignominy of its industrial past, into a stylish, bustling new identity. That means that there are plenty of new restaurants and bars to try out, running the gamut from cheap and dingy to pricey and highbrow. Most of the food can be found along a stretch of South Boulevard that starts with Carabbas Italian Grill, which is part of an upscale Sicilian-American chain. Down the road is Pewter Rose Bistro, offering expensive fusion cuisine and a huge wine list. At night the Pewter Rose morphs into Tutto Monde, a slick nightclub that continues to serve the Bistro's dishes. For somewhat cheaper fare, go a block further to Pike's Old Fashioned Soda Shop where you can get a BLT and, obviously, a tall soda. Pike's is neighbors with the Tyber Creek Pub, an Irish bar perfect for a late night drink. Walk a few more blocks to the only slightly tamer Tea ReX Teahouse, where you can munch muffins while listening to live music. The Villa Antonio Restaurant brings fine Italian cuisine and an atmosphere that ensures a long stay. You won't find as much off of South Boulevard. Quaint but hip Camden Road runs parallel for part of its length, and features the beautifully cheap Price's Chicken Coop, where you can fill up for a fiver but won't find a place to sit. Also on

Camden is Queen's Beans Coffee, offering fair-trade coffee and a seating area where you can prop your feet up and rejuvenate.

©

## Nightlife Insights

Charlotte is a regional center for museums, art, music, theater, sports, and other cultural and entertainment activities. The city's diverse population is able to support a variety of entertainments, some of which are the envy of the entire country.

### Sports

Since the team's inception in 1993, the NFL's Carolina Panthers have called Charlotte home. The Panthers wow crowds on many a Sunday on the field at Charlotte's Bank of America Stadium. For basketball fans, the NBA Charlotte Bobcats and the WNBA Charlotte Sting keep audiences on their feet year round at Charlotte Bobcats Arena. Charlotte, of course, is one of the prime destinations for NASCAR fans. Racing enthusiasts can go hog wild at the world famous Lowe's Motor Speedway.

### Music

The Charlotte Symphony Orchestra has entertained the people of Charlotte for decades, performing a lengthy series of classics (from Tchaikovsky to Wagner) every year at historic Ovens Auditorium, and the architectural marvel Belk Theatre (where even the cheapest of seats are never more than 135 feet from the stage). Opera Carolina, based in Charlotte, performs four epic productions at Belk Theatre each year (from "Porgy and Bess" to "La Boheme"), as well as an annual holiday production of "Amahl and the Night Visitors," and an extensive series of Education & Outreach productions all over both North and South Carolina.

Giving Belk Theatre a run for its money, Tremont Music Hall likes to say that here, "you're never more than 50 feet from the stage." At such close range, audiences are continually bowled over by their favorite national touring rock bands (like X, MXPX, and KMFDM). The Visulite Theatre, hosts

## Charlotte Snapshot continued

rock bands as well (such as the Reverend Horton Heat and Birdmonster), this time in a retired movie house setting. The Milestone Club provides Charlotte with easy access to the underground music scene, playing host to punk and metal bands from all over the world, not the least of which are the Melvins and Green Milk for the Planet Orange. For folk aficionados, The Evening Muse just might be a home away from home. Up-and-coming singer-songwriters like Gary Jules and Dan Bern take the stage at this intimate venue, where the walls are adorned with the works of local artists.

### Comedy

The Comedy Zone brings Charlotte the most sought-after national touring comedians, from Dave Chappelle to Jerry Seinfeld. The Charlotte Comedy Theater, on the other hand, is a local improv troupe dedicated to making their community laugh.

### Art

In the refurbished remains of the historic Charlotte Mint lies the Mint Museum of Art, home to a number of exciting collections, from ancient American art, to Spanish Colonial, European, and contemporary. For a more bohemian experience, one can venture into Charlotte's "NoDa" arts district, where galleries and art studios like Hart Witzen Gallery and the ArtHouse line the boulevards. On the first and third Fridays of each month, art lovers are invited to visit such establishments on NoDa's famous Gallery Crawl.

### Museums

The Afro-American Cultural Center works to preserve African American art, culture, and history, and present it to audiences for educational purposes as well as sheer enjoyment. Housed partly in the original 1936 hangar of Charlotte's original municipal airport, the Carolinas Aviation Museum is an aviation nut's dream. Their collection includes everything from a replica of the Wright Brothers' 1902 Wright Glider to the Grumman F-14D Super Tomcat, made famous by the film *Top Gun*. Also on display are a startling

array of jets, helicopters, ordnance and missiles, rockets, and even spacecraft. The Levine Museum of the New South bills itself as an "interactive history museum," and, as such, uses a wide variety of multimedia exhibits to tell the story of the South since the end of the Civil War. The museum tells this story from many different perspectives, with an eye toward creating greater understanding and painting a more complete picture than traditional history books have attempted.

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## Things to Do Insights

### Bohemian for a Day

NoDa is Charlotte's bohemian arts district, centered on the intersection of North Davidson & 36th. It's a convenient area; almost everything can be reached by walking a few blocks away from 36th on North Davidson, heading toward or away from Uptown. The entertainment in NoDa is lively, the cuisine is stimulating, and the galleries are without peer.

If shopping is your thing, you will be glad to hear that the district is home to a number of legendary storefronts. Book lovers beware: RealEyes Bookstore, with its comfy ambience and community-oriented vibe, just may ruin you for any other bookseller. Fabric Art allows customers to have custom artwork or photography printed digitally on fabric. Customize everything from a silk scarf to a cotton t-shirt or even sofa upholstery. Relive the 60s at Sunshine Daydreams, a unique boutique specializing in locally-produced and often hand-made hippie-era products.

The main attractions in NoDa are the galleries. Twice monthly, the public is invited to visit NoDa's finest on the popular Gallery Crawl, when galleries and storefronts open up until late for an informal arts festival. Whether on the Crawl or not, the following are can't-miss stops. Green Rice Designs & Studio features art in a wide variety of media, from oil paint to computer generated. BEET Contemporary Crafts and Functional Art showcases functional art such as pottery, paper, toys, and even

musical instruments. Blue Pony Studio and Press does not stop at displaying fine art for its customers; it also functions as a fully equipped printmaking studio. At SunStar Studio, in addition to enjoying the visual and performance artwork on offer, you may also attend any of a number of workshops focusing on the healing arts.

When hunger strikes, keep in mind that the cuisine here in NoDa is just as artful as the art. For brunch, stop in at Boudreaux's Louisiana Kitchen for a taste of New Orleans, complete with Cajun Bloody Mary's. For a caffeine fix, follow the locals into Smelly Cat Coffee House, a cozy neighborhood joint offering a comforting selection of coffees, teas, smoothies, pastries, and bagels. Addie's Jamaican Cuisine offers a tantalizingly authentic menu including oven-fresh jerk chicken, curry goat, and oxtail. Come happy hour, belly up to the bar at NoDa's quirkiest watering hole, the Dog Bar. Here, neighborhood canines are allowed to come in and relax alongside their cocktail-sipping human counterparts. Pizza lovers will marvel at the possibilities on the menu at Mellow Mushroom, a beloved regional chain that specializes in pies with names like "Magical Mystery Tour" and "Kosmic Karma."

Craving some entertainment? Moving Poets Theater of Dance is a dance troupe as innovative as they come, enhancing their routines with complex multi-media presentations. They take the stage regularly at the Hart Witzen Gallery's performance space. At Wine Up, treat yourself to a glass of wine and some live jazz (and feel free to shoot some pool afterwards). For more music, head on over to The Neighborhood Theatre where popular national touring acts like the North Mississippi Allstars and Aimee Mann take the stage regularly.

### A Tale of Two Historic Neighborhoods

At Charlotte's inception, the Fourth Ward was the center of culture, taste, and high society. Though the neighborhood has had its ups and downs throughout the intervening centuries, today's Fourth Ward is a treasure trove of historically

## Charlotte Snapshot continued

and architecturally significant homes, businesses and public amenities. Feast your eyes on prime examples of Victorian, colonial revival, Italianate, and even "Stick Style" architecture, some of which date back as far as the 1880s.

For those wishing to go even further back in time, wander through the Old Settlers Cemetery, Charlotte's first. Graves here date back to 1776. At Alexander Michael's Restaurant, one can continue the history lesson while chowing down on some tasty pub grub. Known to locals as "Al Mike's," this inviting bar and grill is situated on the site of a grocery store opened in 1891. After lunch, venture into the Charlotte Mecklenburg Fire Museum and Education Center. Situated within a former firehouse (erected in 1924), the museum features a turn-of-the-century horse-drawn pumper, a 1940s-era switchboard, a Mack Fire Engine, a number of memorials, and a well-stocked gift shop. If the kids are not utterly delighted with all of that, hustle them into Discovery Place, a fully interactive, cutting-edge science museum (and home to The Charlotte Observer IMAX Dome Theatre). After a sobering dose of science, it might be time for a jaunt into the art world. The Fourth Ward's McColl Center for Visual Art is part gallery, part studio space, all located inside a strikingly renovated 1920s-era church. Enjoy seasonal exhibitions as well as "Open Studio Saturdays," where local artists invite the public to watch them at work. After your hectic schedule of culture and history, drop into the aptly named Therapy Café for one of their infamous tiramisu martinis.

Having thoroughly relished the experience that is Charlotte's Historic Fourth Ward, hop the Charlotte Trolley to Charlotte's Historic South End. See the sights, take it all in, then decide which historic district you like best. The South End grew up during one of Charlotte's early periods of expansion. In the 1850s, railroads and streetcars allowed people and businesses to relocate further from the crowded city center. A great number of them ended up a few miles south, and a new community was born.

Before you do anything else, learn the history of the trolley you rode in on, at the Charlotte Trolley Inc. museum and gift shop. Speaking of shopping, shoppers will also delight in the South End's wide array of boutiques. Eileen sells women's fashions, accessories, gifts and art, all with a personal touch. Many items are locally produced and hand made, and despite its upscale look, Eileen strives to price nothing above \$100. Black Sheep caters to a decidedly different clientèle. Billed as an "urban boutique," the place specializes in clothing, art, and skateboards. If you're feeling outdoorsy, find your way down to Latta Park, at the east end of Park Avenue. This leafy neighborhood park was one of the original attractions here in the South End, luring families from all around the region. Today, its 31 acres are no less attractive. Devote a few hours to its picnic area, playground, spray ground, athletic fields and courts, recreation center, and many trails. After so much activity it will surely be, yet again, time to eat. The Pewter Rose Bistro traffics in "internationally American" cuisine, which features fresh local ingredients presented with a somewhat worldly flair. In search of a meal a little more down home? Price's Chicken Coop supplies locals with all the fried chicken they can eat, complete with family-style portions of slaw, potato salad, and hush puppies. For dessert, consider that Pike's Old Fashioned Soda Shop claims to serve "the best milkshakes this side of the Mississippi." Stop in and see if they're right. If milkshakes are not your cup of tea, grab a cup of tea and some biscotti at Tea ReX, a beloved premium teahouse housed in a historic former cotton mill.

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### Travel Tips

#### Getting There

**By Air:** Charlotte Douglas International Airport (CLT) (+1 704 359 4910/ <http://www.charmeck.org/Departments/Airport/Home.htm>) is the area hub, offering flights to North and South America, along with some major airports in Europe.

The following are the major airlines flying out of CLT:

Air Canada (+1 888 247 2262/ <http://www.aircanada.ca/>)

AirTran Airways (+1 800 247 8726/ <http://airtran.com/>)

American Airlines, American Eagle and American Connection (+1 800 433 7300/ <http://www.aa.com/>)

Continental Airlines and Continental Express (+1 800 525 0280/ <http://www.continental.com/>)

Delta Air Lines and Delta Connection (+1 800 221 1212/ <http://www.delta.com/>)

JetBlue Airways (+1 800 538 2583/ <http://www.jetblue.com/>)

Lufthansa (+1 800 399 5838/ <http://www.lufthansa.com/>)

Northwest Airlines and Northwest Jetlink (+1 800 225 2525/ <http://www.nwa.com/>)

United Airlines and United Express (+1 800 241 6522/ <http://www.ual.com/>)

US Airways and US Airways Express (+1 800 428 4322/ <http://www.usairways.com/>)

Individual and group transportation to and from the airport is available on call, or by going to the Visitor Information board located in Baggage Claim. Taxis and shuttles will also usually be waiting outside the lower Baggage Claim area. Following are listings of some available options for taxis, shuttles and limousines if you need to call ahead.

Shuttle companies: Airport Shuttle, LLC (+1 704 894 0796)

Queens Airport Shuttle (+1 704 752 9858)

Walker Transportation (+1 704 618 3499)

Taxi companies:

American Taxi Cab (+1 704 375 1010)

Royal Cab Company (+1 704 373 9988)

Yellow Cab Company (+1 704 332 6161)

Limousine service: A1 Limousine (+1 704 393 3031)

## Charlotte Snapshot continued

Executive Car Service(+1 704 525 2191)

Signature Limousine(+1 704 202 9685)

A city bus runs from about 6a to 8p from the upper ticketing level of the terminal, going into Uptown Charlotte. As a final option, many hotels and motels offer courtesy transportation from the airport.

Rental car companies include:

Alamo(+1 800 327 9633/ <http://www.alamo.com>)

Avis(+1 800 831 2847/ <http://www.avis.com>)

Enterprise(+1 800 325 8007/ <http://www.pickenterprises.com>)

Hertz(+1 800 654 3131/ <http://www.hertz.com>)

Other public and private transportation includes:

Train:

There are Amtrak stations(+1 800 872 7245/ <http://www.amtrak.com/>) near Charlotte's center and in nearby Gastonia.

### By Bus:

Greyhound(+1 800 231 2222/ <http://www.greyhound.com>) has regular service routes to and from the city.

### By Car:

I-77 runs north and south through the city, and I-85 goes east and west with I-485 looping around the city. US-29 and US-74 also go into Charlotte. **Getting Around**

The Charlotte area is well provided for by the Charlotte Area Transit

System(CATS)(+1 866 779 2287/ <http://www.charmeck.nc.us/Departments/cats/home.asp>), though most routes don't run very late. A trip planner is included on the website.

### Traffic Information:

To find out city traffic information go to <http://www.traffic.com>

If traveling overseas, take the safety precaution of registering your trip at <https://travelregistration.state.gov> and for helpful, practical advice about traveling technicalities and safety standards check out <http://travel.state.gov/>.  
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## Fun Facts

### Charlotte

**State:** North Carolina

**Country:** United States

### Charlotte By The Numbers:

Population: 594,359(city); 801,137(metro area)

Average January low temperature: 32 degrees F/ 0 degrees C

Average July high temperature: 90 degrees F/ 32 degrees C

Annual rainfall: 43.52 in.(1.1 meters)

Country dialing code: 1

Area codes: 704, 980

Area: 280.5 sq mi/ 629 sq km

Elevation: 795 ft/ 242 meters

Hotel rooms: 30,000

Coordinates: 35°14'N 80°50'W

### Quick Facts:

Major industries: Banking; motor sports

Electricity: 110 volts AC, 50Hz; round two-pin plugs are standard.

Ethnic mix: 58% White; 32% Black; 7% Latino; 3.4% Asian

Time zone: UTC-5(UTC-4 during Daylight Savings)

### Did You Know?

Charlotte is the biggest city between Washington, DC and Dallas, TX. The city is home to more than 700 places of worship, prompting the nickname "the City of Churches". Fortune 500 companies headquartered in Charlotte include Bank of America, Goodrich Corporation, Lowe's, and Wachovia. The American Foundation for the Blind dubbed Charlotte the "Most Livable Community for the Visually Impaired".

### Orientation:

Charlotte sits amongst the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, in a region known as the Carolina Piedmont. Atlanta, GA lies about 227 miles/365 kilometers WSW, Knoxville, TN is about 183 miles/295 kilometers WNW, Richmond, VA 247 miles/397 kilometers NE, and it is 318 miles/512 kilometers east to Myrtle Beach, SC, on the Atlantic coast.

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