

Charlotte, North Carolina

Charlotte, nicknamed the “Queen City,” is the largest city in the state of North Carolina with the distinction of being one of the hottest destinations for people to visit, live, and do business in the United States. It is the third-fastest growing city domestically due to its desirable subtropical climate, economic affordability, demographic diversity, and local & state pledged support of Education and Arts initiatives. These contributing factors have made the city a major U.S. financial banking center with Bank of America & Wells Fargo having corporate offices. The region also boasts the distinction of being home to a diverse list of Fortune 500 companies (Lowe’s, Family Dollar, SPX Corporation) and being a hub for both technology and energy-oriented organizations.



The city of Charlotte is located in Mecklenburg County with the distinction of having close to two-hundredculturally different neighborhoods. Myers Park, Biddleville, and Dilworth spotlight the history and charm of the city’s Southern colonial past with its mansions and tree-lined streets. Plaza Midwood and SouthPark offer a glimpse of its future with massive luxury condominium developments and an array ofshopping and dining areas.

In recent years, the areas of NoDA, (North of Uptown) and the South End have become the gotocommunity for nightlife, arts and entertainmentofferings. A favorite spot for children and families is Discovery Place Science. It is a science and technology museum that brings science to life through interactive exhibits, experiments, and other thrilling activities. It is also home to a IMAX Theater. There is no shortage of excellent museums in Charlotte. The Mint Museum is the largest visual arts institution in town showcasing work from the late 1700’s right up to the mid 1900’s. The Bechtler Museum of Modern Art is dedicated to mid-20th century modern art. The collection reflects most of the important art movements and schools after World War II with Picasso, Warhol, & Giacometti work represented.



Charlotte professional sports are represented by the Carolina Panthers of the National Football League and the Charlotte Hornets of the National Basketball Association. The Panthers play their home games at Bank of America stadium, while the Hornets play at the Spectrum Center. The AAA baseball team of the Charlotte Knights (a minor league team of the Chicago White Sox) has really brought an air of excitement downtown with the recent building of BB&T stadium. The prime location has brought a plethora of new events and nightlife each April through August. It is also responsible for the development of many new hotels and restaurants to anchor the area.



The U.S. motorsports industry calls Charlotte home. The offices of NASCAR and the NASCAR Hall of Fame are located here. Almost 75% of the industry's race teams, employees and drivers are based nearby. Both the Charlotte Motor Speedway and zMAXDragway, located in the nearby city of Concord, hold major events each April, May, Sept, & Oct.



If you come to Charlotte during the summer and enjoy the outdoors, two favorite activities are a trip out to the U.S National Whitewater Center and Carowinds Amusement Park. The center is home to the largest man-made whitewater river, offering activities including whitewater rafting, kayaking, mountain biking, rock-climbing, zip-lining & rope courses. Carowinds also caters to the adventure seeker with a 400 acre amusement park that is full of roller-coasters and water adventure rides. Both places are family friendly and are known to have special events that run right before the holiday season.



There is so much to do and visit while you are in Charlotte. However, if you do need to get out of town for a day or so, the city of Asheville is about two and half hours east of the city. The car ride is one of the most scenic trips that you can take in the country. I highly recommend jumping on the Blue-Ridge Parkway for a portion of the journey since it is one of the most scenic routes in the entire country. While you are in Asheville, you can enjoy a thriving arts & music scene, microbreweries, and even various hiking and sight-seeing destinations.

Asheville's crown jewel is the Biltmore Estate. It is considered America's largest home and was created by George Vanderbilt in the late 19th century as a retreat reminiscent of the grand castles and estates of France and Britain. It truly is a landscape masterpiece. While you are visiting, I recommend sampling some wine at its winery and learning about the family history at Antler Hill Village.

