

Lexington, KY
Credit: volgariver/Getty

ASHEVILLE & LEXINGTON

NC KY



ASHEVILLE **NC** BY SHAWNDRAS RUSSELL

In March 2019, *Rolling Stone* named Asheville, North Carolina “the New Must-Visit Music City.” Indeed, no city within the state comes with as much street cred and cool, thanks to its beautiful mountainous surroundings, excellent food and beverage scenes, and creative atmosphere, particularly in its music halls and bars.

DO

Nearly 40 venues offer live music every day of the week, ranging from dive bars like **Burger Bar** to swanky rooftop lounges at **The Montford** and **Top of the Monk**. Dive into the city’s impressive arts scene in the **River Arts District**, with more than 200 working artists’ studios, including the **NC Glass Center** and **Silver River Center for Chair Caning**. Two miles south of downtown, stroll through the Gilded Age **Biltmore**, America’s largest private home.

EAT

Find classic Southern at the original and ever popular **Tupelo Honey Café**, or, cruise up 5,000 feet on the Blue Ridge Parkway — one of America’s most scenic drives — to **Pisgah Inn** to accompany your meal with stunning panoramas of the mountains and valleys. Elevated dining in town can be found on the rooftop of **Capella on 9**, ranked among the top 50 rooftop bars in the world in 2018 by *US News & World Report*.

STAY

A stay at **1900 Inn on Montford** — a AAA Four-Diamond property — puts guests in the heart of the oldest of Asheville’s four historic districts, rich with residential architectural gems like **The Rankin House**, a Greek Revival home built in 1846. Or opt for the **Grand Bohemian Hotel** at Biltmore Village, which exquisitely displays the neighborhood’s Tudor style. For a boutique splash, head downtown to **Aloft** or **Hotel Indigo**, both with trendy on-site restaurants and easy walkability to a dozen craft breweries.

GETTING THERE

Started in February 2019, daily nonstop flights with United Airlines reach Asheville Regional Airport (AVL) from Dulles International Airport (IAD) in about one hour and 40 minutes. Once there, Asheville Redefines Transit (ART) bus routes and schedules can be viewed through the Transit App.

LEXINGTON **KY** BY MARGARET LITTMAN

Buried deep beneath Lexington is limestone. Water that flows through the limestone rock is said to make the bones of horses strong, turning out champion racers and inspiring the city’s nickname — the Horse Capital of the World. But this friendly, livable city isn’t just about the horses. It has a vibrant theater scene, Civil War sites, college sports, and a growing foodie reputation.

DRINK

This is bourbon country, so cocktails are more than something you sip at the bar. Arrange a custom distillery tour with **Mint Julep Tours**. In their air-conditioned luxury van (much appreciated during a Kentucky summer), you’ll be ferried about to learn what makes bourbon the state’s elixir. To explore on your own, try **Alltech Lexington Brewing & Distilling**, both a brewery and a distillery, and **Bluegrass Tavern**, which claims the largest bourbon collection in the state.

EAT

Finding something tasty to eat in the South is never an issue. That’s doubly true in Lexington, where Southern classics, such as the shrimp and grits, fill the menus at restaurants like **Honeywood**. A rich immigrant food scene pervades, too, be it Laura Patrick Ramirez’s famous hand-made tortillas at **Tortilleria Y Taqueria Ramirez**, Japanese-style noodle bowls at **Atomic Ramen**, and West African cassava dishes at **Sav’s Grill**.

STAY

For character, it’s hard to beat the contemporary art museum-meets-boutique hotel at **21c Museum Hotel**, which boasts more than 7,000 square feet of exhibition space and regular events. A more classic vibe with resort amenities can be found at the swanky **Lexington Griffin Gate**, complete with golf course, spa, and pool.

GETTING THERE

United Airlines offers daily nonstop flights from Dulles International Airport (IAD) to Blue Grass Airport (LEX) while Delta Airlines offers daily nonstop flights from Reagan National Airport (DCA) to LEX. LexTran offers an express shuttle to downtown.

Downtown Asheville
Credit: Sean Pavone Photo

Tupelo Honey Café
Credit: Brian D Crawford

