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## 9 Things to Do in North Carolina Off the Beaten Path



North Carolina is known for its gorgeous Blue Ridge Mountains and awesome beaches, but the Old North State has so much more to offer.

Yes, you can have the best of both worlds in this state with both mountains and beaches, but what happens when you get off the beaten path? Where does that long winding road lead you? According to travel experts it could take you just about anywhere. Here are 9 things to do in North Carolina that are off the beaten path.

To experience the best of NC, sometimes you just need to get off the beaten path.

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### 1. Fearington Village (Pittsboro, NC)

Fearington Village, located in Pittsboro, NC about an hour West of Raleigh, is an English-inspired Village Center. The village has been built on an old dairy farm by R. B. Fitch and his wife Jenny, who began developing the land back in 1974. Repurposed farm structures have been turned into amazing little shops and restaurants, such as the AAA Five Diamond, Relais & Chateaux Fearington House Inn and Restaurant, and The Roost Beer Garden. When you visit you'll also find a designer women's boutique and a spa, along with a coffee shop and wine shop.

We connected with Missy Fournier, Marketing Manager at Fearington Village, to find out about the true hidden gems of Fearington Village. "While every business in the Village Center is a hidden North Carolina gem, our independent bookstore, [McIntyre's Books](#), is truly special. This bookstore is truly a treasure for local guests and travelers alike."

With all of these wonderful stores and diverse mix of restaurants, you might never want to leave!

### 2. Mt. Airy, NC

Mount Airy, the home of Andy Griffith, is near the Virginia and North Carolina border, just north of Winston-Salem. This small town is actually what Andy Griffith based Mayberry from, the town in his hit show *The Andy Griffith Show*. Our travel expert Michael Colin says, "Downtown feels like Mayberry and has quaint shops and establishments like Snappy Lunch, often referred to on *The Andy Griffith Show*." One stroll down Main Street and you'll know exactly what he's talking about.

The small town also is the home to award-winning vineyards, such as Round Peak and Herrera Vineyards. Within just a short drive you can make it to 11 different wineries surrounding the Yadkin Valley. Might be best to not visit them all in one day!

For the best view in town, drive to Pilot Mountain, only 15 minutes from downtown Mount Airy. Once there you can hike any one of the numerous trails Pilot Mountain State Park has to offer, including some of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail. This specific trail stretches 1,175 miles from the Great Smoky Mountains to the Outer Banks of North Carolina, and cuts right through Pilot Mountain.

### 3. Cumberland County

Cumberland County, which surrounds Fayetteville, NC, is home to several awesome summertime events. According to Jenny Bell, [Blues N Brews Festival](#) is the "one that really stands out as the perfect way to kick off the summer." Jenny also mentioned, "You will find a huge number of the attendees are military members who are stationed at Fort Bragg. The cold beer and hot blues are the big draw." With over 100+ beers to choose from, many being brewed by local breweries, it's no wonder that the festival is a must-see.

"Cumberland County boasts several multi-generation farms that people enjoy visiting and purchasing produce from, but one, in particular, brings my family back over and over throughout the year, [Gillis Hill Farm](#) and [Gillis Hill Road Produce](#)," says Jenny. Who doesn't enjoy fresh fruit and vegetables? Especially in the summertime!

Gillis Hill Farm has been in operation since the 1700s. In the spring you can visit the farm to pick your own strawberries or go for a visit in the fall to pick out pumpkins perfect for carving. Take a tour of the whole property, if you wish, just don't forget to stop in the little store first for homemade ice cream.



### 4. High Hampton Inn (Cashiers, NC)

The [High Hampton Inn](#) is over 90 years old and is set on a 1,400 acre piece of property in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. At this historic inn there is beauty in every direction, as well as something to do. Play a game of golf or tennis, treat yourself to a spa day, go for a hike, or just stroll around the property. There's so much to do!

If hiking is your thing, head out to reach the peak of Chimney Top Mountain. Climb 4,618 feet for a breathtaking view of Cashiers valley and the Blue Ridge Mountains. You won't regret it.

Contributor Jeremy Porter visited the property for the first time over six years ago. "I stumbled onto High Hampton Inn in Cashiers about six years ago and it has become an annual trip for me, my wife, and four young children. It's like going back in time; for example, the cabins are covered in bark. No TV, AC, or reliable cell phone service. You have to spend quality time together and unplug. It's wonderful."

### 5. The Road to Nowhere at The Great Smokies

The history surrounding [The Road to Nowhere](#) is both eerie and intriguing. During the 1930's and 40's private land was purchased to create the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and Fontana Lake. The lake is a reservoir for Fontana Dam, built during World War II to produce electricity for ALCOA aluminum plants in Tennessee, as well as for Oak Ridge National Laboratory's Manhattan Project.

Ellen Snodgrass, Bryson City Chamber of Commerce, told us, "Citizens who had to move off their land for these projects were promised that a road would be built in the Park to replace a highway that was buried beneath the Lake. The road was begun but fell victim to an environmental issue and construction was stopped in the 1960s. The road travels only 6 miles through the Park with beautiful mountain views and view of the Lake, and ends at a tunnel. Walking through the tunnel takes to you great hiking trails and fishing spots...but it's truly the end of the road."

The end of the road is definitely a site to see off the beaten path in North Carolina.



### 6. Scuba Diving

Scuba diving might not be the first thing to come to mind when you think of North Carolina, but surprisingly enough, it is something that you can go and do! Carly Smith, on behalf of the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI), told us, "Every year, millions of visitors head to North Carolina to experience its beaches, and while relaxing and soaking up the sun is ideal, PADI allows visitors to get in the water and experience the depths of the Atlantic Ocean."

There are two PADI dive centers in North Carolina. One is in Durham and the other is in Raleigh. "If someone is visiting North Carolina and is already PADI certified, they can stop by these shops to get their gear and plan out a dive trip. If they are a beginner, they can take entry-level diving courses to learn the ins and outs of diving."

If scuba diving sounds too intense for you, snorkeling is always a great second option! Just grab your snorkel and fins and hit one of North Carolina's many beaches. There are over 300 miles of beach in the Tarheel State so the possibilities are endless!

### 7. V&E Simonetti Historic Tuba Collection (Durham, NC)

This might be the most off the beaten path thing on the whole list. A museum for tubas! The [V&E Simonetti Historic Tuba Collection](#) is located in Durham, NC and is said to be one of the world's largest antique tuba collections. It's so big that NPR came and did a story on it!

"The museum, which is in a bright yellow house, is free and open to the public and features more than 300 antique tubas and brass instruments collected by Vince and Ethel Simonetti," according to Heather Darnell, Senior Public Relations Manager at Durham Convention and Visitor's Bureau.

It doesn't get much more unique than this and it seems very appropriate that the museum is sheltered inside of a yellow house.

### 8. Urban Adventure Quest (Asheville, NC)

As if there weren't enough cool things to do in Asheville, you can now do a city scavenger hunt. Christie Walker, owner of [Urban Adventure Quest](#), a smart phone guided scavenger hunt, told us this is the best way to explore Asheville. "We recommend the Asheville scavenger hunt as a unique way to explore this popular North Carolina city. The game takes participants on a walking tour, where they solve clues and complete challenges while they discover the hidden gems, unique features, and famous sites of the city." Hear what other people are saying about Urban Adventure Quest:

"The scavenger hunt was so much fun! The puzzles were challenging but doable, even by my two daughters (11 and 10 years-old). There are a lot of places I wouldn't have seen had I not done the scavenger hunt. I thought the cost was worth it and highly recommend this experience."

"It was a fun way for our family to tour the city and learn a little along the way! I had to keep reminding my husband to give our 12 year-old a chance to figure out the puzzles! Thanks for an awesome adventure. We will definitely do more quests when we visit new cities!"

Breweries, boutique shopping, and fantastic foods are sure to pop up on this scavenger hunt. Keep your eyes peeled for One World Brewing and The Asheville Pinball Museum. Keep your ears peeled for live bluegrass music. It's just about always being played somewhere, whether on the street or in a cool, little bar.

"Cherokee is a must-visit destination. It makes for one of NC's most unique experiences."

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### 9. Cherokee, NC

For a true historical experience, visit [Cherokee, NC](#). Here you will find a town on the reservation home of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation. According to Robert Jumper, Interim Destination Marketing Manager at Eastern Bank of Cherokee Indians, "It's also base camp for hiking in the Great Smokies, arts and crafts shopping, native elk herd viewing, hours of fishing fun, and home to a history that spans millennia. In Cherokee, you can spend the day just as Cherokees would, three centuries ago."

It's certainly one of the state's most unique experiences to take part in, so don't miss out on your next trip through North Carolina.

North Carolina offers so many rich experiences, and it's one of the reasons we are so proud to offer a range of excellent [NC land properties for sale](#). Check out our wide variety of listings, and reach out at any time for questions about our beautiful properties.