

Welcome to the City: The Triangle

A Crowdsourced Guide by Davidson Alumni and Parents

Top “Must Do” Items in the City

- Canoe, hike and/or swim on the Eno River/quarry (Durham) or Jordan Lake (Apex). The Eno River is a hidden gem in the middle of the hustle and bustle of Durham, and it's free.
- Visit or take a cooking class at Southern Season in Chapel Hill. Great to just wander the store and have samples, see incredible kitchen gadgets and wonder what they are for, and get exotic and southern specialties.
- Walk through the Duke Gardens. Beautiful landscape of plants, flowers, trees, ponds, and fields! Small fee to park during peak hours, but free before noon.
- Visit the many excellent free art events and museums.
 - Don't miss “First Friday” in Raleigh and “Third Friday” in Durham.
 - Check out the North Carolina Museum of Art (Raleigh), North Carolina Museum of Life and Sciences (Durham) (especially great for kids), and North Carolina Museum of Natural Science (Raleigh) (also great for kids).
- Catch a performance of Messiah in Duke Chapel.
- Visit the State Capitol, a National Historic Landmark and excellent example of Greek Revival architecture. One of its architects, Alexander Jackson Davis, also designed the original Chambers building at Davidson, which burned in 1921. Free self-guided tour; also special events on holidays and during Christmas.
- See a show at the Durham Performing Arts Center.
- Catch the NC State Fair at least once while you're a resident.
- Run, walk, or bike any or all of the American Tobacco Trail. 22+ miles through Durham, Wake, and Chatham counties.
- Check out a Paperhand Puppet Intervention show in Chapel Hill.
- Attend one of the many music festivals. Carrboro Music Festival (last Sunday in September) is my favorite, then Shakori Hills.
- Catch the fireworks or enjoy \$1 concessions night at a Durham Bulls game.
- Visit the American Tobacco Campus in Durham. Beautiful renovation of tobacco buildings into a gorgeous facility for offices, picnics, strolling, and food.
- Visit Oakwood Cemetery in Raleigh. Lots of history in a beautiful park-like setting. Some really interesting grave-markers with mysterious stories. Raleigh has at least two other great historic cemeteries too, but I can't remember their names!
- Visit the Hemlock Bluffs in Cary. Great park with a stand of hemlocks normally only found in the mountains. Left over from the last ice age.
- Take the sculpture walk at the NC Art Museum. Great to see a wide variety of interesting sculpture and other art scattered about in a natural setting. Good exercise too.
- Take a brewery tour. Even if you don't drink beer, it's really neat to learn about the brewing process as well as the focus on local agriculture. Most are free, but (as far as I know) all of them are \$5 or under. There are several in the area, and each is unique.

- Enjoy the sunset while eating homemade ice-cream at Maple View Farm in Hillsborough.
- Take a Segway Tour of Raleigh.
- See a concert at Cat's Cradle in Carrboro. Famous for bringing in big names before they're big.
- Visit Lake Johnson in Raleigh.
- Visit the library at NC State's Centennial Campus.
- Eat Sunday brunch at Weaver Street Market in Carrboro.
- Attend a Monti StorySLAM at the Motorco in Durham.
- Take in a concert at Koka Booth Amphitheatre in Cary. This is the most beautiful outdoor venue in the area. All experiences are great but with the NC Symphony concerts folks can bring in their own picnics. Great to see how elaborate some are!
- Participate in the Boylan Heights ArtWalk in Raleigh the first Sunday in December. Great way to see local and regional artists who set up on porches and lawns in one of Raleigh's great historic neighborhoods. The art is great and so is the architecture. Free unless you find the perfect piece of art.
- Go to the regional farmers' markets: Durham, SW Durham, Carrboro, etc.
- Visit the NC Botanical Garden in Chapel Hill.
- Go to the Carolina Theater in Durham for artsy movies in an amazing theater and/or performances (great history of landmark's restoration). Also check out the Chelsea Theater in Chapel Hill for artsy movies.
- Hike in Umstead Park in Raleigh.
- See a show at Morehead Planetarium and Science Center in Chapel Hill.
- Enjoy a scoop of Howling Cow ice cream (made by NC State students). Available at a walk up window (!) at DH Hill Library, the Talley Student Union, and at the State Fair.
- See a performance at Playmakers Repertory Company in Chapel Hill.
- Visit the Lemur Center at Duke.

What We Wish We'd Known / Advice for Alumni New to the Area

- Houses cost more in Raleigh than Charlotte. Houses cost less in Durham than Raleigh.
- When lots are posted with towing signs, they mean it.
- Carrboro is a lot farther to I-40 than you think.
- Durham has a worse reputation than it should.
- There is some 'tribalism' in the area...some people are pro-Triangle, while others are only pro-Durham or pro-Raleigh pro-Chapel Hill. The Duke-UNC rivalry exists primarily in the Triangle; other than that, people are pro UNC or NC State.
- It's easier to get around than you might think. Learn to take the back ways around the Triangle—more interesting that way.
- Cary is a much more dynamic and diverse community than the stereotypes may lead you to believe.
- Be sure to try the local theatre companies and not just the big touring shows. The Triangle has a very eclectic and evolving theatre scene.
- Go to Durham and live. Best vibe—by a long way—and full of smart, progressive people who are making waves in the New Economy. The parts of the Triangle are different: if you're establishment types, go to Raleigh. If you're more progressive and liberal, go to Durham. Chapel

Hill is a great place, but Carrboro is so much better, and more livable. I'm liberal, but CH is off the chart.

What to Read

Newspapers:

- *News & Observer*: Parent company publishes the N&O, one of the nation's best regional newspapers, as well as 10 bi-weekly newspapers offering community coverage throughout the Triangle.
- *Indy Weekly*: Progressive news, culture and commentary for Raleigh, Cary, Durham and Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

Websites:

- Goodnight Raleigh: A photographic look at the art, architecture, history, and people of Raleigh at night.
- Raleigh Connoisseur: A blog with information on new developments in downtown Raleigh including new shop/restaurant openings and new construction.
- Carpe Durham: Ramblings about restaurants and bars in Durham.
- WRAL.com: Get the latest Raleigh area news, weather forecasts, I-40 traffic, ACC and high school sports, strange news and blogs for Central and Eastern North Carolina.

Note from Alumni Relations: While we don't keep these guides updated year round, we do ask alumni and parents in our chapters for updates to them each fall when we send out our Welcome to the City invitation. If you'd like to add something, we'd love if you could hold your recommendation until next fall!