

ASHEVILLE

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NEWS AND INSIGHTS FOR 2026

As the curtain rises on a new year, the Asheville area continues to ascend as a global destination for the arts, dining and awe-inspiring natural beauty.

America's Favorite Drive reopens in time for 90th anniversary – The Blue Ridge Parkway celebrates 90 years since construction began in 1935, with more than 114 continuous miles now fully open from the highest peak in the east, Mt. Mitchell, through Asheville and all the way to the Smokies. Visitors of the Parkway can easily access its most popular attractions, including the Folk Art Center, the Blue Ridge Parkway Visitor Center and the North Carolina Arboretum - home to year-round draws including Winter Lights, bonsai and quilt garden exhibitions and hands-on experiences.

Sensory spectacle illuminates Biltmore – An evening experience, Luminere, is set to transform America's Largest House and gardens into a luminous dreamscape. The installation projects moving imagery, set to a custom score by Julian Grege and performed by the Asheville Symphony. Guests can enhance the evening with artisan picnics on the grounds or exclusive guided tours of the house (Mar. 26–Oct. 18, 2026). Visitors can extend their stay on the estate at one of two on-property hotels: The Village Hotel on Biltmore Estate and The Inn on Biltmore Estate. The 210-room Inn—situated steps from the historic house—has recently completed an interior redesign, refreshing guest corridors, rooms, and suites with a contemporary interpretation of its classical European roots inspired by the French Renaissance château.

Historic homes bring Asheville's stories to life – Just a short distance from the estate's grandeur, Asheville celebrates everyday history with two beloved heritage sites. The Smith-McDowell House, the oldest surviving residence in the city and a fine example of antebellum brick architecture, invites visitors to step back into 19th-century life with period rooms, gardens and engaging exhibits that explore early Western North Carolina history. And in downtown Asheville, the Thomas Wolfe Memorial preserves the Victorian boardinghouse where one of America's great novelists spent his youth. The home welcomes guided tours and exhibits that illuminate Wolfe's life, work and the city that inspired him.

Museum of Costume Jewelry set to shine in Asheville – A new cultural gem is coming to the Asheville area with the vision for the Museum of Costume Jewelry, dedicated to collecting, preserving and exhibiting 20th-century and contemporary costume jewelry design. Planned as a state-of-the-art, centrally located museum, the space will serve as a vibrant hub for Western North Carolina residents, a hands-on resource for students of the fashion arts, and a world-class attraction for visitors. Exhibits will blend artistry with education, tracing the evolution of materials, styles, and cultural influences—from Art Nouveau and Art Deco to Hollywood glamour, post-war innovation, 1970s Lucite, and today's designers.

INCENTIVE FUNDS FOR YOUR GROUP TOUR

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EXPLORE ASHEVILLE SERVICES

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DRIVING DISTANCE IN MILES

Atlanta, GA	217	Nashville, TN	288
Charleston, SC	259	Orlando, FL	547
Charlotte, NC	120	Philadelphia, PA	628
Cincinnati, OH	372	Pigeon Forge, TN	96
Myrtle Beach, SC	305	Savannah, GA	288

ICONIC ASHEVILLE



BILTMORE

Make a day of visiting Biltmore, America's largest privately-owned home. This 250-room chateau is nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains and provides an inside look into the lives of the upper class of the early 1900s. The estate is also home to the country's most-visited winery, several shops and restaurants and a robust variety of recreational experiences. Special events scheduled annually.



GREAT OUTDOORS

Asheville has long been known for its fresh mountain air and long-range views. Connect with nature on a leisurely drive along the Blue Ridge Parkway or with a group program at Chimney Rock State Park. For a more hands-on experience, climb and zip through treetops at the Adventure Center of Asheville, chase waterfalls and river rapids, or hike one of the hundreds of trails through maintained forestland.



CRAFT BEVERAGE PARADISE

Asheville ranks among the cities with the most breweries per capita. Spend time with your group exploring, learning, and tasting local craft beers, either in the company of experts or on your own at a free tour. Powerhouses such as Sierra Nevada and New Belgium join the thriving local beer scene, as well as dozens of cideries, distilleries, and wineries.



CREATIVE CONNECTIONS

With an identity deeply rooted in arts and crafts, Asheville is home to some of the region's best handywork. Easily stroll the streets of the River Arts District or Downtown Asheville Arts District for access to hundreds of working artist studios. Enjoy a dynamic glassblowing demo at Lexington Glassworks. Visit the Folk Art Center, home to the Southern Highland Craft Guild's oldest shop and gallery.



HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

From November through years end, Asheville is filled with holiday wonder. Biltmore comes alive with miles of garland, heirloom decorations, special menus and tours, and Candlelight Christmas Evenings. The Omni Grove Park Inn hosts the National Gingerbread House Competition featuring the finest edible creations the country has to offer. And groups love the pageantry of Winter Lights at the North Carolina Arboretum, among other holiday-themed activities.