



Monticello Country
Ballooning

OFFICIAL VISITOR GUIDE

GET VISITOR INFO



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WELCOME!

Charlottesville and Albemarle County are filled with friendly, vibrant, and passionate people who bring exciting energy to the area, translating to a host of experiences that are sure to inspire, entertain, and enrich. In one day, you can sip award-winning local wine, tour presidential homes, hike the Shenandoah National Park, listen to live music, visit an art gallery, enjoy world-class cuisine, and never be more than just a short drive from your accommodations. Talk with knowledgeable travel specialists at our Mobile Visitor Centers to learn more about the experiences that have captivated so many. With so much to do, we'll be welcoming you back before you know it.

GET ORIENTED



Driving Distance to Charlottesville

- Richmond, VA → 71 miles, 1 hour and 10 minutes
- Roanoke, VA → 121 miles, 2 hours
- Virginia Beach, VA → 177 miles, 2 hours 45 min
- Washington, DC → 116 miles, 2 hours 30 min
- Baltimore, MD → 154 miles, 3 hours
- Raleigh/Durham, NC → 230 miles, 3 hr 30 min
- Greensboro/Winston-Salem, NC → 205 miles, 3 hr 30 min
- Charlotte, NC → 272 miles, 4 hr 30 min



The Rotunda at the University of Virginia

WINTER

Visiting during winter offers snowy adventures, cozy firepits, and a slower pace—perfect for lingering.

SPRING

Our spring calendar is packed with events that celebrate culture, community, and creativity!

SUMMER

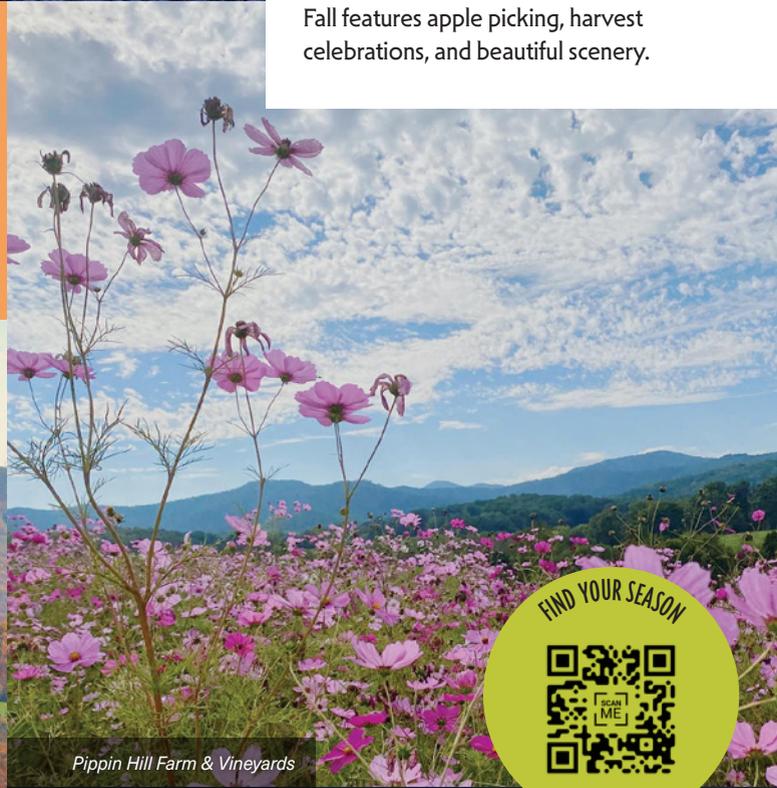
Pack your sunscreen and immerse yourself in the outdoors, whether tubing on the James or Rivanna Rivers or exploring one of our many hiking trails.

FALL

Fall features apple picking, harvest celebrations, and beautiful scenery.



92 Acres



Pippin Hill Farm & Vineyards



A FOUR SEASON DESTINATION

VALUE TIPS

Plan your trip to Charlottesville and Albemarle County during the height of summer or winter for fewer crowds and more affordable lodging rates. During the spring and fall, try booking a midweek stay.

WINERIES

VISIT OUR VINEYARDS



Sip Award-Winning Wines

Charlottesville and the Monticello American Viticultural Area (AVA)—home to 50+ wineries—were named Wine Region of the Year by Wine Enthusiast in 2023. Once the site of Thomas Jefferson's early grape-growing experiments, the area now produces wines of national and international acclaim. Notable varietals include viognier, cabernet franc, and chardonnay, plus petit verdot and petit manseng with a regional twist. Enjoy guided wine tastings alongside everything from food-truck fare to elevated dining. Visitors can also enjoy live music, beautiful mountain views, and fun events such as polo, bingo, and karaoke. For a fully-immersive experience, book onsite lodging at a winery or hire a local transportation company to guide your travels.





OUTDOOR RECREATION

Charlottesville and Albemarle County offer endless outdoor recreation opportunities for all abilities and skill levels. Hike around scenic reservoirs, the Rivanna Trail, or nearby Blue Ridge Parkway and Shenandoah National Park. Water lovers can kayak, canoe, or tube the James and Rivanna Rivers, and enjoy flat water at Beaver Creek Lake or Chris Greene Lake. Golfers can play championship courses with mountain views, while farms and orchards invite visitors to pick seasonal fruit, sample wine or cider, and shop local goods. With a variety of trails, rivers, mountains, and family-friendly activities, it's no wonder the Charlottesville area was recently voted a Top Adventure Town by *Blue Ridge Outdoors*—there's truly something for every outdoor enthusiast.



Old Trail Golf Club



IX Art Park with Blue Ridge Bicycle Tours



Once home to Founding Fathers Thomas Jefferson and James Monroe, Charlottesville and Albemarle County offer rich architecture and deep American history. At Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, visitors learn about America's third president, who wrote "all men are created equal" yet enslaved more than 600 people. A few miles down the road is Highland, home of James Monroe, the fifth U.S. president. The estate offers self-guided and private tours, plus over 4 miles of rustic trails. These sites, through their archaeological work and descendant community input, confront the complex history of slavery, ensuring a fuller, more honest telling of America's past.



After a visit to Highland and Monticello, make a lunch stop at Michie Tavern, a historic tavern serving a southern-style buffet.



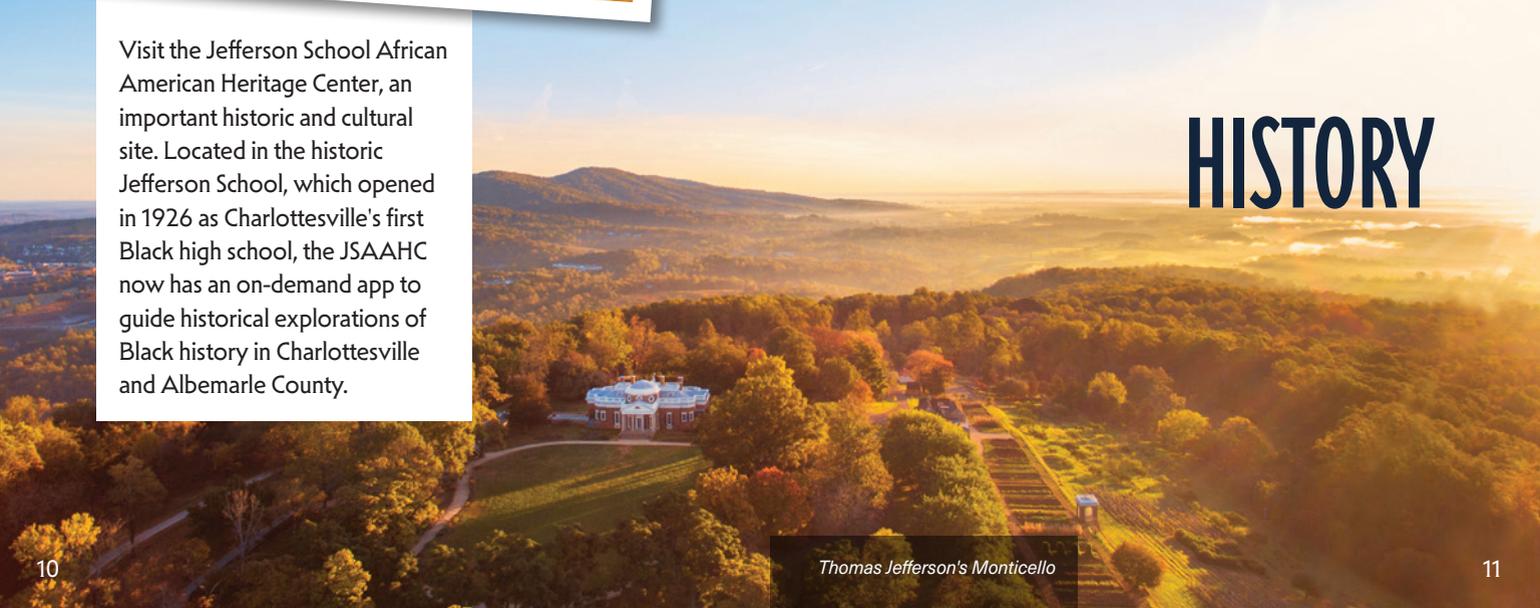
Jefferson School African American Heritage Center



Michie Tavern

Visit the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center, an important historic and cultural site. Located in the historic Jefferson School, which opened in 1926 as Charlottesville's first Black high school, the JSAAHC now has an on-demand app to guide historical explorations of Black history in Charlottesville and Albemarle County.

HISTORY



Thomas Jefferson's Monticello



Juneteenth Celebration, photo credit Derrick Waller

Black residents' contributions to Charlottesville and Albemarle County date back centuries, and you can learn about this legacy at a number of dynamic historic sites. Today, our community is hosting exciting events, making wine at local wineries, and taking the arts scene by storm. Discover exciting flavors and culinary creations at Black-owned restaurants, then groove to the music of emerging and established Black musicians at local music venues.

DISCOVER BLACK CVILLE



Southwest Mountain Vineyards



MarieBette Café and Bakery



Two Up Wine Down Festival, photo credit Kori Price



Bar Botanical, photo credit @toastswiththeyosts

FOOD & DRINK

Random Row Brewing Co.



Kindness Cafe + Play



Charlottesville and Albemarle County boast an impressive culinary scene with global flavors and a strong root-to-table focus. Chefs source from local farms and small producers, and drink menus often highlight regional beer, cider, wine, and distilled spirits. From food trucks and local farmers markets, to rooftop bars and white-tablecloth restaurants, dining here blends local pride, creative flavors, and vibrant community. Every meal is a memorable experience.



Conchitas



Praha Bohemian Bakery & Café



Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection



EXPERIENCE THE ARTS



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



The Paramount Theater

Featuring a wide variety of live music, galleries, and theatre, Charlottesville and Albemarle County never fail to provide an exciting and art-filled experience for visitors and locals alike. IX Art Park offers murals, sculptures, markets, performances, and Virginia's first immersive art experience, The Looking Glass. The Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection and The Fralin Museum of Art provide free, world-class exhibits, while the McGuffey Art Center invites visitors to watch artists at work. Hands-on options abound at local studios, from painting to plant-based art. Live music thrives everywhere, from Downtown Mall restaurants to historic venues like the Paramount, the Jefferson, and the Southern theaters, that host performances from local talent to global stars, as well as live theatre and dance performances.



Cville Sabroso Festival



Bluebird & Co.



The Ivy Creek Garden Center

SCOUT LOCAL SHOPS



SHOPPING

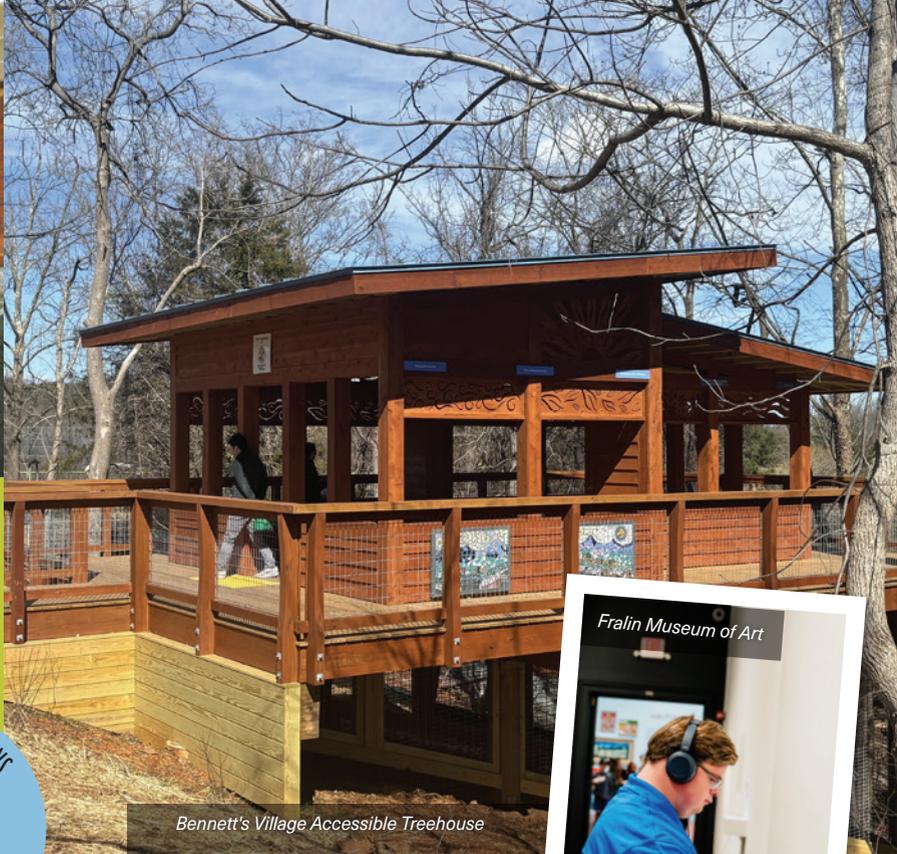


New Dominion Bookshop

Shop 'til you drop in our area's diverse shopping districts blending local boutiques and national retailers. The historic Downtown Mall, a pedestrian hub on the National Register of Historic Places, invites strolling past shops, restaurants, and galleries. West Main's Midtown district leads to the University of Virginia's Corner, lined with stores and eateries. Visit The Shops at Stonefield or Barracks Road Shopping Center for a mix of national and local retailers. Whether you're seeking handcrafted goods, modern styles, or great deals, there's something for every taste. With charming streetscapes, convenient centers, and plenty of dining options, shopping here is as much about the experience as the finds.



Charlottesville Hop On Tours



Bennett's Village Accessible Treehouse



Fralin Museum of Art

ACCESSIBILITY



Charlottesville and Albemarle County warmly welcome visitors from all backgrounds and abilities. Recognized as Destination Verified by Wheel the World and as a member of the A11Y Club for TravelAbility, our diverse community offers experiences for everyone. Stay the night at one of our certified-accessible accommodations, enjoy inclusive outdoor activities like the Saunders-Monticello Trail or Bennett's Village All-Abilities Playspace, or shop on the historic pedestrian Downtown Mall, featuring a variety of stores with step-free entrances. Transportation providers in our area also provide options that make travel throughout Albemarle County available and accessible.



Pippin Hill Farm & Vineyards



Ivy Creek Natural Area



Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection

FIND MORE FREEBIES



5 FREE THINGS TO DO

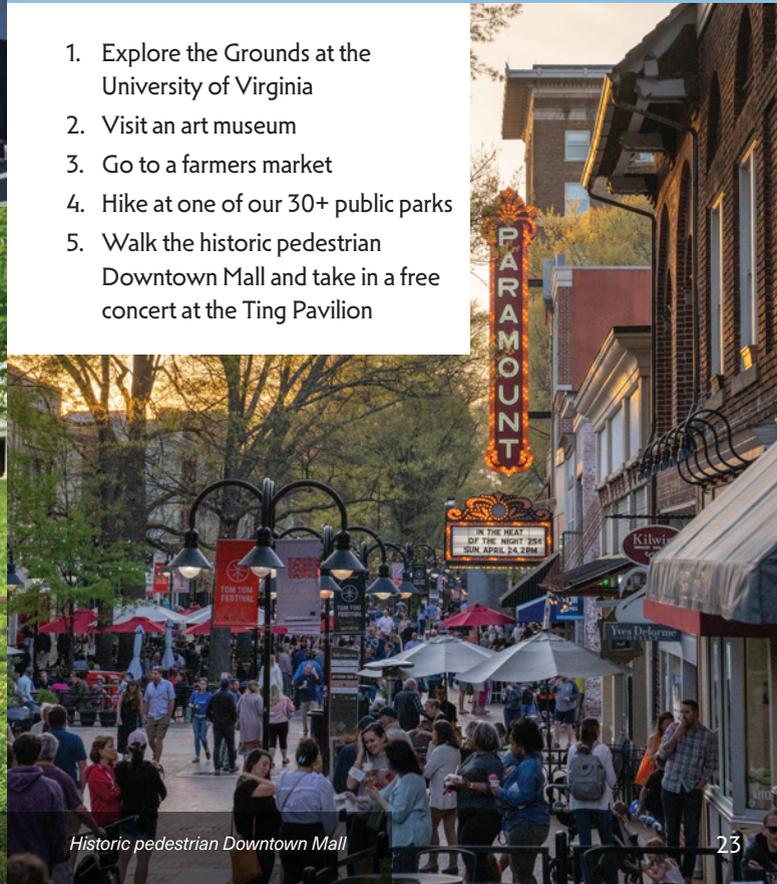


Charlottesville City Market

1. Explore the Grounds at the University of Virginia
2. Visit an art museum
3. Go to a farmers market
4. Hike at one of our 30+ public parks
5. Walk the historic pedestrian Downtown Mall and take in a free concert at the Ting Pavilion



Rotunda and Lawn at the University of Virginia



Historic pedestrian Downtown Mall



Kimpton The Forum Hotel



Omni Hotel at Charlottesville,
photo credit Warner Segarra Photography Inc.



ACCOMMODATIONS



Hollymead House, photo credit @theroute231



Boar's Head Resort



The Clifton

From luxurious resorts and your favorite chain hotels to a selection of vacation rentals, cabins, and cottages, there's an option for everyone's preferred travel style in Charlottesville and Albemarle County. Midweek stays offer the best availability and lower rates, and during peak travel seasons such as spring and fall, accommodations sell out quickly, particularly on weekends.



Oakhurst Inn



Doubletree Charlottesville, photo credit @carolinemartinphoto



Skyline Drive
Shenandoah National Park

TO WASHINGTON DC

AIRPORT

CHARLOTTESVILLE

Blue Ridge Parkway

TO ROANOKE

TO RICHMOND

ALBEMARLE COUNTY





Photo credit @aerowingva

The images in this guide are thanks to the talented photographers who generously shared their work, along with the many local partners and visitors who captured moments that showcase the spirit of Charlottesville and Albemarle County. Their images help tell our story—from iconic views to everyday discoveries—and bring this destination to life. Want to see your photos featured in future guides? Tag us on Instagram and share your adventure!

 /CharlottesvilleVirginia

 @CharlottesvilleVa



Mobile Visitor Centers
visitcharlottesville.org/visitorcenter

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