

Carolina Day Trip: Insider TIPS for visiting Brevard, NC

It just doesn't get more delicious than summertime in the Appalachian Mountains. The daytime temperatures are downright delightful, and after the sun dips below the peaks, it's sweater weather.

In the middle of many good options, we've chosen Brevard for our next 36-hour adventure because this charming mountain town has more ways to have fun than most areas can imagine, as well as a mindset that welcomes retirees and part-time residents into an event-filled, creative community fold.

Our advice? Take a couple of friends, and plan to spend several days. Here are some tips to get you started, helped along by Brevard residents who've enjoyed all these activities and more.

First, get a room. There are dozens of inns, B&Bs, resorts, campgrounds, hotels, and more. It's hard to choose a favorite, but it's also hard to ignore the Red House Inn. Our friends love it, and it rates high on virtually every scale you can find.

The 1851 structure has been recently renovated and is both home and business to Daniel and Tracie Trusler and their daughter, Emily. Top quality bedding, an ideal location in downtown Brevard with shopping and dining nearby, and a short distance to all kinds of wonderful ways to spend your time make the Red House Inn a great option.

The personal service is what draws rave reviews, and for those craving an English breakfast, this is as close as it gets on this side of the pond, with a North Carolina twist, of course.

Safely housed, it's time to let the fun begin. For this edition of Day Trippin' we're going to offer a variety of possibilities. You choose what suits your family and friends. Afterwards, tell us how it went.

Wherever you go, watch for the area's famous white squirrels. There are lots of stories about where they came from, but the folks here cherish these unusual creatures and even hold a festival to celebrate them, as well as a squirrel count to check on their wellbeing.

Outdoor Enthusiasts

Hiking and biking are naturals here in the mountains. Hikers, mountain bikers and road cyclists love the rugged trails, as well as the take-your-breath-away views along the Blue Ridge Parkway (celebrating its 75th birthday this year). With 500 mountain trails, you can see the world much more clearly and may even enjoy your own mountain top experience!

Do you even remember how many years it's been since you've ridden a horse? (Actually, I can. I was twelve, attending Rockbrook Camp for Girls, in Brevard.) Stables and equestrian centers are plentiful here.

One possibility is Pisgah Forest Riding Stables. They offer one-hour, two-hour and three-hour rides. (For three hours, you'll have to choose between riding past waterfalls, or up to the mountain top. Decisions, decisions.)

There are some requirements, so check the website. And, reservations are recommended. Hint: See if Blitz (grey mare), Apache (white gelding) Strawberry (big and brown), and Dice (big and black) are available if you've got youngsters older than seven. They're particularly good with the little ones.

DuPont Forest Trail Rides offers more horsey-adventure possibilities, with personalized rides and the possibility of a swim after lunch. And, Free Rein Center for Therapeutic Riding and Education offers horseback riding for special needs children and adults. Their animals are very gentle.

Want to skip the steeds, but see the falls? Try Miller's Land of Waterfall Tours. Craig Miller offers to show you the falls

that are off the maps, and he's been exploring these parts for more than two decades.

Want more? What about tubing down chilly mountain streams, testing yourself on a ropes course or zip line, kayaking or canoeing around rocks and through a bit of whitewater?

And then there's fishing – lots of fishing. Davidson River Outfitters is an excellent resource, with champion guides who know these streams like you know your backyard. They specialize in wading for trophy mountain trout and drift boat fishing for trout and smallmouth bass. Ask about their six miles of privately managed, limited access trout streams, plus the national forests and state parks. What a way to introduce a grandchild to a really thrilling experience!

Art Lovers

Now, for those who prefer to get their exercise lifting a credit card, the opportunities are just as good. Maybe it's the air, the views, or simply good luck, but artists flock to this area, where they are appreciated by locals, transplants and visitors.

Gravy is one gallery, located in downtown Brevard and featuring the work of local artists. Some of their work benefits the Boys & Girls Club of Transylvania County. Glass Feather Studio is filled with kiln-fired art glass and fine photography.

Number 7 Arts is a fine arts and crafts cooperative outreach program of the Transylvania County Arts Council. And Red Wolf Gallery showcases paintings, sculpture, prints, jewelry, and pottery. (Don't stop with these. There are dozens of art galleries and potters' studios with the fruits of creative labor available for your visual enjoyment and probable purchase. Some offer classes, so don't ignore your inner artist if you start wanting to play with mud.)

In fact, there's a Crafter's Corridor, US 276 between Brevard and the South Carolina line. A brochure is available at the Brevard Visitor's Center.

Searching for toys? Look no further than O.P. Taylor's Toy Store, diagonally across from the courthouse. It's a major attraction with lots of unusual, collectible and high quality toys.

Dining in Brevard

Somewhere along the way you'll get hungry. The Jordan Street Café gets mostly great reviews from locals and visitors, with a special nod for the Blackberry Streusel Tart. Another star for lunch or dinner is Marco Trattoria, where diners applaud the sauces and pizzas, especially lemon artichoke. Consider a great panini, with the grilled eggplant, tomatoes, goat cheese and roasted red pepper hummus selection for eight dollars.

Hob Nob is another super restaurant in downtown with a fabulous lunch and dinner menu and a Sunday Brunch spectacular. "Sunday Night Jazz" happens during June and July. College professors and local musicians jam from 8 pm until and students join in. Diners get great entertainment with their mountain trout, vegetarian gourmet, or seafood lasagna (plus much more, including a killer version of warm-centered chocolate cake).

The Quarry Restaurant & Piano Bar is another excellent choice, with avid fans among the Brevard residents. (OK, I must admit, live music feeds my soul and with local musicians tickling the ivories from 6pm on, I'll start out happy, even before the food arrives. We've also been told the martinis are among the best in town. HmMMMMM.)

There are others, of course, from fine dining to fish camps and home-style cooking. Local magazines and a very helpful Visitor's Center will answer your questions and fill your hands with brochures.

Enjoy the Arts

But as you make your plans, don't forget the arts and culture that keep transplants sure that they made the best possible relocation decision. A favorite is the Brevard Music Center, which presents more than 80 performances during their summer season.

The Porter Center for Performing Arts is a product of Brevard College, which is known for its fine arts curriculum. Their season kicks off in October, so if you're there for leaf season, check 'em out. And, don't forget the local musicians. You may hear old-fashioned mountain music at the Courthouse gazebo, or other locations. You can't plan for a spontaneous music eruption. Just hope you're there when it occurs (and ask the Visitor's Center for advice).

They're not spontaneous, but are loads of fun. Street dances on Tuesday evening are great. The fourth Friday gallery walk downtown is excellent.

Tired? We'll bet you are. It's been quite a day (or two). Rest easy back at the Red House Inn on those expensive sheets. Remember, there's always tomorrow ... and the next day ...

P.S. On your way to more adventure, stop at the Blue Ridge Bakery which garners rave reviews from just about everyone. The Hummingbird Cake is said to be outstanding, but locals suggest a sampler of cupcakes to get a real feel for the frosting and baking expertise of these folks.

Intrigued? Learn more: [Brevard, NC Profile](#)

About the Author

Katherine O. Pettit has worked as a writer, magazine editor, printer and public relations consultant. The Columbia resident has published more than 250 articles in magazines and newspapers. Her writing explores a variety of subjects including travel, lifestyles, business and management.