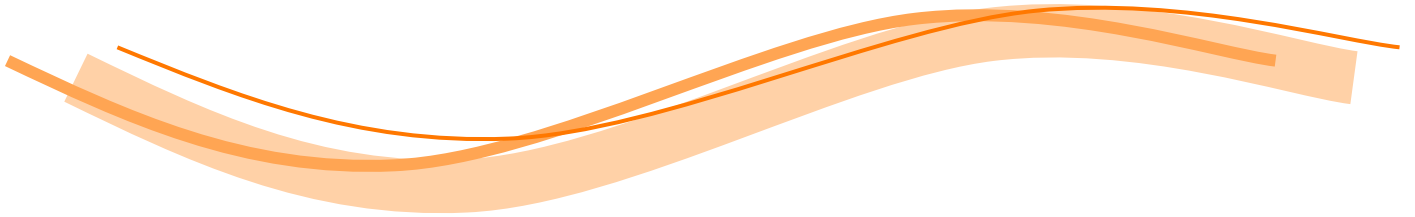




CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA





CHARLOTTESVILLE VIRGINIA	<p>From the Blue Ridge Mountains to the countryside, Charlottesville and Albemarle County Virginia are filled with history, horse farms and vineyards. The homes of three great presidents — Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe — remain beautifully preserved. And at its heart, lies the picturesque city of Charlottesville and the University of Virginia, one of the nation's great public universities and a world-renowned architectural masterpiece. But the past is only part of the story. Stroll on the Historic Downtown Mall and you will experience a thriving community: a foodie destination with a myriad of world-class restaurants, over 120 unique shops, various hotels, live music, theatre, art, and sports.</p> <p>Whilst this is a year-round destination, the spring and fall are particularly delightful times to visit. By happy coincidence, these periods are also the time when many Canadian Snowbirds are driving by Charlottesville on the way down to Florida and on their return... So this is a great place to break the journey for a few days. In the summer time, for vacationers at Virginia Beach, the cooler delights of Charlottesville are just a 3-hour drive westwards.</p>
Location	Charlottesville is located in the centre of the Commonwealth of Virginia along the Rivanna River, a tributary of the James, just west of the Southwest Mountains, itself paralleling the Blue Ridge about 32 km to the west.
Geography	Rolling pastures abutting the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains.
Name	It was named for Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, queen consort of the United Kingdom and the wife of King George III.
Population	The City of Charlottesville population is 43,475 and Albemarle County has just over 100,000 inhabitants.
Language	English
Currency	The US Dollar. Currently (August 2016) the Canadian Dollar is worth 77 cents US.
Tipping	As throughout the US – 15% is the norm in restaurants.
Government	Voters elect a five member council to serve as the legislative and governing body and members serve four-year terms. Every two years, they select a councilor to serve as mayor. The mayor presides over meetings, calls special meetings, makes some appointments to advisory boards, and serves as the ceremonial head of government.
Documentation	Canadian residents need Passports but no visas to enter the United States.
Time zone	Eastern Standard Time, the same as Ontario and Quebec.
Health	No concerns here except to ensure that visitors have appropriate travel insurance as US health costs are notoriously expensive.
Safety tips	Charlottesville is regarded as a very safe, university town – just normal precautions whilst travelling are recommended.

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CLIMATE	
General climate	Charlottesville has a four-season humid subtropical climate, with all months being well-watered, though the period from May to September is the wettest. Winters are somewhat cool, with a January average of 2.2 °C, though highs frequently (11 days in January) reach 10 °C. Spring and autumn provide transitions of reasonable length. Summers are hot and humid, with July averaging 25.1 °C and the high exceeding 32 °C on 33 or more days per year. Snowfall is highly variable from year to year but is normally light, averaging 44 cm. What does fall does not remain on the ground for long.
Today's weather	Today (27 August 2016) is 27C and mostly sunny in Charlottesville.
Best time to visit	Whilst this is a year-round destination, the spring and fall are particularly delightful times to visit. By happy coincidence, these periods are also the time when many Canadian Snowbirds are driving by Charlottesville on the way down to Florida and on their return... So this is a great place to break the journey for a few days.

GETTING AROUND	
Getting There	The Charlottesville Albemarle Airport (CHO) is a non-hub, commercial service airport offering one-stop international and domestic destinations, as well as daily non-stop flights around the U.S. We are served by Delta Connection, United Express, American Eagle and US Airways Express offering over 50 daily non-stop flights to and from Charlotte, Philadelphia, New York/LaGuardia, Washington/Dulles, Atlanta and Chicago. www.gocho.com
Distances	Charlottesville is 185 km from Washington, D.C. and 110 km from Richmond, Virginia.
Trains	Charlottesville is connected by Amtrak to the major US rail networks: www.amtrak.com and tel: 800.872.7245
Car Rental	On-site rental cars are available at Charlottesville Albemarle Airport.
Buses	Greyhound Bus Lines connect Charlottesville with all major cities: www.greyhound.com and tel: 800.231.2222
Trolley	Charlottesville offers free trolley service in roughly a figure eight that serves the major areas of local attractions, including Scott Stadium, the Rotunda and The Corner at UVA, historic downtown and the Downtown Mall, the Amtrak and Greyhound stations and West Main. The free trolley runs every 15 minutes with service from early morning to last stops at nearly midnight Monday to Saturday and 5:40 p.m. Sundays.
Urban Experience in Charlottesville	Charlottesville and Albemarle County offer the best of all worlds... Vibrant city life (without the inconveniences of large metropolitans!) and quaint countryside only a short drive away. For those who revel in the urban experience, Charlottesville will astound you with its awesome atmosphere and array of options for entertainment, shopping and

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dining! Here's a suggestion for spending two days in town...

Day One

Start your day by hopping on our free trolley, which will take you to the heart of Thomas Jefferson's Academic Village, at the University of Virginia. There, you will want to explore the campus, stroll the Lawn and take a guided tour of the historic Rotunda. Time to eat again, so why not have a bite at one of the many restaurants on The Corner. Time for some serious shopping and you are in luck, because Emmet Street (which turns into Seminole Trail or Route 29) features many shopping centres like Barracks Road Shopping Center, The Shops at Stonefield and Fashion Square Mall, to name a few. Shopping sure can build up an appetite so time to head to the Belmont neighbourhood where you can choose from the many unique restaurants, including The Local, Mas and Belmont BBQ. And since the night is still young, you can now take in one of the many live music performances presented at venues such as the nTelos Wireless Pavilion, The Jefferson or the John Paul Jones Arena. Finally, get a good night sleep at one of the many centrally located hotels or inns and dream about your first wonderful day in Charlottesville...

Day Two

Time for breakfast again and this time, why not try one of the fabulous restaurants on the historic pedestrian Downtown Mall. Then to walk off breakfast, explore the Mall, where you will find an array of unique privately owned boutiques, art galleries and (you guessed it!), eateries (you know you will get hungry again!). To take a break from shopping, why not visit The Glass Palette, where you can create your very own glass art piece or City Clay, where you will be able to spin your own wheel and fabricate a unique pottery item.

After lunch at one of the famous downtown eateries, why not go put on some skates and fly on the ice at the Main Street Arena! Afterwards, venture away from the Downtown Mall to the Historic Court Square to see our 200-year old courthouse, which is the only one in the United States that has been used by three early American Presidents at the same time. Then, head west on Market Street, passing Lee Park and the McGuffey Art Center, to West Main Street and its Main Street Market, for some lovely shops and eateries (don't miss Albemarle Baking Company if you're in the mood for a treat!). It's dinner time, and there are so many options to choose from either on West Main Street or in the Downtown Mall area. Time for theatre and the choice is yours. The Paramount welcomes you with its world-class shows, or if you prefer high-quality volunteer theatre, don't miss the productions at Live Arts.

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ACCOMMODATION TYPES	<p>Charlottesville offers visitors a wide range of hotels, inns, bed and breakfasts and accommodations for every taste and budget. Lodges and inns along Emmet Street (Route 29) offer convenient access to main thoroughfares to connect visitors to shopping, attractions, scenic drives and historic sites within and beyond the city.</p> <p>Another concentration brings visitors a stone's throw from the University of Virginia and plants them in the heart of college life, including the lively social scene of the off-campus district known as The Corner. These accommodations also provide quick, convenient access to the University Medical Center and clinics within the University of Virginia Health System.</p> <p>Downtown Charlottesville hotels and inns offer everything from luxury suites to budget-friendly rooms, while accommodations in adjacent Albemarle County, range from roadside motels to golf resorts, offer quiet, relaxing, countryside retreats just minutes away from Monticello and Ash Lawn-Highland, wineries, breweries, golf, farms, orchards and outdoor activities.</p> <p>For visitors looking for unique charm, the region offers an extensive network of bed and breakfasts from all eras, some dating back 200 years and bearing the craftsmanship of the builders who worked on Jefferson's Monticello home. Each offers visitors distinctive rooms and furnishings and family-style breakfasts with many offering complimentary wine socials in afternoons and evenings, as well.</p> <p>Start your search here: https://www.visitcharlottesville.org/visitors/lodging/</p>
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LIFESTYLES	
Kids	<p>Charlottesville and Albemarle County are playgrounds for the whole family. Walk in the region of rich history, absorb the passionate arts community, and explore our area's breathtaking landscape. A trip here will activate the minds of your young ones while transforming traditional learning opportunities into plain old fun!</p> <p>Inspire your family with an unparalleled experience at the only home in the United States to be named a World Heritage Site by the United Nations, Thomas Jefferson's Monticello. You can witness how Jefferson brought his genius to life with a visit to his historic home. A tour provides insight into the innovative mind that authored the Declaration of Independence - a lesson appreciated by students of any age!</p> <p>Charlottesville also is home to one of Jefferson's proudest legacies, the</p>

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	<p>University of Virginia. Between Jefferson's architectural brilliance on display in the form of the Rotunda, another UNESCO World Heritage Site, and the climate steeped in academic integrity, Mr. Jefferson's University is a field trip you don't want to miss!</p> <p>Charlottesville and Albemarle County's easygoing, kid-friendly pace will allow you and your family to enjoy all that the area has to offer at your own speed. Stimulate your child's senses with a trip to the legendary city farmers' market, shop and stroll on the historic Downtown Mall, pick your own produce at Carter Mountain Orchard, marvel in the Virginia Discovery Museum or stretch your legs with a hike in Shenandoah National Park.</p>
Romance	<p>Virginia is for Lovers and so is Charlottesville! It doesn't get more romantic than a trip to this area, where the breathtaking mountains serve as a backdrop to a vibrant town of arts and culture. Not to be forgotten, the area boasts over 20 local vineyards, all of which provide picturesque settings and delicious wines ready to be sipped. Soar through the sky in a hot air balloon, dine under the stars or picnic atop a mountain, the romantic options are endless.</p>
Zoomers	<p>This is a perfect destination for Snowbirds making their way to and from the southern US. Plan to stay in the area for a few days to break the journey and explore the many pleasure of Charlottesville.</p> <p>Started in 2011, The Monticello Artisan Trail is a connected network of talented artisans strewn throughout the beautiful landscapes of this area. On the trail, you'll find the local artisans studio and retail galleries, events and workshops related to their craft, as well as information about area farmers - the longest-standing business of agriculture has made some 21st century updates to better welcome you to their homes, farms, and doors through a fusion where agriculture meets tourism. Artisans Studio Tour - November 12 & 13, 2016.</p>

UNIQUES	
Surprising	<p>Between penning the Declaration of Independence and curriculum at The University of Virginia, Jefferson also wrote, "Not less than two hours a day should be devoted to exercise...health is the first requisite to morality." Over 200 years later, Charlottesville still follows his advice.</p> <p>Charlottesville has a strong community of fitness and health minded individuals. In fact, Men's Journal named Charlottesville the "Healthiest Place to Live in America." There are health and nutrition stores, yoga studios, gyms, fields, public facilities and other healthy hot-spots in Charlottesville.</p>
History	<p>At the time of European encounter, the inhabitants of the area that became Albemarle County were a Siouan-speaking tribe called the</p>

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	<p>Saponi. In 1744, the Virginia General Assembly created Albemarle County from the western portion of Goochland County. The county was named in honor of Willem Anne van Keppel, 2nd Earl of Albemarle and titular Governor of Virginia at the time. The large county was partitioned in 1761, forming Buckingham and Amherst counties, at which time the county seat was moved from the formerly central Scottsville to a piece of newly central land, christened Charlottesville. In 1777, Albemarle County was divided and Fluvanna County established, finalizing the boundaries of modern Albemarle County.</p> <p>History permeates Albemarle County — most profoundly in the spirit of Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence, third president of the United States, founder of the University of Virginia, architect, philosopher, farmer, and viticulturist. Jefferson's home, Monticello, the Rotunda, and the grounds of the University of Virginia have been designated as World Heritage Sites by the United Nations. Visitors can experience the homes of two other Founding Fathers: Montpelier, the elegant estate of James Madison, America's fourth president and draftsman of the constitution. And Ash Lawn-Highland, home to the nation's fifth president, James Monroe, now restored as an 18th-century working farm.</p> <p>Charlottesville's Main Street, once a Monacan Indian hunting path, is laced with historic architecture, picturesque parks, and statuary illuminating famous figures from the past: Lewis and Clark, Stonewall Jackson, and Robert E. Lee. Hidden historic gems include Court Square, the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center, Edgar Allan Poe's dorm room at U.Va., and the Hatton Ferry in Scottsville. A National Scenic Byway, "The Journey Through Hallowed Ground," stretches from Monticello to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania and commemorates major events from the Revolutionary and Civil War eras.</p>
Recommended Reading	<p>Charlottesville by Eryn S Brennan, Margaret Maliszewski</p> <p>Growing side by side with Jefferson's University of Virginia, Charlottesville developed into a bustling community whose businesses, families, and celebrations were well documented in photographs beginning in the 1880s. The collection of images reproduced in Images of America: Charlottesville tells the story of the creation, growth, hardship, transformation, and success of a city beloved by residents and visitors alike.</p>
1000 Places to See Before You Die	<p>Charlottesville has its very own entry in Patricia Schultz' US and Canada edition.</p> <p>Also listed is Monticello, Jefferson's historic home and the nearby Shenandoah Valley.</p>
Must Sees	<p>There are two UNESCO World Heritage Sites: the grounds of Jefferson's home, Monticello, and the University of Virginia.</p>

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	<p>Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826), author of the American Declaration of Independence and third president of the United States, was also a talented architect of neoclassical buildings. He designed Monticello (1769–1809), his plantation home, and his ideal 'academical village' (1817–26), which is still the heart of the University of Virginia. Jefferson's use of an architectural vocabulary based upon classical antiquity symbolizes both the aspirations of the new American republic as the inheritor of European tradition and the cultural experimentation that could be expected as the country matured.</p>
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SPORTS ACTIVITIES	<p>Charlottesville has no professional sports teams, but is home to the University of Virginia's athletic teams, the Cavaliers, who have a wide fan base throughout the region.</p>
Golf	<p>Golf players at any level can enjoy the greens in Charlottesville and Albemarle County, where traditional and innovative greens interlace amid natural beauty and a climate that invites year-round play. With four courses in the immediate area, golf includes championship courses with 4 ½-star rankings from Golf Digest, links designed by Pete Dye and Associates and an Arnold Palmer Signature Course, as well as the world's first Green Golf Trail, Monticello Golf Trail. With natural and bentgrass fairways over rolling hills, course trails that meander along running streams shaded by graceful willows and ancient oaks, here golf delivers challenging terrain plus awe-inspiring vistas and views of the Blue Ridge Mountains guaranteed to make you stop and stare.</p> <p>Birdwood Golf Course at Boar's Head 410 Golf Course Drive, Charlottesville, VA 22903 Tollfree: (855) 692-6538 Website: http://www.boarsheadinn.com/?NCK=cvbwebsitelistingspkgs Birdwood is a public golf course rich in history. Its verdant hills were part of a 1739 "upland wilderness" land patent, one of the earliest in the colony. In 1819 Birdwood Pavilion was constructed by the same craftsmen who built the Rotunda at the University of Virginia. Over time, the property's prized farmland became a top producer of Hereford cattle and prizewinning show horses. The University of Virginia acquired the property in 1974, enlisting architect Lindsay Ervin in 1984 to transform Birdwood into the par-72 championship golf course it is today. Birdwood Golf Course is a proud member of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program, created and administered by Audubon International. Under the program we are striving toward best management practices in environmental planning, wildlife and habitat management, chemical use reduction and safety, water conservation,</p>

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water quality management, and outreach and education. Our efforts in environmental stewardship were recently recognized as we became certified as an Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary. Spectacular Blue Ridge views. Invigorating vistas. And 18 holes of challenging golf. No wonder Golf Digest ranks Birdwood 4.5 stars.

Meadowcreek Golf Course

1400 Pen Park Road, Charlottesville, VA 22901

Phone: (434) 977-0615

Website: <http://www.meadowcreekgolf.org/>

Located in the heart of the City of Charlottesville and the shadows of the Blue Ridge Mountains, bold innovation and unmatched tradition walk hand-in-hand alongside an abundance of natural beauty. Capture the views on the greens of Meadowcreek Golf Course.

Named one of the "Best Places to Play" by Golf Digest magazine, this Charlottesville golf course will challenge your game while stimulating your senses with panoramic views, large, stately oak trees and flowering Dogwood and Cherry trees along the course.

Meadowcreek Golf Course offers a full service professional shop, including the latest in competitively priced golf merchandise and clothing. They offer a full line of services, including the "Meadowcreek Grill" and outdoor patio, driving range, club repair, and instructional services. Their professional staff can accommodate small or large outings and arrange services to meet all your needs.

Old Trail Golf Course

5494 Golf Drive, Crozet, VA 22932

Phone: (434) 823-8101

Website: <http://oldtrailgolf.com/>

Nestled at the base of the Blue Ridge Mountains just 28kms west of Charlottesville, Virginia, Old Trail Golf Club features an 18 hole championship golf course, practice facilities and full service Clubhouse. An 18-hole Championship course, Old Trail was designed to conform to the natural features of the land. Old Trail offers multiple sets of tees to appeal to golfers of all playing abilities. In addition, Old Trail Golf Club is committed to the growth of the game and offers junior markers on all the holes so juniors of all ages can enjoy themselves playing a shorter course more appropriate to their skill level. The course features A1/A4 bentgrass greens and zoysia fairways with the first cut rough comprised of a bluegrass/tall fescue blend. Areas between holes include native grasses and plants encouraging local wildlife. If you are looking for individual lessons, a golf school to focus on a certain part of your game, or even a golf clinic, it's here!

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	<p>Spring Creek Golf Club Website: www.springcreekgolfclub.com Spring Creek Golf Club is a nationally recognized golf course located only minutes from Charlottesville, Virginia and a short drive from Richmond, Virginia. Bent grass fairways, beautiful greens and the natural contour of the land help make Spring Creek a unique, exceptional golfing experience.</p>
Fishing	<p>Although there are many great fishing spots throughout the state of Virginia, there can be no doubt that some of the top destinations are in and around the town of Charlottesville. Whether you are interested in fishing from a dock or heading out onto a lake with a motorized boat, you can find the perfect spot on this list. Here are five places to go fishing in Charlottesville, Virginia.</p> <p>Walnut Creek Lake This popular location in North Garden, just minutes from Charlottesville, boasts incredible fishing opportunities. The lake itself is more than 45 acres in size, and anglers will have great success even without a boat or expensive equipment. Since Walnut Creek Lake is regularly stocked with fish, it will be easy to catch one of the many channel catfish, largemouth bass and sunfish. Keep in mind that anglers over the age of 12, even those fishing with their parents, will need to have a valid fishing license issued by the State of Virginia. There is currently a limit of five bass per person per day at Walnut Creek Lake.</p> <p>Beaver Creek Lake If you have a boat you want to take out on the water, this is the perfect place to do so. More than 100 acres of water provide a beautiful fishing spot, and there are no swimmers allowed in the lake. There is plentiful parking and several picnic areas for a rest or a meal after a day on the water.</p> <p>Mint Springs Valley Park Although the fishing area at Mint Springs Valley Park is limited, it is easily the best spot for trout in the Charlottesville area. Gasoline motorboats are not allowed on the lake, but electric motors are permitted. A trout license as well as a State of Virginia fishing license are required for catching trout at Mint Spring Valley.</p> <p>Chris Greene Lake Park Along with being a beautiful fishing spot, the Chris Greene Lake Park is also home to canoe rentals, a playground, barbecue areas, swimming facilities and a dog park. Anglers will be able to use electric boats, although gas motors are forbidden. Keep in mind that smaller bass</p>

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	<p>measuring in between 12 and 15 inches need to be released and can't be kept after catching.</p> <p>Rivanna Reservoir For a quiet and often private fishing experience in Charlottesville, Rivanna Reservoir is the perfect destination. This small lake measures in at just over 450 acres in size, and it is located just minutes from the downtown Charlottesville area. It is owned by the city, and access is free for all. Although it is used primarily as a water supply source for the area, it is also a popular fishing spot for those in the know. Keep in mind that since parking access is limited, you may need to arrive earlier in the day to secure a spot. Once you are there, there is no end to the great fishing available. Some of the most common fish caught include crappie, sunfish, catfish and largemouth bass.</p>
Horse riding	<p>Horse riding at Fairhunt Farm 348 Irish Road, Scottsville, VA 24590 Phone: (434) 960-8830 Website: http://www.fairhunt.com/ Fairhunt Farm in Scottsville Virginia; equine lessons for riders of all ages. Set in a lovely area; acres of trails; fields for the experienced rider; sand arena for beginner lessons or jumping. Tackroom heated/AC. Fairhunt Farm is also a member of Farmington Hunt Club and many hunt fixtures are nearby.</p>
Hiking	<p>If you love hiking, camping and the great outdoors, bring your love to Charlottesville and Albemarle County, where outdoor enthusiasts can adventure at every altitude and every speed! By land there's hiking, disc golf, and horseback riding, and if you are looking for something a little splashier, whet your appetite for adventure with tubing, canoeing, kayaking and rafting. There are even hot air ballooning, high ropes courses and skydiving if you prefer your adventures sky-high. Many of the area's outdoor excursions are led by local experts and experienced survivalists, but the area offers acres and acres of land and water for solo exploration, whether along the miles of the Rivanna Trail, the 200kms of the Appalachian Trail in nearby Shenandoah National Park or across miles of wilderness areas jointly maintained by Charlottesville and Albemarle County, including the Ragged Mountain and Ivy Creek natural areas. Some of the historical landmarks such as Monticello and Montpelier also have wonderful, scenic trails to explore.</p>
Cycling	<p>Charlottesville was designated as a "Bicycle Friendly Community" according to the League of American Bicyclists. The area provides a vast amount of scenic rides for both mountain and road biking, and coupled with public transportation - all of the buses have bikes racks -</p>

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	an alternative transportation method once you're here.
Skiing	You can also find fun in any season, because when the weather cools, the region delivers first-rate skiing, snowboarding and snow tubing, as well as many ways to enjoy the changing seasons.
Other Activities	<p>Running</p> <p>Picturesque and well-maintained running trails weave in and out of the town. Outside Magazine named Charlottesville the "Best Trail Running" place in the country.</p> <p>Road races are also popular here. The oldest, the Charlottesville Ten Miler has been around since 1975. Streets are closed for the thousands of people running throughout the City and County.</p> <p>The Charlottesville Marathon, held each April, was called "One of the Top Destination Marathons in the country," by the New York Times. The Daily Burn recognized the Charlottesville Marathon as one of the 15 Best Spring Marathons in the U.S. Countless other races wind through the beautiful trails and roads of Charlottesville and Albemarle County.</p>

CULTURE	
Arts	Charlottesville is home to a historic and established arts scene. After all, it was Georgia O'Keeffe who had quit painting at age 21 before she had moved to Charlottesville. A few University of Virginia art classes later, and she was on her way to becoming one of America's most revered artists. Currently, Charlottesville is home to dozens of art galleries and museums that highlight the works of internationally and locally renowned artists.
Music	<p>Charlottesville has an arts & culture scene that rivals that of any metropolis in the country. Just look at some of the performers who have swung by recently; Sheryl Crow, Lady Gaga, U2, Jay-Z, Kenny Chesney, Elton John, Jimmy Buffet, Taylor Swift and Bruce Springsteen (twice). With all those big names, it's easy to forget Dave Matthews created his band while bartending on Downtown Mall and regularly plays sold out shows in Charlottesville.</p> <p>The area continues to serve as an incubator for the next big artist to emerge from its thriving local scene, and concert venues of all sizes support the diversity of performers. From the 15,000+ seat John Paul Jones Arena, to the historic Paramount Theater and intimate, one-of-a-kind establishments like The Southern, Charlottesville provides a range of venues that attract both the world's biggest performers and small emerging artists.</p>
Film	<p>The Virginia Film Festival is more than a four day festival of films. We engage the local community through school screenings, interactive workshops, filmmaking competitions, and more.</p> <p>The 29th Annual Virginia Film Festival will be held November 3-6, 2016.</p> <p>http://virginiafilmfestival.org</p>

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Museums	The Virginia Discovery Museum , on the Downtown Mall, has a variety of child and family-oriented exhibits. Closed Monday, open until 5pm other days. Admission is \$4 for all ages.
Festivals	<p>Year round, Charlottesville hosts an assortment of festivals and events that are enjoyable for all types and ages. Morgan Freeman, Sandra Bullock, Anthony Hopkins and thousands of movie buffs have all attended the annual Virginia Film Festival. The Virginia Festival of the Book brings together writers and readers every year in March to celebrate literature. Twice a year, people flock into Albemarle County to witness a premier steeplechase event called the Foxfield Races. And whether you've got a green thumb or can just barely keep a cactus alive, Historic Garden Week celebrates spring blooms at their finest. There is always something going on in Charlottesville! Here are some of the event and festivals over the next few months:</p> <p>September First Fridays Fridays After Five Charlottesville City Market Foxfield Races Charlottesville Chamber Music Festival Monticello Heritage Harvest Festival Women's 4-miler U.Va. Football Top of the Hops Gran Fondo Cycling Race</p> <p>October First Fridays Charlottesville City Market Top of the Hops International Food Festival Apple Harvest Celebrations Crozet Arts & Crafts Festival Scenic Leaf Drives VNB Tennis Tournament U.Va. Football Virginia Wine Month</p> <p>November Charlottesville City Market Apple Harvest Celebrations Virginia Film Festival Jefferson's Thanksgiving</p>

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	<p> Ball & Holiday Show Downtown for the Holidays Montpelier Hunt Races Scenic Leaf Drives Cut your own Christmas tree/Ash-lawn Highland U.Va. Football & Basketball Virginia Cider Week </p> <p> December Charlottesville City Market First Night Virginia Downtown for the Holidays Sounds of the Season A Holiday Concert The McGuffey Holiday Art Show Three Bridges Marathon & Half Marathon U.Va. Basketball U.Va.'s Annual Lighting of the Lawn </p>
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ATTRACTIONS	
Beaches	<p> Balmy summer days in the 30Cs with humidity that reaches nearly as high can make you yearn for breezy beaches where you can take a cooling dip. While Charlottesville's inland location puts you hours from the seashore, you'll still find plenty of places to wiggle your toes in soft sand and take a refreshing swim. </p> <p> Go Jump in a Lake Enjoy 2 acres of beach at Chris Greene Park 20kms due north of downtown Charlottesville. You'll find the beach on a peninsula jutting out into the 53-acre lake, ensuring plenty of room to spread your beach blanket or build a sand castle near the water's edge. You can swim anytime between Memorial Day and Labor Day when the beach and its restroom facilities are open. Bring your dog to his own special beach at the lake - a 1-acre fenced dog park that includes a roped-off swimming area away from the beach-going crowd. When it's time to dry off, take Fido for a walk along the Piney Forest or White Rock loop trails. </p> <p> Up a Creek Sun yourself on 2 acres of sandy beach along the southern shore of Walnut Creek Lake 24kms southwest of downtown Charlottesville. Swim or rent a canoe to explore tree-lined coves around the lake. Need to get out of the water to warm up? An 18-hole disc golf course is right near the beach. Set along the park's Jungle Trail, you'll find challenges where you'll have to fly your disc between the trees or over bodies of </p>

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	<p>water. Other trails tucked into the tree-lined lake shore conceal four old homesteads and 25kms of scenic hiking or mountain-biking terrain.</p> <p>Tucked in a Scenic Valley Just 30kms west of the city, Mint Springs Valley Park provides an acre of sandy shoreline set alongside a small creek. Swim out to an anchored raft in the 5-acre lake, or build a sand castle along water's edge. You'll find restroom facilities open from Memorial Day through Labor Day and scenic picnic sites near the beach. When you feel like stretching your legs, head out on the Lake Trail to discover two more small bodies of water and old homesteads along the Fire Trail. Or hike through an old stand of fruit trees on the Mountain Orchard trail.</p> <p>When Only an Ocean Will Do If you're longing to breathe the sea breeze and feel the salt water lapping at your toes, a three-hour drive gets you to Virginia Beach. The city has three beaches to suit your seaside mood. Busy Resort Beach is where you'll find the biggest crowds and a hub of activities that include car shows, festivals and concerts. 25kms south, Sandbridge Beach offers a more kicked-back experience with natural dunes and nearby access to wild areas in False Cape State Park and Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge. Smaller kids and their parents will feel more secure as they play in the gentler waves found at the sheltered Chesapeake Bay Beach on the city's north side.</p>
Nature	<p>Shenandoah National Park serves as a refuge for many species of animals otherwise pressured by human activities, development and other land uses. There are over 190 resident and transient bird species, over 50 species of mammals, over 50 reptile and amphibian species, and over 35 fish species found in the park. Only incomplete records of insects, spiders, and other invertebrates are available so the total number of different species of these groups is unknown. A handful of these species are large and conspicuous and therefore easily found by visitors. The park provides boundless opportunities for the public to search for and discover the thousands of other park residents. Virtually all park visitors see some mammals, such as white-tailed deer and gray squirrels. Others, like the big brown bat, striped and spotted skunks are more elusive, remaining largely out of sight until darkness falls. Black bears and bobcats, though sometimes active during the day, seem to remain hidden deep in the forest. The smallest mammals (moles, voles, and shrews) found in the park are rarely seen because they spend much of their lives underground or hidden under leaves and low growing plants. Careful observation should bring rewards in finding many of the wild inhabitants of the park.</p> <p>Just as the number and distribution of mammals varies somewhat from</p>

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	<p>year to year, the number of species present in the park changes over time. For example, coyotes, an adaptable predator, have recently expanded their range in Virginia and can now be found throughout the park.</p>
Parks	<p>Shenandoah National Park 3655 U.S. Highway 211 East, Luray, VA 22835-9036 Website: https://www.nps.gov/shen/index.htm Shenandoah National Park lies astride a beautiful section of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The Shenandoah River flows through the valley to the west, with Massanutten Mountain, 70kms long, standing between the river's north and south forks. The rolling Piedmont country lies to the east of the park. Skyline Drive, a 200km road that winds along the crest of the mountains through the length of the park, provides vistas of the spectacular landscape to east and west. The park holds nearly a thousand kilometers of trails, including nearly 200kms of the Appalachian Trail. Trails may follow a ridge crest, or they may lead to high places with panoramic views or to waterfalls in deep canyons. Many animals, including deer, black bears, and wild turkeys, flourish among the rich growth of an oak-hickory forest. In season, bushes and wildflowers bloom along the Drive and trails and fill the open spaces. Apple trees, stone foundations, and cemeteries are reminders of the families who once called this place home. Camping, horseback riding, cottages, and lodging are available at different locations along the drive.</p>
Gardens	<p>High above Charlottesville at his Monticello home, Thomas Jefferson was known as an avid gardener. The former President once proclaimed, "no occupation is so delightful to me as the culture of the earth, and no culture comparable to that of the garden." Over 200 years later, Jefferson's dedication towards gardening is deeply rooted within Charlottesville-Albemarle. Jefferson's Pavilion Gardens at the University of Virginia are open and available to visitors at times. Special tours combining public and private gardens take place during April's Historic Garden Week. In addition, three nearby sites - Monticello, Ash Lawn-Highland and Montpelier - offer gardens and groves of presidential stature.</p>
Historical Sites	<p>Monticello, the Rotunda and the grounds of UVA - designated UNESCO World Heritage Sites - draw both U.S. and international visitors intrigued by how the area helped shape and was shaped by the politics and personalities of the country's founding fathers. Not surprisingly, both sites bear the touch of one of world's most important historical figures, Thomas Jefferson, third president of the United States and author of the Declaration of Independence. Hundreds of thousands of visitors each year tour Monticello, the</p>

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	<p>mountaintop home he planned and designed in painstaking details and continued to evolve throughout his life.</p> <p>Jefferson's most important legacy, however, lies in the heart of Charlottesville. One for which the architecture is merely the outer trappings to underlying ideals: The Rotunda and adjoining Pavilions that form The Lawn at the University of Virginia founded what is today one of the top universities in the nation, fulfilling Jefferson's vision of creating a "bulwark of the human mind in this hemisphere."</p> <p>While these sites form a triple crown for history lovers, the region offers much more for anyone fascinated by glimpses of the challenges, culture and quirks of colonial life, including a free walking tour of historic downtown.</p> <p>Ash Lawn-Highland, the nearby residence of the fifth U.S. president, James Monroe, offers a unique perspective on the working farm and estate that friend, neighbour and fellow President Jefferson too understood. A short 30 minute drive from Charlottesville is Montpelier, the beautiful home of James Madison.</p>
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OTHER ACTIVITIES	
Shopping	<p>Like many towns tucked into the rural countryside, the greater Charlottesville area offers its share of antiques, quilts, crafts and Americana, as well as shopping on a much grander scale too.</p> <p>The Barracks Road Shopping Center, for example, offers more than 80 distinctive shops, boutiques and restaurants offering everything from original art and upscale clothing to souvenir gifts and gadgets for hearth and home, all linked with walkways dotted with fountains and outdoor dining for a perfect morning or afternoon.</p> <p>The nearby and centrally located Seminole Square Shopping Center is home to over 45 unique stores where you can find anything from jewelry to clothes to bicycles and is easily accessible on Route 29N.</p> <p>On the east end of town lies the Pantops Shopping Center, offering a variety of stores from electronics vendors, home décor shops and everything in between.</p> <p>The Downtown Mall packs more than 120 shops into a beautiful stretch of tree-spanned pedestrian-only brick walkways along East Main Street, while the nearby Warehouse Districts offers shopping a little further from the beaten path, with specialty shops offering arts, imports and one-of-a-kind fashions.</p>

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	<p>West Main and The Corner complete Charlottesville's mix of independent retailers, while at the other end of the spectrum, the Fashion Square Mall just off Route 29 at Rio Road offers some 100 familiar shops for clothes, beauty and fragrances, gifts, toys, shoes and more.</p>
Markets	<p>The producers-only City Market at the corner of Water and First Streets has brought a different kind of shopping to Charlottesville every Saturday morning for more than four decades, with vendors selling handcrafted ceramics, living herbs, artisanal cheeses, wines from area vineyards, fresh fruits and vegetables, unique jewelry and gifts. From Thanksgiving to Christmas, the Market moves to the Downtown Mall Fridays and Saturdays, lasting until 5 p.m.</p>
Nightlife	<p>The excitement of a day in Charlottesville doesn't have to end with a beautiful sunset on the Blue Ridge Mountains. From concert halls that put on unforgettable shows to dance clubs that keep your feet moving into tomorrow, Charlottesville has exciting and inviting nightlife covered. The Charlottesville area is peppered with distinct bars and clubs that cater to all ages and interests. Whether you're looking for "chill" or "upbeat" or revisiting the college days, it's easy to find a watering hole to fit your scene. Area breweries, wineries and restaurants also provide great outlets to keeping the good times rolling.</p>

CUISINE	<p>Gearharts Fine Chocolates 243-B Ridge-McIntire Rd., Charlottesville, VA 22903 Phone: (434) 972-9100 Website: http://www.gearhartschocolates.com/</p> <p>Gearharts Fine Chocolates is an artisan chocolate shop and dessert cafe in historic downtown Charlottesville. Gearharts features a display production kitchen, private event space, coffees, wines and beer. At a time when ingredients like cardamom, chilis and fresh herbs simply weren't found in American chocolate, a globetrotting chef dared to dream of an artisanal chocolate shop in the South. Tim Gearhart began his journey to chocolatier by wandering the world through its kitchens. He toured the Far East as a Marine Corps cook, trained in pastry at the Culinary Institute of America, and then honed his craft everywhere from an English castle to a Western dude ranch. Inspired by his travels and eager to craft chocolates that reflected them, he returned home to Virginia to set up shop amid Charlottesville's emerging food scene. Emboldened by the confidence of a fellow chef and former boss, Tim launched Gearharts Fine Chocolates with Bill Hamilton in 2001. Outfitted with a small office kitchenette, and armed with only two forks and a bowl, Tim hand-dipped about 700 pieces of chocolate a day during that first holiday season. While the need to</p>
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	<p>create more than 13,000 chocolates a day has since forced the mechanics to change, the recipes and handcrafted nature have remained. Fusing their own blend of the world's finest chocolate with local sweet cream and pure butter, they continue to craft their original 16-piece signature line.</p>
Food	<p>Orchards & Farms</p> <p>The mild climate and rich soil of Charlottesville and Albemarle County allows for the growth of abundant farms and orchards. Agriculture enthusiasts from all over are drawn into Central Virginia from the first pink and white dogwood blossoms of the year through to the last sweet, crisp apples harvested in the fall.</p> <p>Area farms offer a chance to take in the scenic beauty of Albemarle County, while getting a firsthand look at the inner workings of agriculture. Many of the farms sell their products directly on site. Others offer tours that take you around the property and even let you test your hand in milking a cow.</p> <p>For foodies, families and anyone looking for a less bovine encounter, family-run orchards around Charlottesville invite people to make memories among rows of strawberries, peaches, nectarines, cherries, apples and pumpkins throughout the year. In addition to the sweetness of fresh-picked fruit, Albemarle County's orchards offer ciders, preserves, candied fruit and other farm-fresh treats.</p>
Drink	<p>Vineyards, Breweries & Cideries</p> <p>Thomas Jefferson could be called the father of wine and wineries in Virginia, the first to take winemaking from the province of backyard hobbyists with a few vines to acres of vineyards and a focus on refining exceptional varietals.</p> <p>Winemaking wouldn't hit its stride in Albemarle County for two centuries, in the mid-1970s. But today, after more than 35 years of winemakers intensively learning the land, light and distinct characters of generations of vines, wines from the Monticello American Viticultural Area (named for Jefferson's home) are considered among the best produced anywhere in the Eastern United States.</p> <p>Part of that award-winning excellence comes from the topography. All around Charlottesville, time and the elements have eroded ancient mountains down to rolling hills that yield wines of incredible complexity as slight variations in altitude and aspect, soil and light, create subtle differences in grapes from vine to vine. The Terroir is perfect!</p> <p>The result is a portfolio of wines that balance the best of Old and New World styles - bright, medium-bodied wines that pair as well with foods as they can be enjoyed on their own, all produced by small, family-run wineries that are passionate about what they do and passionate about sharing it. Here is just one example:</p>

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	<p>Trump Winery 3550 Blenheim Rd, Charlottesville, VA 22902 Phone: (434) 984-4855 Website: http://www.trumpwinery.com/ Named Top 10 Best Wine Travel Destinations in the world, there are plenty of reasons to escape to Virginia Wine country. Situated on 1,300 acres of breathtaking scenery, Trump Winery is Virginia's largest vineyard and its located along the Monticello Wine Trail. Just minutes from downtown Charlottesville and historic sites Monticello and Ash Lawn-Highland, Trump Winery is producing sparkling, white and red wines that compete with the best wines from around the world. The charming tasting room and adjacent outdoor terraces are the perfect setting to experience Virginia wine country. Sample their fantastic selection of award-winning wines, savor our seasonal cuisine, and experience the breathtaking views of the vineyards. Tasting Room Hours: Open year round 11am-5pm daily.</p> <p>But grapes aren't the only vines winning a following in Charlottesville. Hop vines thrive in the climate (in fact, Virginia was once known as the hop capital of the world), and Albemarle County is home to small-batch breweries making handcrafted ales and lagers as well as hard ciders from the region's orchards.</p> <p>A handful of these award-winning brew houses form a beer-lovers dream tour known as the Brew Ridge Trail (an homage to the Blue Ridge Mountains). The trail welcomes visitors in casual comfort, often with live music and simple but creative kitchen fare to complement the art, science and inventive spirit of this region's master brewers.</p> <p>Charlottesville has four breweries within its city limits, South Street Brewery, Champion Brewing Company, Three Notch'd Brewing Company, and C'ville-ian Brewing Company. Starr Hill Brewery, was originally based in Charlottesville, and is today located in Crozet, Virginia, 24kms west of the city.</p>
Restaurants	<p>In its own quiet way, Charlottesville offers a culinary destination to make any foodie salivate and restaurants that can go plate-to-plate with any city across the country.</p> <p>With an appetite for excellence, the entrepreneurial restaurateurs of Charlottesville operate more than 100 independent restaurants, cafes, bistros, grills and pubs.</p> <p>These are people who are passionate about good food and great dining who make the most of abundant farming and agriculture in the area. The area hasn't adopted a "farm-to-table" approach - here, it's just a way of life.</p> <p>The result is a dazzling array of menus that draw on the freshest foods</p>

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	<p>of the region: organic produce, handmade cheeses, free-range poultry and grass-fed beef, all expertly prepared with a nod to regional traditions plus flavour influences from around the world. French? Japanese? Southwestern? Indian? Thai? You'll find it all alongside pulled pork, biscuits and black-eyed peas and traditional Virginia fare. Much of the dining is casual, with most places offering a mix of indoor and outdoor seating to make the most of the mild climate. But locals offer atmosphere for any occasion, from formal fine dining to street food and treats found strolling the Saturday morning City Market, from stews made on-site to fresh crepes and melt-in-your-mouth donuts hot out of the oil.</p> <p>Last but not least, food lovers take note: some of Albemarle County's best eats aren't found in restaurants at all. Visitors delight in seeking out the "hidden kitchens" of Albemarle County, meandering scenic back roads and stopping off at country stores and farm stands where flavour and freshness can't be beat.</p> <p>Virginia's non-profit Local Food Hub also offers an online directory of where to find fresh, locally grown foods: http://www.localfoodhub.org/find-our-food/</p>
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FOR MORE INFO	<p>Charlottesville Downtown Visitors Center 610 East Main Street, Charlottesville, VA 22902 Phone: (434) 293-6789</p> <p>The Downtown Visitors Center sits on the east end of the Historic Downtown Mall and is open 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. daily to assist visitors during their stay in Charlottesville and Albemarle. Complete with hundreds of brochures highlighting area businesses along with their specially trained Travel Specialists, the Downtown Visitors Center is a one stop shop for travelers. Of interest to Quebec visitors – they also speak French. Music Today tickets (live music at local venues) are available at the Downtown Visitor Center daily from 9:15am to 4:45pm. Tickets are available for the following venues - the Sprint Pavilion, the Jefferson, The Southern Café, and The Paramount (Starr Hill presents shows only). Parking is available in the Market Street and Water Street garages, and they will validate your parking for two hours.</p> <p>Website: https://www.visitcharlottesville.org/</p> <p>Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/charlotteslevirginia/</p> <p>Twitter: https://twitter.com/visitcville/</p> <p>Pinterest: https://www.pinterest.com/cvilleva/</p>
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