



# Destination Gay Asheville

*"The gayest little City in the US"*

## A Visitors and Relocation Guide

We are often asked by individuals contemplating a move or visit to Asheville "What's Asheville like?" So, we created the following to help answer all questions. You can find additional information and links on the website [GayAshevilleNc.com](http://GayAshevilleNc.com)

### Welcoming Community:

As you peruse through the website, you will see the many activities and opportunities through organizations to find anything you are looking for or interested in for all ages. Asheville is a very gay welcoming community and was one of the first cities to pass an equal rights bill for city/county employment. Not only, most of our businesses, but a majority of our religious places of worship offer a safe and welcome home to worship. Just look on the website under spirituality. Check out the GayAshevilleNc website under businesses and look for a listing for your specific needs.

### Places to Stay During Visits:

Asheville is a destination city, which means that we are always busy, even during other cities off-peak season and rooms book up quickly. We no longer have an off-season as we are open and thriving year round. Staying downtown, where all the action is, can be challenging, but there are other options providing more vacancies and lower costing.

**Downtown Hotels** are as expensive or more so than most other major cities. There has been a boom in increased hotel rooms; however, the range in cost has not decreased. All hotels are located within walking distance of main attractions and downtown nightlife.

**Perimeter Hotels** offer lesser expensive rates and can be found within a 15-20 minute drive from the center of downtown. To the east, Biltmore and Hendersonville Rd, including the Biltmore House area; to the west is Patton Ave (Smoky Park Hwy) and Hwy 91 near the outlet mall; to the east is Tunnel Road and out off I-40 near Black Mountain are the least expensive.

**B&B's** are available throughout the area with costs based on amenities and locations and slightly less than hotel rooms. Additional Air B&B's can be found with much lower rates. Those can be found through Air B&B and Mister B&B.

**Cabin rentals** are available from a 20 to 30 mile radius of downtown Asheville. Weekend stays require a minimum of two nights and holidays a three day minimum. These offer a variety of amenities and book far in advance. Note: only a few are pet friendly.

### Planning Your Visit:

Asheville is divided into many areas of interest. You can stop by the Asheville Visitor's Center and pick up area maps and brochures. There is no one Gayborhood or gay concentrated area like in other larger cities; as all of Asheville is gay friendly and gay businesses are interspersed throughout. The same holds true for living neighborhoods.

**Asheville Activities:** Downtown is very vibrant both day and night, filled with many street side cafes, street entertainment and businesses open late. Activities take place all week long and there are plenty of venues and points of interest to keep you occupied.

Those areas of interest include:

**Downtown**, home to outdoor dining, musicians, and shopping day and night. There is always something going on and has been called the most active city downtown in the south. People are always on the street 7 days a week. Many music clubs and venues can be found from the famous Orange Peel with name bands and entertainers to the Dual Piano Bar, or Jazz bars and the Friday night Drum Circle, an Asheville favorite held in Pritchard Park. During the summer, Shindig on the Green is held a fun evening of mountain music at Pack Square Park located in front of the Courthouse. Asheville's annual Gay Pride called Blue Ridge Pride is also held in Pack Square Park every September. The only gay owned and operated bar O.Henry's is located off Haywood and is NC's oldest continuously operating gay bar, it features many drag shows and theme events. There are other bars and clubs, gay and straight owned that cater to the LGBTQ community with special shows and nights.

**South Slope**, Asheville's newest and most vibrant. It is located just south of downtown bounded by Asheland, Biltmore and Coxe Avenues and contain many businesses along Coxe, Banks and Buxton Avenues. There are 8 breweries located in this area and has been called the "Brewery District."

**River Arts District and River Walk** Asheville's artsy area filled with dining options, artists galleries and workshops along with a bike and walking trail that follows the French Broad River. It is also located across the river from the largest area brewery, New Belgium Brewery. Many tours and art walks take place throughout the year. The Grey Eagle, another music venue with name entertainment and bands is also located at the beginning of the Arts District. They also are home to Drag Brunches.

**West Asheville** located just over the river is another section of Asheville that is live with restaurants, music venues and bars. A number of establishments host gay night events and during the week are a mix of gay and straight patrons.

**Biltmore Village** located just across from the entrance to the Biltmore House provides a shopper's paradise as well as dining options. During the Holidays, it is lit up and is just fun to walk through anytime. The towering Romanesque Architecture of the Cathedral of All Souls anchors one side of the village entrance with the Bohemian Hotel the other.

### History and Tours:

Many opportunities are open for self guided walking and cycling tours as well as specific learning tours. The Historic District of Montford and the famous Riverside Cemetery are among one of the features of the Grayline Tours and the new Segway Tours. You can also find everything from Kayak and water to birding and nature hiking tours. Tickets available at hotels or at the Asheville Visitors center, located on Montford Ave. Seasonal events can also be found at the NC Arboretum and Montford Christmas Home and Spring Garden Tours.

## **LGBT Organizations:**

Variety is the spice of life and Asheville offers so many chances to get involved. There are special organizations for same sex only as well as mixed groups for socializing. Community outreach is one of Asheville area's keys to success. For those interested in getting involved, you can choose from any of the many political and activist groups, special interest health groups, sports oriented and our Blue Ridge Pride Organization. We welcome all to not just move to Asheville; but to become active. See the many groups on the website [LGBTQ Resources Page](#).

## **Gay Neighborhoods:**

There is no "gayborhood" as in many other cities, as the entire city is made up of pockets of neighborhoods with many gays integrated into them. Check out the many realtors on the *[GayAshevilleNC website and listed below](#)*. They are very knowledgeable of the communities and will guide you to the best area for your budget and lifestyle. Outside of Asheville; most areas are about a 15 to 20-minute drive to downtown city-center. Highways cross through with two major interstates. Our regional airport is 20 minutes from downtown and has four major carriers presently flying in and out. Full contact information on realtors is available on the website.

## **Apartment and Condo Accommodations:**

Living in the Asheville metro area is rather expensive. Our homes/Condos and taxes are the most expensive in NC; however, there are bargains and less expensive homes outside of city limits. City apartments are high and the occupancy rate is 99% full. Apartments outside of the city are less expensive and usually more available. Leslie and Associates is one of the large rental firms and is very LGBT friendly. See Realtors.

## **Cultural Offerings:**

For a city, our size, we have a symphony, lyric opera, regional ballet, community chorus, Gay Men's Chorus, gay rugby, and much more. Our civic center is host to many sports and concerts. Our downtown is one of the most vibrant and the amount of night-time activities rival even the largest cities. We constantly are on a "one of the top-ten cities for...." Which is a major reason why so many people find Asheville. There are numerous live performance theaters which include Flat Rock Playhouse, SART (Southern Appalachian Repertory Theater) Asheville Community Theater, Montford Park Players (Shakespeare in the Park), and numerous smaller theater companies with emphasis on LGBTQ material.

## **Antiquing and Crafting:**

If you love to shop for antiques, arts and crafts, you will find shops all over the Asheville Area. Downtown on Lexington Avenue, Biltmore Village area and on Swananoa River Rd. shops and antique malls are abundant. . Special auctions are held by Robert Brunk or Wilson & Terry Auctions and shops within the Grove Arcade contain many local mountain crafter's work. Close by off the Blue Ridge Parkway is the Folk Art Center which features artists and crafts persons from Western North Carolina.

## **Employment:**

Asheville has become a major city to move to or retire to; however, it is best served by individuals that bring their jobs with them. Our employment opportunities are limited to the medical community; which always has openings. Low paying Hospitality jobs are abundant, but they do not all pay living wages. While we love having new faces move to Asheville; we don't want to mislead the opportunities here. Unless you are transferring with an employer or have a skill that is needed in Asheville, please double check before making the move if expecting to find suitable sustainable employment once here.

## **Safety:**

Safety is an issue many people ask about. As far as the LGBTQ community, we have very little violence towards the community, so you do not have to fear moving here or walking about. As in any city, discretion is always the key to exercise. As we have grown, crime has come to the mountains; however, it is not directed to our community and is not rampant. As stated above, movement downtown, even in the evening, is very safe. Many people that live in nearby communities either walk or bike to and from downtown.

## **Get Involved:**

If you are also looking for a city to become involved, you have found the right place. We have so many opportunities for individuals to volunteer, support and join. From our civic to LGBTQ Non-Profits, your talents will be most appreciated. That also includes the talent of just "jumping in" and helping-out.

**We Welcome You to Asheville**  
"The Land of the Sky" \* "The Paris of the South"  
"The Gayest Little City in the US"

### **Our LGBT Welcoming Realtors and Insurance**

*Lyn McFarland Asheville Bull Dog Realty - [lynmcfarland@gmail.com](mailto:lynmcfarland@gmail.com)*

*THE ALLEN TEAM - KELLER WILLIAMS PROFESSIONALS REALTY [info@theallenteamasheville.com](mailto:info@theallenteamasheville.com)*

*Ben O. Pruette- Premier/Southeby's [ben.pruette@premiersir.com](mailto:ben.pruette@premiersir.com)*

*DWELL REALTY GROUP- [info@dwellavl.com](mailto:info@dwellavl.com)*

*David Henry Keller Williams -[davidhenry@kw.com](mailto:davidhenry@kw.com)*

*Dennis Polk Keller Williams - [dennispolk@kw.com](mailto:dennispolk@kw.com)*

*Sue Riles Town and Mountain -[sue@sueriles.com](mailto:sue@sueriles.com)*

*Ron Rosenblum exp Realty - [ron.rosenblum.exp@gmail.com](mailto:ron.rosenblum.exp@gmail.com)*

*Hilary Drake Mountain Star Team Re/Max - [mountainstarhilary@gmail.com](mailto:mountainstarhilary@gmail.com)*

*Leslie and Associates Rental Properites -[toml@leslieandassoc.com](mailto:toml@leslieandassoc.com)*

*Tabatha Hamlin State Farm Insurance - [tabatha.hamlin.un7m@statefarm.com](mailto:tabatha.hamlin.un7m@statefarm.com)*