



International Civil Rights Center and Museum



Guilford Courthouse National Military Park



Greensboro City Park

# greensboro:

## NORTH CAROLINA'S

BY BRANDON GREULICH

GREENSBORO IS SEVERAL CITIES IN ONE. IT IS A COLLEGE KID'S PLAYGROUND, AN ARTIST'S CANVAS, AND A HISTORICAL LEGACY. IT IS A CITY THAT IS DEVELOPING A NEW IDENTITY AND HONORING ITS HISTORY WHILE THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY FIGHTS TO STAY ALIVE DURING THE PANDEMIC. GORGEOUS NEW PAINT JOBS COAT DOWNTOWN BUILDINGS, CREATING A WHIMSICALITY WELL SUITED TO A COLLEGE TOWN.

The city center of Elm Street runs north to south, from business to pleasure. This street, full of specialty shops, coffee bars, breweries, bars, and restaurants, is the backbone of Greensboro. Underscoring that significance are placards detailing the history of the area, which has been home to a World War I era cigar factory, a Confederate military base, and the heart of the East Coast denim industry. A freight train runs right through the town center and takes about ten minutes to pass.

Cross when you can; otherwise, relax and enjoy the vibrant paint and murals. You'll be hard pressed to find chains or franchises. No McDonalds, no 7-Eleven, no CVS. Elm puts the emphasis on niche small business, so be prepared to venture elsewhere to find convenience stores and pharmacies. Those seeking national outlets and department stores will find them at the **Mall at the Four Seasons**, just a short walk from the Sheraton, VVA's Convention hotel.

For somber diversion, the **International Civil Rights Center and Museum** downtown features wall-sized installations of intentionally fragmented photographs depicting racist brutality in a fractured America. The murders of Emmett Till, Willie Brown, and other children are shown in gruesome detail. While some exhibits are distressing, the museum also celebrates the nation's racial progress and those who fought for it. The museum occupies the same building as the preserved F.W. Woolworth's whites-only lunch counter where four students at North Carolina A&T staged their first nonviolent sit-in to challenge segregation in 1960.

From the museum, the rest of downtown is just a few steps away. A walk through **Greensboro City Park** in the heart of downtown will acquaint you with the city, its people and culture. The park is adjacent to the **Greensboro Cultural Center** and two fountains that draw the young and old to spend time outside when the temperatures rise. In summer, you might even catch a live performance of Shakespeare in the park or street musicians.

Beyond the murals and intimate live shows, the city proclaimed its love of music with the completion of its new Elm Street performance venue, the **Steven Tanger Center for the Performing Arts**. The center hosts musicals, concert orchestras, contemporary ensembles, and more, although things have been challenging during by the pandemic.

There are plenty of diversions away from the city center, including several parks and gardens. The **Guilford Courthouse National Military Park's** tall thin trees form a canopy and a quiet, venerating atmosphere. Even alongside joggers and cyclists, the pathways through this forest feel calm. The trail is studded with historical placards. There are also memorials, as the park name suggests, for the Revolutionary War soldiers killed or injured in nearby battles. Some are modest headstones, no more than a foot high; larger monuments are slightly off of the main trails. In the woods between the paved paths are a few natural throughways that can help visitors connect to the natural environment and to the departed souls enshrined in this park.

The **Tanger Family Bicentennial Garden** has winding paths through small exhibits, including a sensory garden with a babbling brook and a red brick wedding gazebo. The **Greensboro Arboretum** has flowers every season and an adjacent meditation garden for anyone looking for a peaceful pit stop. The **Greensboro**

**Science Center** has attractions geared for children, but people of all ages enjoy the aquarium, which is open Saturday mornings from 9:00-10:45. Meet the resident octopus, manta rays, and others. There's also a rope course and zoo.

### LET'S EAT

Greensboro boasts many types of international cuisine—French, Italian, Japanese, Brazilian, Palestinian, and Laotian to name a few. There are also American and Southern restaurants and even one that works with molecular gastronomy to create beautiful, other-worldly dishes.

Just off Elm Street, the **Liberty Oak Restaurant** (100 W. Washington Street) is welcoming and accommodating, with amazing food and atmosphere. I highly recommend the shrimp and grits. The **Green Bean Cafe** (341 South Elm) has great chai, a colorful entrance, and a contrasting black and white interior.

**Crooked Tail Cat Cafe** (604 South Elm) has coffee, tea, and rescued cats looking for homes. Its adorable back wall mural was painted by a local artist and leads to the cafe area (where cats aren't allowed). I also recommend **Chez Genèse** (616 South Elm), a bright, lively French brunch spot downtown, and **Scrambled Southern Diner** (2417 Spring Garden Street) if you want to escape to a family brunch uptown.

At **Chez Genèse**, the quiche du jour is satisfyingly substantial. My only regret was not having room for the croque monsieur. **Scrambled** boasts innovative fried green tomatoes and a great community atmosphere. For lunch, **Jerusalem Market** (310 South Elm) has tender, authentic lamb shawarma, and **Sticks and Stones** (2200 Walker Avenue) has excellent artisan pizza. Evening and late-night spots include the **South End Brewing Company** (117B West Lewis Street) and **Boxcar Bar + Ar-**



Greensboro Science Center

**cade** (120 West Lewis Street), where you can compete in an air hockey tournament, play classic arcade games, and enjoy wild pizza combinations.

There are a surprising number of exciting tours in and around Greensboro. Some focus on the breweries, others on golf courses and locally sourced food and ingredients. Take the **Carolina History & Haunts Tour** for history and ghosts. The **Pub Peddler** ferries riders around in its "peddle pub trolley" through downtown, with stops at bars and restaurants. Reservations are required. Or pick your own theme: **Triad Trolleys Co.** will tailor tours to each group's interests. They offer tours on trolley cars, Segways, standup paddle boards, and electric bikes.

Food, music, history, and art: Greensboro's got 'em. ■

## HISTORIC CITY REIMAGINED

