

108 THINGS



TO DO IN CHARLOTTE BEFORE YOU DIE

1. **Indulge in the fruits of the sea at Miro Spanish Grill.** Try one of the seafood stews, packed with such savory ingredients as shrimp, calamari and clams. 7804-A Rea Road. 704-540-7374. www.mirospanishgrille.com.
2. **Drink until you just can't drink no mo' at the Ballantyne Hotel & Lodge.** 10000 Ballantyne Commons Parkway. 704-248-4000. www.theballantynehotel.com.
3. **Admire Mother Nature's handiwork at Big Rock Nature Preserve.** Elmstone Drive. 704-504-9346. www.charmeck.org.
4. **Mosey down to the village of Marvin and get a glimpse of the idyllic life.** www.marvinnc.org.
5. **Delight in some heavy metal at Eight Legs Gallery.** 310 E. South Main St. 704-843-1662. www.eightlegsgallery.webs.com.
6. **Take a lap (pool) around the outdoor waterpark at Morrison YMCA.** Among its attributes is the 10,000-square-foot waterpark, with a spacious lap pool, slides and an interactive spray area that's fun for kids and adults alike. 9405 Bryant Farms Road. www.ymcacharlotte.org
7. **Get your pulse racing at United House of Prayer's Gospel Shout concert.** Every spring. 2321 Beatties Ford Road. 704-394-3884.
8. **Don your best gold (and blue) at Johnson C. Smith University's homecoming.** 100 Beatties Ford Road. 704-378-1000. www.jcsu.edu.
9. **Rub shoulders with a parade of humanity at Niki's Food Shop.** 3300 Beatties Ford Road, 704-398-2638. www.nikisfoodshop.com.
10. **Inhale Laurene's mac'n'cheese — it will make you hurt somebody.** 1821 Bishop Madison Lane. 980-237-1180. www.perkinsusa.com.
11. **Talk to Mr. Quillie and leave with more than clean laundry at People's Dry Cleaners.** Quillie Smith III is a walking repository of Charlotte history, and in the 30-odd years that People's has served the west side, he's seen a lot of it get made, made up, pushed down and re-emerge. If you have a couple of hours and a few dress shirts on hand, stop in. You won't be sorry. 1930 Beatties Ford Road. 980-333-8184.
12. **Forget your diet at Carolina Cones.** New flavors include peanut butter pretzel, moon pie, play dough, spumoni and chocolate amaretto. 20801 N. Main St. 704-892-8190.
13. **Discover your inner Picasso at Cornelius Arts Center.** 19725 Oak St. 704-896-8823. www.cornelius.org/parc.
14. **Prepare for the zombie apocalypse at The Range at Lake Norman.** 10913 Bailey Road. 704-895-3155. www.therangeatlakenorman.com.
15. **Sit on the deck at Rusty Rudder and reflect on life (or your age).** 20210 Henderson Road. 704-892-9195. www.therustyrudder.net.
16. **Celebrate Christmas anytime at Our Daily Bread.** You don't have to book a trans-Atlantic trip to try the crispy, sugary goodness of kürtöskalács (chimney cake). 20124 W. Catawba Ave. 704-892-1360.
17. **Row, row, row your boat (or just watch others do all the hard work) at Ramsey Creek Park.** Get back to nature here. 18441 Nantz Road. 704-896-9808. www.charlottedragonboat.com.
18. **Find your Celtic roots in traditional Irish grub at Galway Hooker Pub.** 17044 Kenton Drive. 704-895-1782. www.galwayhookerpub.com.
19. **Be a drama queen at Warehouse Performing Arts Center.** 9216 Westmoreland Road. 704-859-5930. www.warehousepac.com.
20. **Beast your favorite bar's trivia night by picking up the Smart-Ass Trivia Game at Paper Skyscraper.** 330 East Blvd. 704-333-7130. www.paperskyscraper.com.
21. **Say a little prayer at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral.** Sunday morning liturgy: 8:30 service typically offers up more English than the 10 a.m. 600 East Blvd. 704-334-4771. www.htgo.org.
22. **Revitalize your taste buds at Kabob Grill.** 1235 East Blvd., Suite G. 704-371-8984. www.kabobgrill.com.
23. **Be a kid again at Latta Park.** 601 E. Park Ave. 704-432-4280.
24. **Detox by picking up some goodies at Berrybrook Farm Natural Food Pantry.** 1257 East Blvd. 704-334-6528. www.berrybrookfarm.com.
25. **Have a one-night stand at The Morehead Inn.** This charming spot is a close enough retreat that you won't feel guilty in the morning. 1122 E. Morehead St. 704-376-3357. www.moreheadinn.com.
26. **Feed your inner chocoholic at Davidson Chocolate Co.** 1235 East Blvd. 704-817-9314. www.davidsonchocolate.com.
27. **Opt for authentic Vietnamese food. Eat at Ben Thanh.** 4900 Central Ave. 704-566-1088. www.benthanhcharlotte.com.
28. **Strike up a conversation at La Shish.** Anything shawarma or kabob is the way to go, and save room for the lentil soup. 3117 N. Sharon Amity Road. 704-567-7900. www.lashishkabob.com.
29. **Find Michael Jackson's coveted red leather jacket — or something like it — at Value Village.** Mostly for hardcore pickers, the second-hand store is a little dingy but worth getting lost in on a Saturday. 4451 Central Ave. 704-568-8896. www.carolinavaluevillage.com.
30. **Fall in love with the eggplant Parmesan at New San Remo.** 4439 Central Ave. 704-537-3131.
31. **Marvel at the survivor spirit of Mecklenburg's oldest structure, the Hezekiah Alexander House.** 3500 Shamrock Drive. www.charlottemuseum.org.
32. **Get your vaquero on at El Potrero Western Wear.** 3718 Central Ave. 803-937-1990. www.elpotrerowesternwear.com.
33. **Delay your death by taking a lesson at the Fencing Academy.** 1500 W. Morehead St. 980-237-3762. www.charlottefencing.com.
34. **Party at Scorpio like gay marriage is legal in North Carolina.** 2301 Freedom Drive. 704-373-9124. www.thescorpio.com.
35. **Put life in perspective by watching the planes at the airport overlook.** 7300 Old Dowd Road. 704-359-4013.
36. **Talk to someone who champions growth while preserving history, like Greg Auten.** Not only is longtime west-side resident Greg Auten a cool guy — the owner of Pinky's Westside Grill would have to be — but he knows all the noteworthy spots in FMW. 1600 W. Morehead St. 704-332-0402. www.eatatpinkys.com.
37. **Get messy at Bar-B-Q King.** 2900 Wilkinson Blvd. 704-399-8344. www.barbqking.com.
38. **Discover the true definition of a neighborhood bar at The Westside Tavern.** 3323 Avalon Ave. 704-398-8954.
39. **Eat till you get sleepy with a home-cooked meal at Gardenia Restaurant.** 1019 Alleghany St. 704-399-4253.
40. **Spark a true cultural exchange at LATIBAH Collard Green Museum.** 720 Tuckaseegee Road. 704-333-2426. www.latibahmuseum.org. (Emiene Wright)
41. **Go bird-watching at Carolina Raptor Center.** 6000 Sample Road. 704-875-6521. www.carolinaraptorcenter.org.
42. **Shamelessly devour a giant turkey leg at Carolina Renaissance Festival.** 16445 Poplar Tent Road. 704-896-5555. www.royalfaires.com/carolina.
43. **Find your way out of a maze at Rural Hill.** 4431 Neck Road. 704-875-3113. www.ruralhill.net.
44. **Test how healthy your heart really is by eating at Lupie's Café.** 101 Statesville Road. 704-948-3959. www.lupiescafe.net.
45. **Try a food you swore you'd never eat, like McLaughlin's Farmhouse liver mush at the Bradford Store.** 15915 Davidson Concord Road. 704-439-4303. www.thebradfordstore.com.
46. **Pay tribute to times past by visiting the Historic Latta Plantation.** Check the calendar for Civil War reenactments. 5225 Sample Road. 704-875-2312. www.lattaplantation.org.
47. **Sing your heart out at Jeff's Bucket Shop.** 1601 Montford Drive. 704-525-0425. www.jeffsbucketshop.com.
48. **Stay farmers market fresh — check out the one at Wedgewood Church.** 4800 Wedgewood Drive. www.wedgewoodchurch.com.
49. **Celebrate the housing era of Eisenhower.** Take a stroll through the neighborhood and admire the 1950s-style homes and huge tree canopies.

- 50. Take the big-ass burrito challenge at Maverick Rock Taco.** Finish it in 30 minutes and you get the \$25 dish for free, plus a T-shirt and your picture on the Taco Hall of Fame. 1513 Montford Drive. 704-527-1400. www.xeniahospitality.com/maverick.
- 51. Unearth a time capsule at Regal Cinemas Park Terrace Theatre.** 4289 Park Road. 704-523-9771.
- 52. Take signs seriously — like the one at Park Road Shopping Center.** 4201 Park Road. 704-523-2640. www.parkroadshoppingcenter.com
- 53. Marvel at new life at Renfrow's Hardware.** The store receives an influx of baby chicks for sale. Homesteaders and onlookers alike can stop in for a peep. 188 N. Trade St. 704-847-4088. www.renfrowhardware.com.
- 54. Ring in local food at the Matthews Community Farmers' Market.** Every Saturday, the market bell rings at 8 a.m. to signify the start of this hyperlocal "growers only" market. www.matthewsfarmersmarket.com.
- 55. Pay homage to the gods of craft beer at the Carolina Beer Temple.** 131 Matthews Station St. #1C. 704-847-2337. www.carolinabeertemple.net.
- 56. Uncover a secret Greek grocery store by visiting Minos Imported Foods.** 11016 Monroe Road. 704-841-2808.
- 57. Discover the buried treasure of Korean food at Pepero.** 10920 Monroe Road. 704-845-2107.
- 58. Gorge on bolinhos at Tropical Cafe and Bakery.** 11100 E. Monroe Road. 704-846-7654. www.tropicalbakerync.com.
- 59. Set trip over pork styles at Moe's Original Bar B Que.** 111 Matthews Station St. 704-814-6637. www.moesoriginalbbq.com.
- 60. Hear your next favorite band in a local music venue.** Neighborhood Theatre, 511 E. 36th St., www.neighborhoodtheatre.com; Evening Muse, 3227 N. Davidson St., www.eveningmuse.com; Chop Shop, 399 E. 35th St., www.chopshopnoda.com; Roux, 3306-A N. Davidson St., www.facebook.com/rouxnoda; Jack Beagle's, 3213 N. Davidson St., www.jackbeagles.com.
- 61. Taste the best hot dog you've never had.** You've probably eaten a hot dog on a street corner before, but until you've had one of Carlos Diaz's dogs "his way" with Latin relish — tomatoes, peppers, onions, lime juice, cilantro, etc. — you've never really had a hot dog. Weekend nights in front of the Evening Muse.
- 62. Handle some balls at the Blind Pig.** If you can score over 500 in skee ball at the Blind Pig, your dreams will come true: Free beer. 453 E. 36th St. www.theblindpignoda.com.
- 63. Be celebrated at dupp&swat.** If you're lucky, a purchase will get you Insta-famous, with the hashtag #supportCharlotte. 2424 N. Davidson St. Suite 112B. 980-224-2128. www.duppandswat.com.
- 64. Eat Charlotte's best burger at Brooks Sandwich Shop.** 2710 N. Brevard St. 704-375-7808. www.eatbrookschilli.com.
- 65. Get a sandwich named after you at NoDa Bodega.** 800 E. 35th St. 704-375-8704.
- 66. Jump on the mic at I AM Art: Spoken Word at Upstage, and spill your guts.** 3306-C N. Davidson St. 704-430-4821. www.upstagenoda.com.
- 67. Have a cheap beer with Homeland's Brody and Carrie at T's Fat Parrot.** 5416 Mt. Holly-Huntersville Road. 704-394-7002.
- 68. Go back in time at Streetside Classics.** Instead of buying something right off the line, check out the classic cars — perhaps a 1956 Chevy, a 1980 Pontiac or a 1939 Ford. 5400 West W.T. Harris Blvd. 866-542-8392. www.streetsideclassics.com.
- 69. Taste your own death in East Coast Wings' Insanity Challenge.** If you dare. 9711 Northlake Centre Pkwy. 704-494-4174. www.eastcoastwings.com.
- 70. Pay respect to an old friend by visiting H&M at Northlake, which used to be the location for book retailer Borders.** 6801 Northlake Mall Drive. 855-466-7467.
- 71. Go treasure hunting at the International Collectibles and Antiques Roadshow.** 7100 Statesville Road. 704-596-4650. www.metrolinatradeshowexpo.com.
- 72. Strive to be ping-pong champion under the stars at Thomas Street Tavern.** 1218 Thomas Ave. 704-376-1622.
- 73. Party like a pirate at Snug Harbor.** 1228 Gordon St. www.snugrock.com.
- 74. Become a fire-twirling god/goddess at The Happening.** Thursday nights are mesmerizing at The Happening (8 p.m. at Petra's Piano Bar), when the fire dancers come out to play. 1919 Commonwealth Ave. 704-332-6608. www.petraspianobar.com.
- 75. Tackle the 1-pound Hemi burger at The Diamond.** 1901 Commonwealth Ave. 704-375-8959. www.diamondcharlotte.com.
- 76. Defy gravity at Aerial CLT.** Yoga on a mat? Been there, done that. Why not do it in the air while hanging from aerial silks? 2139 McClintock Road. 910-391-7871. www.aerialclt.com.
- 77. Have a Bloody Mary drinking contest at Fern's brunch.** 1323 Central Ave. 704-377-1825. www.fernflavors.com.
- 78. Be a good neighbor: Attend the Gordon Street Block Party and stay for the fireworks.** 1218 Gordon St. www.facebook.com/pmpig.
- 79. Twist your muscles into new, awkward positions — then reward yourself with beer.** On Tuesdays, Olde Mecklenburg Brewery hosts free Yoga on Tap classes. Every second Wednesday of the month, Oak Room partners with Arrichion Hot Yoga for a free class, and on Thursdays, Triple C Brewing does \$5 yoga.
- 80. Save the Earth and ride a bike.** Ride bikes along the rail trail, the path that follows the light rail. LYNX Blue Line along South Boulevard, www.charmeck.org.
- 81. Learn to embrace surprising couplings — like country line-dancing at Marigny.** 1440 S. Tryon St. Suite 110. 704-910-4444. www.marignycharlotte.com.
- 82. Dudes, step up your underwear game at Brief.** It's OK to be a little vain. 1426 S. Tryon St. 704-376-6612. www.shopbrief.com.
- 83. Show respect for those who came before you.** Check out this 1800s-era slave cemetery. The unmarked stones — five rectangular blocks in the ground — are at the corner of Youngblood Street and Remount Road.
- 90. Completely redo your home, no matter how much it costs.** Score deals at the unmarked furniture stores around Triple C Brewing.
- 79. Yuppie it up on a date night at Whole Foods.** Start off with a visit to the wine bar at the back, where, along with whatever cabernet or pinot you fancy, you can order a cheese plate. 6610 Fairview Road. 980-213-2400. www.wholefoodsmarket.com.
- 80. Dance like everyone's watching but no one cares at the Latin American Festival.** www.latinamericancoalition.org/festivallatinoamericano.
- 81. See up close the fashions of Charlotte's fanciest ladies at Coplon's.** 6800 Phillips Place Court, Suite F. 704-643-1113. www.coplons.com.
- 82. Step outside of your comfort zone: Try fusion at Cowfish Sushi Burger Bar.** Say it with me: Bur-gu-shi. 4310 Sharon Road, 704-365-1922. www.thecowfish.com.
- 83. Learn more about wine than just how many glasses will get you drunk by talking to Arthur's Wine Shop owner Robert Balsley.** 4400 Sharon Road. 704-366-8610. www.arthurswine.com.
- 91. Have a hot night at A Piece of Havana.** Try the Havana Sampler if you're a beginner. 1126 S. Tryon St. 704-588-7883. www.apieceofhavana.com.
- 92. Go unicorn and seagull spotting at McDowell Nature Preserve.** 15222 York Road.
- 93. Become an international jetsetter at The Wine Shop at Rivergate.** Look, here's all that needs to be said: free drop-in wine tastings. 14142 Rivergate Parkway. 704-831-9000. www.thewineshopatrivergate.com.
- 94. Master yourself through Shaolin kung-fu at The Peaceful Dragon.** 12610 Steele Creek Road. 704-504-8866. www.thepeacefuldragon.com.
- 95. Dance in the aisles to a Bollywood Musical at Ayrslley Grand Cinemas 14.** 9110 Kings Parade Blvd. 980-297-7539. www.ayrsleycinemas.com.
- 96. Kick ass in a gaming tournament at Save Point Video Games.** 8640 University City Blvd. Suite A9. 704-548-0777. www.savepointvideogames.com.
- 97. Visit the Common Market of University — that is, The Wine Vault.** 9009 J.M. Keynes Drive. 704-548-9463. www.headwino.com.
- 98. Be about that vegan/vegetarian life at ZiZi's Awesome Vegan 2 Go.** 7945 N. Tryon St., Suite 110. 704-595-9170. www.awesomevegan2go.com.
- 99. Get the last word in at The Last Word.** 230 East W.T. Harris Blvd. 704-966-9673. www.thelastwordcharlotte.com
- 100. Get lost on the greenway.** With the Mallard Creek, Clark's Creek, the Ruth B. Shaw trail and Toby Creek sections combined, the greenway's longest section has nigh 20 miles of getaway to explore.
- 101. See where back-porch country music is alive and well at Puckett's Farm Equipment.** 2740 W. Sugar Creek Road. 704-597-8230. www.puckettfarm.com.
- 102. Dip everything in the beer cheese at The Wooden Vine.** 231 N. Tryon St. 704-376-8463. www.thewoodenvine.com.
- 103. Lay down on a bed of nails at Discovery Place.** 301 N. Tryon St. 704-372-6261. www.discoveryplace.org.
- 104. Embrace your inner carnivore: Eat an entire T-Rex at Pure Pizza.** 224 E. 7th St. 980-207-0037. www.purepizzaclt.com.
- 105. Turn off the smartphone, undo the top two buttons of your shirt and have a glass of red at Vintage Wine Lounge.** 317 S. Church St. 704-332-3273. www.facebook.com/vintagewinelounge.
- 106. Take a selfie with the Disco Chicken (Niki de Saint Phalle's "Firebird") — then get cultured at the Bechtler.** 420 S. Tryon St. 704-353-9200. www.bechtler.org.
- 107. Get weird in an Uptown bar crawl.** The next few events coming up are the Sombrero Bar Crawl (May 3) and the Super Hero Bar Crawl (June 8).
- 108. Perfect your pole tricks at Uptown Cabaret's Amateur Night.** 108 E. Morehead St. 704-344-0802. www.uptowncabaretclubs.com.