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Girlfriend Getaway to Asheville North Carolina

By: [Jan Ross](#)

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We never made a plan to visit this fascinating little town nestled between the Smoky Mountains and the Blue Ridge Mountains in North Carolina; it just happened to be halfway between Lexington, Kentucky and Savannah, Georgia where we were headed. But when I began to do research about the area and realized belatedly that the [Biltmore Estate](#) is



located in Asheville, the decision was made. Asheville North Carolina was added into our girlfriend getaway travel itinerary, and it turned out to be absolutely one of our favorite destinations!

Where to Stay in Asheville

Hilton at Biltmore Park

We stayed at two equally wonderful hotels and I can unreservedly recommend both. Our first stay was at the Hilton at Biltmore Park . Located in Biltmore Park, a new area near the Biltmore Estate and conveniently full of little shops, restaurants and a movie theater right by the hotel itself, the hotel is brand spanking new and in lovely, pristine condition. We checked in with no problem, settled into our comfy room and then strolled around, checking out the free Internet connection, fitness center, pool and the Sensibilities Spa. One of the most surprising things about this particular Hilton is that pets are allowed and we immediately saw people with their well-behaved dogs on leashes. Asheville is very pet-friendly and we saw dogs all over town, most especially on the terraces of the restaurants downtown. This is the place to go if you like to travel with your pet.

We had a reservation at Roux that evening, the gourmet restaurant located inside the Hilton, and this was one of the best decisions we made the whole time we were in Asheville. Open for breakfast, lunch and dinner, Roux uses as much local food as possible and has an innovative menu which features southern comfort food presented in a lovely and delicious manner. Try the cheese platter prepared with delicious local cheeses and be sure to sample their wonderful bread pudding!



One of the best things we did at the Hilton was visit the [Sensibilities Spa](#) for an afternoon. Enter the door of the spa, discreetly tucked away beside the lobby of the Hilton and you smell that fabulous and relaxing spa smell. Hushed and quite lovely, this relaxing place is the perfect way to spend an afternoon. Or a day. Or possibly an entire week.

Not only were both of my treatments absolutely wonderful, I spent the rest of our week of travels marveling over how great my complexion looked. At one point, I was looking at myself in a mirror in the bright sunlight, marveling at how great this weather was for my face when I suddenly realized the facial might have had something to do with it! So, check out the

Sensibilities spa and get the European facial. You will be so glad you did!

Grove Park Inn

We also stayed at the wonderful and truly unique Grove Park Inn where we both fell in love with this historic and gorgeous place. The historic Grove Park Inn (it's actually one of the Historic Hotels of America) opened on Saturday, July 12, 1913 and the Secretary of State, William Jennings Bryan, delivered the keynote address. You would not be surprised by this historical tidbit if you could see the place - it's truly magnificent. Constructed of enormous chunks of stone quarried locally, the Inn has an expansive lobby filled with rocking chairs situated before one of the largest fireplaces I have ever seen and a view from the dining terrace that is absolutely stunning.



We finally managed to tear ourselves away from the incredible lobby and make our way to our room. One of the most intriguing things about the Grove Park Inn is that, because it is literally built into the side of a mountain, you actually go down in the elevator to get to your room instead of up - a fact that takes some getting used to! Our room was perfectly lovely with an incredible view of the hotel and spa, which is an experience by itself. With truly luxurious amenities like a Keurig coffeemaker and Bose radios in each room, the Grove Park Inn accommodations provide a wonderful and relaxing retreat.

We were in one of the Property View rooms, which are located in the contemporary wings in the historic Main Inn. These rooms overlook the lovely Spa gardens and the historic courtyard, but they have a wide variety of accommodations including a cottage where I would love to stay sometime.

After relishing our incredible view for a while, we decided to stroll around the hotel and the grounds, which are immense. They have a beautiful and historic 18 hole golf course, and a huge sports complex which offers fitness classes, personal training, racquet ball, tennis, an indoor pool and even some great kid's programs and camps.

The Grove Park Inn is also home to the Nantahala Outdoor Center, which offers a ton of outdoor activities in the area. Named "One of the Best Outfitters on Earth" by National Geographic, the Nantahala Outdoor Center at The Grove Park Inn offers whitewater river rafting, kayak and canoe trips, as well mountain biking, hiking, climbing and fishing adventures. You can also enjoy guided hikes; fly fishing and horseback riding in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park or zip line through the forest on an exciting canopy tour.

Although we didn't have time for a spa visit on this trip, the [Spa at Grove Park Inn](#) is truly incredible and is one of the top 5 hotel spas in the country, according to Travel+Leisure. You actually descend into what seems like an underground cavern, with soothing music and cascading waterfalls - it's really beautiful. With 43,000 square feet of relaxation space, it's one of the largest spas I have seen and I was impressed with the wide variety of treatments which were available.

Things to Do in Ashville

Biltmore Estate

After our first day relaxing, we spent the next day at the Biltmore Estate and you absolutely cannot go to Asheville without doing this. You can purchase your tickets there or online and they include not only a tour of the mansion, but also the gardens and a tour at wine tasting at the Winery. This huge estate is absolutely gorgeous and extremely impressive. It's hard to believe this behemoth was, at one time, a completely private residence. We were immediately impressed with the Biltmore Estate as we entered through some gorgeous gates, then wound our way through acres and acres of lush fields and beautiful forests (Biltmore has a grand total of 8,000 acres) before finally arriving at the house which is, in reality, more like a palace than a house.



George Vanderbilt's 250 room mansion is just as impressive today as it was when it was first built back in 1895. Your tour includes an audio portion so be sure to put on the headphones and listen to the fascinating history of this place.

After the tour of the house, walk over to the [Stable Cafe](#) for lunch. There is plenty of dining choices on the estate but what could possibly be better than dining in what used to be the stables for the estate? Once you have finished lunch in the stable, you will want to spend some time walking around the gorgeous gardens. Everywhere you turn, there are beautiful, shaded walks, benches, fountains and incredible flowers.

Plan to devote an entire day at the Biltmore Estate because there is so much to see and do. We didn't even make it to [Antler Hill Village and Winery](#), which would be fabulous if you are into wine tasting and taking some local wines home with you. There's also plenty of place to shop and eat and just enjoy your day. We were so impressed, we would like to go back and spend more time - I'm sure it's absolutely incredible at Christmas.

Trolley Tour



The next day, we headed to the [Asheville Visitor Center](#) for a trolley tour with [Grayline Trolley Tours](#) of Asheville. Tickets are available at the visitor center, the trolleys run every half hour, and your ticket is good for two days of hop on/hop off touring - our favorite way to see a destination! We were amazed to see so many beautiful homes throughout Asheville and learn all about the history of this wonderful mountain location.

Hop off in town in time to have lunch at the famous [Tupelo Honey Café](#). Sit on the

patio and soak in the kitschy, slightly hippie, laid-back vibe that is downtown Asheville. Comprised of students from UNC Asheville, tourists, local residents, and plenty of friendly dogs (which are welcome everywhere), there's plenty to see here from the patio of the café. Everything on the menu is good but the biscuits are so good, they might make you plan another girls trip to Asheville.

Which is not a bad idea, come to think of it!

Jan Ross is a freelance travel writer who has been traveling the world since way back before she can even remember. Her dad was in the Marine Corps so she is used to packing up at a moment's notice! She loves writing hotel and restaurant reviews since it means she gets to stay in fabulous places and eat wonderful food. She especially loves writing spa reviews because that means she gets phenomenally pampered and, seriously, who does not like that? She has visited lots of places but still gets a thrill of excitement when she boards a plane, steps into a new hotel room, or sees a new location for the first time. And she hopes that thrill never, ever goes away.

For more information on Jan, visit her website at WanderlustWonder.com.

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