

CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE

In the mid-20th century, Chattanooga was the most polluted city in America. After a massive environmental transformation that began in the '70s, this mountain town in the Appalachian foothills became one of the country's cleanest, cementing it as a favorite outdoors destination. In fact, last year, it was named North America's first National Park City, a title given to a community "acting together to make life better for people, places, and nature." And while its 100-plus parks and dozens of miles of hiking trails are certainly enticing draws, its culinary offerings, growing arts district, and family-friendly attractions make Chattanooga a compelling getaway for all kinds of visitors. EMMA HUNT

TASTEFUL TRAVELER →



Calliope

INDULGE

After the *New York Times* named **Calliope** one of the 25 best places to eat in the U.S. last year, dinner at the modern Eastern Mediterranean restaurant has become a must. Share a selection of small plates, including favorites like whipped feta, burnt carrots, and smoked short rib.

SAMPLE

Chattanooga Whiskey Experimental Distillery opened in 2011 as the city's first distillery in more than 100 years. Visitors to the downtown location may book a guided tour and taste a range of creative flavors (previous offerings have included persimmon-infused bourbon and bourbon-barreled limoncello).



TAKE HOME

MoonPies were created in 1917 when a Kentucky coalminer asked a local bakery to create a snack "as big as the moon." A century later, visitors can load up on treats and souvenirs at the **MoonPie General Store** on board the riverboat *Southern Belle*. Take home exclusive flavors, such as guava, in addition to classic chocolate.

DIG IN

Texas-style barbecue is the specialty at **Little Coyote**, a 2025 Michelin Guide Bib Gourmand recipient, helmed by Chef Erik Niel. Smoky brisket and steak fajitas pair perfectly with fresh-made tortillas and an array of sauces. Dine on the patio to enjoy your meal with mountain views.

BREAK BREAD

The line may extend out the door at **Niedlov's Bakery & Cafe**, but the fresh-baked sourdough and gorgeous pastry case make it worth the wait. Grab a first-come, first-served table and enjoy sandwiches on housemade bread, and be sure to order a loaf or croissant for the road.



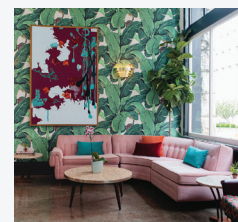
ART ENTHUSIAST →



Hunter Museum of American Art

SLEEP

Vibrant, patterned wallpaper, groovy furniture (think retro hand chairs), and bold artwork decorate the 16-key midcentury modern **Dwell Hotel**. The boutique downtown spot also features a swanky, cosmos-themed bar called **Matilda Midnight**.



GET CRAFTY

Studio Ours provides a creative space for shoppers and makers alike. Here, local artists sell their quirky-cool wares, such as monogrammed jumbo scrunchies and sweatshirts with personalized pet embroidery. There's also a craft cafe, where patrons can select a craft package (like rubber stamp-making and painting) and flex their creative muscles while sipping a coffee.



SHOP

Artworks of all mediums—from still life paintings bursting with color to one-of-a-kind ceramics—fill the walls of **River Gallery**, located in the Bluff View Art District, where you can also find several museums and an outdoor sculpture garden.

ADMIRE

Nearly 3,000 works of art adorn the walls and galleries of the riverfront **Hunter Museum of American Art**, including Louis Comfort Tiffany stained glass and presidential-themed pieces by Andy Warhol. Interactive elements, such as a station to create your own digital portrait, keep museumgoers of all ages entertained.



TAKE A WALK

More than 50 giant works of art dot the wide-open landscape at **Sculpture Fields**. Stroll the paths on its 33 acres to see large-scale, abstract pieces set against the backdrop of Lookout Mountain.

KID-FRIENDLY CROWD →



Tennessee Aquarium

WANDER

Kids will love the arcade and authentic vintage train car at the **Chattanooga Choo Choo**, while adults will appreciate the ornate architecture of the historic train depot that now functions as a dining and entertainment district. It's also home to the **Hotel Chalet**, where you can spend the night in restored Pullman cars.

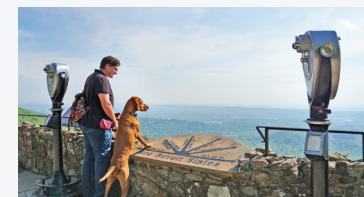


TREAT YOURSELF

Clumpies Ice Cream Co. has been a Chattanooga staple since 1999. Three brick-and-mortar spots scoop classic flavors such as birthday cake and butter pecan year round, along with seasonal spring favorites like honeycomb and blueberry lavender.

STROLL

Vintage whimsy is on display at **Rock City Gardens**, open on top of Lookout Mountain for nearly 100 years. Gnomes hide among the blooming trails, and kitschy displays of classic fairytales make up the beloved Fairyland Caverns. Don't miss the 180-foot Swing-A-Long Bridge and an observation point that provides panoramic views of seven states.



LOOK UP

After descending 260 feet below the surface in an elevator, follow a guide along the winding paths marked by natural cave structures before arriving at **Ruby Falls**, a 145-foot waterfall discovered in 1928 deep inside Lookout Mountain. A dazzling light display behind the rushing water adds drama.