



You can find it all in North Carolina

With a population of over 7 million, North Carolina could probably be about two states: one for the mountain region and one for the coastal region. Fortunately, you can find it all in the Old North State.

The reasons to retire to North Carolina are plentiful. The state is virtually the birthplace of golf (Pinehurst area) and stock car racing (Charlotte); the coastal seaport towns have incredible amenities, the mountain towns are quaint and affordable and the history of the state encompasses both Revolutionary and Civil War history. Moreover, the fresh and salt water fishing is incredible, the Tobacco Road basketball tradition is a national leader and some of the best colleges and universities call North Carolina home.

Yes, you guessed it, the author now lives in North Carolina. But, having lived in Texas, Arkansas, Mississippi, and South Carolina and having spent considerable time in Georgia, Florida and Louisiana, I do appreciate the culture, sports, economic vitality, friendly people and fantastic medical care you can get in North Carolina. Each state in the South is unique, but North Carolina perhaps has more pockets of different lifestyles than any Southern State.

Want to live in the Mountains or near the Blue Ridge Parkway? Don't forget to visit Asheville (pop. 68,294) or Hendersonville (pop. 9,531). Of course, many other mountain towns, including Brevard, Boone, Banner Elk, Highlands and Cashiers and Blowing Rock - all small towns that well during the "season" ... the summer months. There is currently a rush to buy property in all of these mountain locales for retirement.

Don't forget Pinehurst and Southern Pines, the genteel equestrian and golf center, that recently hosted the U.S. Open Golf Tournament. Retirees love the quaintness, sense of community and the incredible golfing found in this region.

However, some of the fastest growth in the state is found on the Atlantic Coast of North Carolina. The center of this area is Wilmington, an old seaport town that has transferred itself into a wonderful retirement hub. As many as 20 retirement-oriented "plantations" or gated communities are now within a short driving distance of Wilmington, offering great golf and a quiet lifestyle. But, they offer easy access to Wilmington and (in South Carolina) Myrtle Beach for culture, outstanding restaurants, entertainment venues and medical care. Wilmington has done a tremendous job in its downtown resurgence in recent years and Myrtle Beach has exploded with visitors and retirees alike. Call the span between the two, "Retirement Alley," because this is where droves of retirees are headed.

Other notable areas of the state that are popular with retirees are the Northeast section of the state and the seaport towns of New Bern and Edentown, the Outer Banks and the metro areas around Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill (Triangle) and Charlotte. The Triad area of Greensboro/Winston-Salem/High Point is a retirement destination, but to a lesser extent.