

Country Living

APRIL 2021



Introducing the hidden gems and happening hamlets rising to prominence like that ol' water tower on the horizon. From favorites blessed with a double scoop of Main Street momentum to lesser-known towns undergoing sidewalk-to-steeple revitalizations, you'll find a host of places where you can slow your pace. Plus: More ways to embrace the charms of little-town living



Highlands, NC

POPULATION: 982

MOTTO: "The Height of Happiness"

WHY WE LOVE IT: Highlands has long been a favorite getaway for city folks in the South. "But there have been more and more young families moving here to live full time, too," says Margaret Shutze, who moved with her own family in 2019 to create Flat Mountain Farm, a workshop and events venue. "It's really become a year-round town," adds Jason Reeves, owner of the new Highlander Mountain House hotel and the Ruffed Grouse Tavern. "Highlanders are a dynamic bunch who care about Southern hospitality, and they've been very welcoming." Despite changes, beloved parts of Highlands (like its many antiques shops) remain the same. There's a vibrant arts community nurtured via local institutions like the Bascom visual arts center, as well as outdoor adventure aplenty in the Blue Ridge Mountains. "The town really is idyllic, like a throwback to a simpler time," Jason adds.

LOCAL CHATTER: In April, Highlands hosts its first-ever Bear Shadow Music Festival with live outdoor performances of folk, blues, and bluegrass.

Meanwhile Up the Road



CHECK OUT CASHIERS, NC (POPULATION: 137)

Cashiers is the subject of buzz now that the team behind Tennessee's famed Blackberry Farm has helped make over High Hampton, a beloved getaway for nearly a century. The retreat opens its doors this month with renovated guest rooms, plus new cottages, dining options, and a spa. A swimming pool overlooking 35-acre Hampton Lake and activities like kayaking and a kid's camp make it a fit for visitors of all ages.

