

Peak Performance

HIGH HAMPTON, CASHIERS,
NORTH CAROLINA

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THE HEADY SCENT OF CHESTNUT WOOD infuses a stay at High Hampton, a rustic-luxe resort nestled near the Nantahala National Forest in Western North Carolina. Nearly one hundred years old and set on 1,400 acres, the property recently reopened after a major renovation with help from Tennessee's venerable Blackberry Farm. Now, the lodge-like inn and surrounding cottages, which are wrapped in wood paneling and accented with colorful pops of plaid, feels like the ultimate family camp retreat—board games around the fire, croquet on the lawn, and a swimming hole, but also day beds for lounging, an exclusive, tucked-away spa, and gracious service at every turn. Each meal and sip, crafted around regional ingredients and an excellent wine list, is better than the last. Throw in a challenging Tom Fazio-designed golf course, intensive hiking trails, a kids' camp, and spectacular views of the surrounding forest and summits, and your summer vacation plans are complete.

From left: Excellent meals await, thanks to Blackberry Farm-caliber chefs and sommeliers; rooms within the cottages provide peace and quiet; the patio at the Tavern overlooks the lake.



THE NEIGHBORHOOD

While High Hampton itself feels off-the-beaten-path, you're in the heart of Western North Carolina's mountainous playground. Detour from the winding roads to check out Highlands, a charming town full of shops and restaurants (pop into Wild Thyme at lunch for an open-faced goat-cheese-and-fig sandwich) or meander through tiny Cashiers to peruse gift stores and fly-fishing suppliers.

THE FOOD SCENE

Inside the inn's **Dining Room**, where complimentary breakfast and lunch are served, you'll find an oversize stone fire place, azure chandeliers, pillowed ban-

quettes, and views of the nearby peaks. Dinner is a three-course affair with a selection of starters that might range from marinated kale with roasted squash to Georgia clams with Benton's bacon swimming in a Pernod broth, followed by entrees like meltingly tender short ribs over grits or Moulard duck breast slivered and served alongside braised greens. For dessert, look for the ever-changing sorbets. Breakfast finds dishes like a French-style goat-cheese omelet or avocado toast topped with pickled carrots and sprouts. For a lasting memory, book a whiskey or wine tasting—one of the inn's sommeliers will open several stunning bottles while educating you on the nuances as you sip. The **Tavern**, tucked into the first floor

of the inn, offers lounge-like dining as well as a spacious patio complete with fire pits—grab a sourdough-crust spicy sausage pizza dotted with ricotta salata. Other property restaurants, including **Halsted House**, **Range House**, and **Mitch's Lakeside**, offer more casual bites.

THE DIGS

The twelve rooms in the main inn and multiple cottages and suites offer just the right amount of rustic, as well as an underlying current of luxury. Think: Screen-free rooms with quilted bed coverings over Frette linens and modern, tiled bathrooms complete with soaking tubs surrounded by soothing views of the forest beyond.