



What to Do and See Post-Hike in Burnsville **Jennifer Pharr Davis**

You know the drill. You've just finished a big day in the mountains. You're tired, sweaty, hungry and all you want to do is find a cold beer, some good food, and a shower. And you don't want to drive that far to get it. Well if you're climbing up at Mt. Mitchell State Park, on the Black Mountain Crest Trail, or anywhere else in Yancey County, you're in luck! Because the area with the highest peak east of the Mississippi has a trail town to match its grandeur.

If you happen to be hiking the Appalachian High Route (which Jake Blood and I dreamed up this past spring), you won't even need to hitch a ride! The trail runs right through town and is the perfect place to start (and end) your hike.

But if you're just out for the day enjoying one of the many outdoor offerings of Yancey County (summer temps up here are 10-15 degrees cooler than the rest of North Carolina!) you won't need to look any further for the perfect place to relax and refuel than the county seat of Burnsville.

So where to begin? Why not lodging. The historic [Nu Wray Inn](#) is currently getting a multi-million dollar facelift and should be ready (fingers crossed) in 2023. When it's finished, it will offer luxury accommodations and a prime location right on the square within walking distance of everything Burnsville has to offer. Another good in-town option is the cute, classic little motor lodge just down the street called the Carolina Country Inn. Or, if you want a more "off the grid" experience, there's no better spot than the Mt. Mitchell Eco-Retreat in Celo, with gorgeous views and modern amenities but peace and quiet galore.

If you opt for staying in town, [Appalachian Java](#) is the perfect place to get caffeinated. Grab one of their killer cinnamon roll while you're at it, a delicious sandwich for your hike, and just one- ok, maybe two- cookies. (You can chalk it up to carb loading.)

Whenever you're finished gallivanting in the mountains, head back to town and take your pick at some of the best grub in Western North Carolina. Chow down on a crispy wood fired pizza at [Homeplace Beer Company](#) and chase it with the positively outstanding (and smooth as silk) Myrtle Beach in the Mountains IPA. And don't forget to check their events calendar. They often have live music at the outdoor stage and a cute little farmer's market every week in the summer.

What something heavier? If you're looking for North Carolina barbecue, the descriptively named [Pig & Grits](#) will hit the spot with fun menu items like the Hog Boss, Blavocado Bird, and the Meat-a-tarian.

And for a nightcap, [Snap Dragon](#) is conveniently located right on the square, though it feels instead like you're in someone's private garden, what with all the gorgeous vegetation that surrounds their patio. (If you get there earlier in the day, sample the tasty salads, soups and sandwiches next door at the aptly named [Garden Deli](#)).

When you finish eating dinner, burn off some of those calories by perusing the bookstores, toy stores and antique shops up and down main street. And if you *still* have energy, why not rally and catch a mesmerizing program at the renowned [Bare Dark Sky Observatory](#) just outside of town. It's one of the premiere spots in the Southeast for stargazing- and pondering your existence.

If you plan far enough in advance, you can time your Burnsville getaway with one of the annual festivals like the [Mt. Mitchell Craft Fair](#) in early August or [RiddleFest](#), the music festival celebrating innovative- and highly underappreciated- African American musician Lesley Riddle, who had an outside influence on the Carter Family and Country music in general.

Whatever your reason for coming to Yancey County- climbing the tallest mountains east of the Mississippi, fly fishing on the Toe River, day tripping on the Parkway, or just getting the heck out of Dodge, you can't go wrong visiting Burnsville. It's an adorable spot and the perfect base camp for your weekend (o longer) adventure.

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