

My Favorite Places to go in the Lake Norman, North Carolina Area for a Relaxing Weekend with Family

FEATURING MOORESVILLE, CORNELIUS, DAVIDSON, AND CHARLOTTE



The world is a book, and those who do not travel read only one page. – St. Augustine

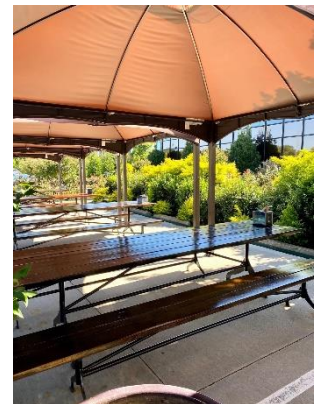
The beauty of Lake Norman in North Carolina attracts people far and wide who are in search of a lake life experience while still being centrally located to city amenities. You can find the calming presence of nature at many of the local parks surrounding Lake Norman, and when you are finished enjoying the peace and quiet of the outdoors, there are large towns in every direction boasting food, shopping, and entertainment. During my time living in the Lake Norman area from May to December of 2022, I was able to explore Mooresville, Cornelius, Davidson, and Charlotte and enjoyed many of the wonderful places this area has to offer. Let's walk through my memories, and I will tell you where you need to go if you ever find yourself in the Lake Norman Area for a family vacation.

Mooreville

1. Barcelona Burger and Beer Garden - 500 S Main St, Mooreville, NC 28115



I can only begin with the best and these burgers are it, but before we talk about the food, let's set the scene. When you walk up to Barcelona's entrance, there are picnic tables lining the building surrounded by lush trees and potted plants in every nook and cranny, giving you a cozy secret garden vibe and a great place to enjoy your meal. Then, the inside of the restaurant is a large open room that is cafeteria style with row after row of picnic tables. You will notice



immediately that the restaurant earned its name from the owner's love of FC Barcelona futbol (soccer). There are soccer balls hanging from netting on every inch of the ceiling as well as flags supporting the owner's homeland of Barcelona, and soccer plays on several televisions throughout the

room. Whether you are looking to enjoy nature with your food or to catch up on the latest

soccer game, the atmosphere is sure to be enjoyable. My family and I were always treated with kindness, and on our last visit, one of the employees brought over scoops of gelato on the house.

The menu keeps things simple with a variety of burgers (\$9-14), rotisserie chicken (\$8-19), salads (\$7), sides (\$2-5), drinks (\$2-5), and desserts (\$4-6), but the food is anything but simple in taste.

Throughout my family's time in Mooresville, we ate at The Barcelona many times and tried most of the menu, and I can honestly say the

food was never disappointing. The burgers are at the top bursting with flavorful spices cooked to perfection. The house sauce is a delicious blend of mayo, ketchup, and spices, and being someone who has always mixed my ketchup and mayo, I was immediately excited to try it.

After my second bite, I officially announced, "This might be the best burger I have ever eaten!"



Barcelona also has a huge display of desserts to choose from and one of the best flourless chocolate cakes I've ever eaten. No matter which item you choose from the menu, it is sure to leave you wanting more.

2. Main St. Antique & Design Gallery - 500 S Main St, Mooresville, NC

28115



Located right next door to The Barcelona, Main St. Antique & Design is an amazing find if you love antiques, handmade items, and unique finds. It is the largest antique store I have ever been to with around 500 different vendors. The building was originally a textile mill, and the interior continues to maintain a warehouse

style with its two-story high ceilings and lack of separate rooms. The booths are created by divider panels and lined up in rows throughout the building. My family and I went a few times and never managed to see everything.

There are beautiful works of art made by local artists. In one booth by Just Jo, the artist creates floral resin art at the bottom of dishes such as platters, spoon holders, and teacup saucers. I also found a beautifully maintained antique corner cabinet with the original glass for an unbelievably good price. My husband and I really



enjoyed one vender's display of paint-by-numbers artwork and were amazed to see how lovely the paintings turned out to be. Paint-by-numbers kits were available for purchase as well as the art. Main St. Antique & Design Gallery is the perfect place to spend an afternoon browsing and enjoying surprises around every corner.

Cornelius

3. Jetton Park - 19000 Jetton Rd, Cornelius, NC 28031



There are many beautiful parks around Lake Norman, but Jetton Park is by far my favorite, with its 104 acres of shaded lakefront property. The 1.4-mile trail winding throughout the park is paved providing smooth walking, biking, or stroller riding. Jetton Park has one of the best playgrounds in the area because of its shade and user-friendly playground equipment. I never had to worry about an unsafe section while watching my four-year-old play, unlike many of the other playgrounds that are better equipped for larger children.





If you drive to the end of the peninsula shaped park, there is a sunning beach great for playing by the water or bringing a blanket to lay back, relax, and enjoy the views (no swimming allowed). There are also many benches and over 30 picnic areas throughout the park within the trees

as well as by the water. In the middle of the park, there are 8 lighted tennis courts and a gazebo. In addition to all these wonderful aspects, there is a gorgeous building called Waterfront Hall available to rent for events. Jetton Park is a slice of serenity perfect for spending a day with your family enjoying the peaceful joy of nature.

Davidson

4. Historic Downtown Davidson - N Main St, Davidson, NC 28036



The moment we drove down N. Main St., through the historic downtown of Davidson, NC, I was enchanted. It was not one specific spot that held my attention but all the small details that make this little town charming. One of the first things you will notice is the beautiful liberal

arts college, Davidson College, sprawling along the left side of the street. This college was established in 1837 and still has many of the original buildings, giving the feeling of going back in time.



At the edge of the college, the Davidson Library is situated on the corner with a large lawn in front shaded by huge trees. The library has many events for the public including outdoor story time on the lawn for children on certain Mondays. Downtown Davidson also hosts a Farmer’s Market every Saturday from 9am-Noon, and during the summer, there are multiple weekly live music events.



On the other side of N. Main St., there are several restaurants and shops to explore. Main Street Books is one of the best places to begin with its many isles of books to browse. This storefront was originally home to the town’s general store until 1987 when it was converted into what is now the area’s most esteemed bookstore. Even though the bookstore is small, there is a wide variety of genres, and the owners work very hard to host many events featuring writers, poets, book clubs, and more to inspire a love of reading throughout the community.

Another fun stop while strolling downtown is The Village Store. This store is bursting with charming and unique items. The Village Store carries clothing, candles, cookware, baby items, toys, greeting cards, Davidson memorabilia, décor, and much more. I



especially enjoyed looking at the beautiful display of windchimes. Whether you are looking for a gift, souvenir, or to treat yourself, there is something in The Village Store to catch your eye.

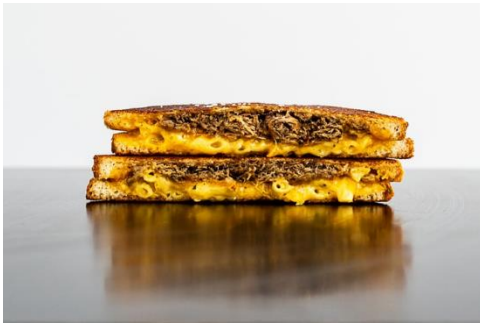
Charlotte

5. Optimist Hall - 1115 N Brevard St, Charlotte, NC 28206



Although Charlotte isn't technically in the Lake Norman Area, I could not complete this list without mentioning Optimist Hall. If you find the time to drive 25 minutes into Charlotte, Optimist Hall is worth the trip. I would call this place a food court, but Optimist Hall is much too trendy for that. This posh dining hall hosts 25 delicious options for you and your companions to choose from and indoor or outdoor seating. The designers have done an excellent job of making Optimist Hall look and feel like a super trendy place to dine and relax.

All the food is drool worthy, but my favorite restaurant is Papi Queso with its decadent and



mouth-watering pulled pork, mac and cheese, and caramelized onion grilled cheese sandwich called “the pig mac” for \$10. Once you’ve eaten this sandwich, a regular barbeque sandwich will never be the same.

After you’ve eaten your meal, walk over to Honeysuckle Gelato for their amazingly creamy gelato, milkshakes, or gelato sandwiches. My husband ordered the cinnamon roll gelato for \$4.25, and after stealing a few bites, I can say it was absolutely scrumptious. I chose the chocolate brownie, and my son ordered the mango. However, my son soon decided, and rightfully so, that chocolate was the way to go and took most of it for himself.



My consolation prize after having most of my gelato stolen was to splurge on a latte for \$5



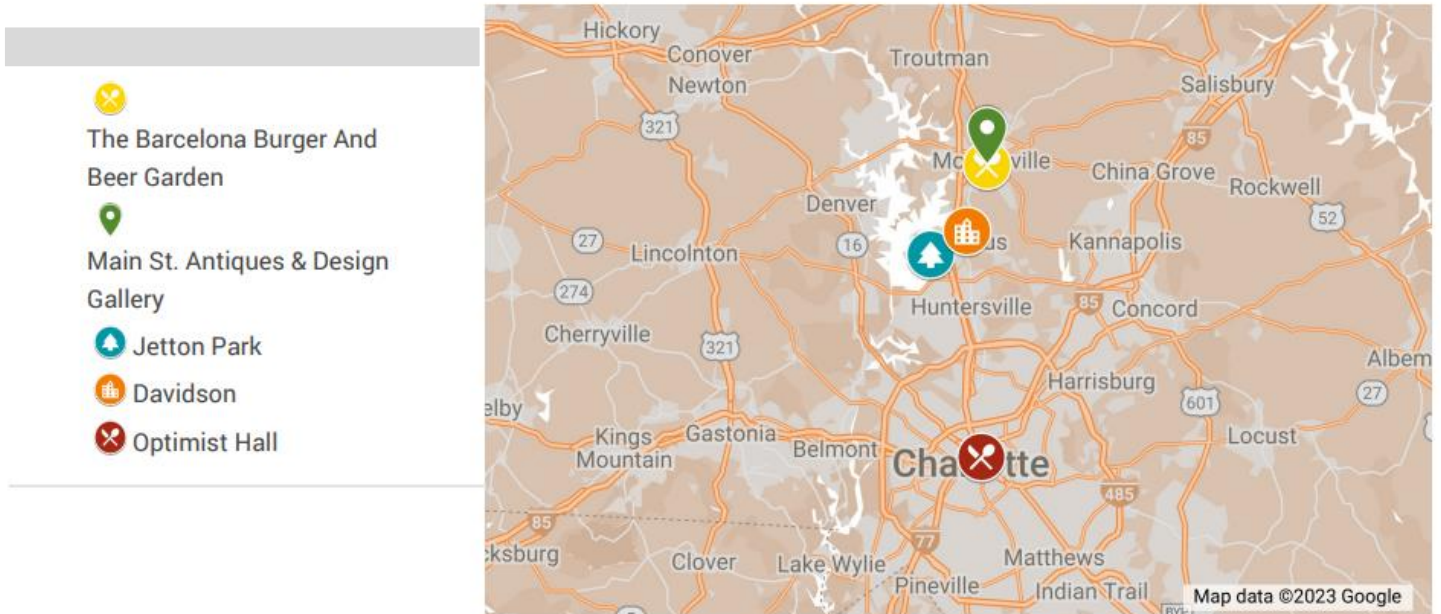
from Undercurrent Coffee, and boy, I came out winning. I don’t know if I have ever had a latte like it. It was the perfect blend of nutty coffee and smooth cream. I would go to Optimist Hall just for this coffee. Optimist Hall is a fun place to go with so many options to please everyone you bring.

About the Author

Leah Smith is an undergraduate student at East Tennessee State University. She is pursuing a Media and Communications major and English minor. In her free time, Leah enjoys spending time with her husband and two sons, reading, and exploring nature.

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Lake Norman Area Guide Map



For an interactive map, use the link or QR code below.

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