

# A visit to Winston-Salem



By Lockie Hunter  
WNC Parent contributor

Within a very short drive of our mountains is the Winston-Salem community, boasting museums, parks and much history to explore.

Winston-Salem's convenient location in the heart of North Carolina, along with its affordable attractions, makes it a fun family vacation year round. The two-hour drive is short enough for a day trip, but the area is packed with things to do if you wish to extend your stay.

## Taste of history

**Old Salem Museums & Gardens** explores the life of Moravians and early Southerners living in the 18th and 19th centuries with the opportunity to interact with costumed interpretive staff while touring the historic district.

There are many year-round family events ranging from Civil War Days and July 4th celebrations to spring festival and twilight tours. And Old Salem Museums & Gardens hosts several special days for home-schooling families, which include activities such as apple fritter making and other hearth cooking.

Lauren Werner, director of marketing, says the holiday season is a time cherished by visitors from near and far.

"Enticing smells from Winkler Bakery — home of the original, paper-thin Moravian cookie — waft through the air. Guides take visitors on candle-lit tours;



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**Above, Tanglewood Park in Winston-Salem offers many outdoors activities including trail riding. At top, a visitor watches an otter in the habitat along SciWorks' nature trail.**

children enjoy games on the square, and the only thing that outnumbers the special classes, workshops, games and tours are the number of people sharing in the holiday spirit," she says.

## Museum fun

The mission statement of the **Children's Museum of Winston-Salem** is to create a compelling destination for the community to play and learn by experiencing literature, storytelling and the arts. Ex-

hibits such as "Jack and the Beanstalk" and "Amazing Library" join rotating events such as "Multi-lingual Storytime" and "Wiggly Worm Wednesday" for a wide variety of ways to explore and learn.

**SciWorks** combines hands-on exhibits, a nature trail and a planetarium within a 79,000-square-foot facility on 30 acres in Winston-Salem.

Hands-on exhibit galleries include PhysicsWorks, SoundWorks, KidsWorks, Science Lab, HealthWorks, BioWorks,

and NC: From the Mountains to the Sea. With exhibits to delight every age group, children and adults can take a journey of exploration in the fields of physics, natural/biological science, natural history and the health sciences. The nature trail includes barnyard animals, a wetland bog area, two playful otters and other critters.

Inside the 50-foot planetarium dome visitors experience a realistic simulation of the night sky. Planetarium programs range from preschool to adult and include many multicultural selections, special effects, video images and lighting to enhance the experience.

The **Winston Cup Museum** is a self-guided museum where families can follow the 33-year history of NASCAR.

"Seeing the wall mural and getting up close to the racecars gives the feeling of experiencing the actual raceway atmosphere," says Kathleen Allen, assistant at the Winston Cup Museum.

Trophies and other artifacts on display throughout the museum show guests some of the rewards a driver and team would receive for their hard work. A video along with a car on display tell the story of Wendell Scott and his struggles as the first African-American NASCAR driver. Guests take home a hard card-like ticket as a souvenir; children age 5 and older receive a lanyard, too.

## Get outside

Not far from the city, **Hanging Rock Park** offers sheer cliffs and incredible views of the Piedmont but also mountain trails that lead to quiet forests. Rent a vacation cabin and spend your days picnicking or taking a dip in the cool lake. Interpretive programs allow families to explore and learn about nature.


For more outdoor seasonal fun, the **Carolina Marina** on Belews Lake can be your family's place on the lake. Heather Birch, of Carolina Marina, says the marina offers "pontoon boat rentals, cottage rentals, individual boat slips, wide-lane boat launches and much more."

Two local parks offer outdoor diversions year-round.

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**PhysicsWorks is one SciWorks' exhibit that appeals to older children.**

## Visit Winston-Salem

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nine tennis courts, two of Golf Digest's top-rated courses, a nature park, two children's playgrounds, and a swimming pool. Stop by the horse stables to arrange riding lessons or a leisurely carriage drive around the park. Admission is \$2 per car.

**Bethabara Park** is where Winston-Salem began. Settled 250 years ago by the Moravians, this communal experiment is a historic landmark. Now a 183-acre wildlife preserve with 126 species of birds, the park includes an old mill site, 20 miles of nature trails, and many native animals such as beavers, mink, woodchucks and foxes.

There is a museum dedicated to the connection between the natural environment and the unity with people, featuring colonial gardens, a reconstructed village, Moravian costumed guides and a French and Indian War fort. Admission

to the gardens, trails and park is free, but there is a small fee for guided tours and museum entrance.

### Holiday time

While the Winston-Salem area affords many year-round family adventure opportunities, there is something extraordinary about Winston-Salem during the winter holidays as well.

"Traditional holiday-goers put Old Salem Museum & Gardens on their 'must-do' list," notes Marcheta Keefer, director of marketing and communications for Visit Winston-Salem.

"As charming as any scene from a classic Dickens novel, a trip to Old Salem during the holidays is so magical it could transform any Scrooge into the happiest Christmas kid."

This historic Moravian village hosts several traditional Moravian ceremonies including Candle Tea, candlelight tours and a Christmas Eve Lovefeast.



SPECIAL TO WNC PARENT/NC DIVISION OF TOURISM

**Witness Moravian life in Old Salem, one of the nation's most authentic historical sites.**

### GETTING THERE

- ◆ Old Salem Museums & Gardens: 900 Old Salem Road, Winston-Salem; 888-653-7253
- ◆ Tanglewood Park: 4201 Manor House Circle, Clemmons; 336-778-6300
- ◆ Historic Bethabara Park: 2147 Bethabara Road, Winston-Salem; 336-924-8191
- ◆ Children's Museum of Winston-Salem: S Liberty St; Winston-Salem; 336-723-9111
- ◆ Carolina Marina: 548 Shelton Road, Stokesdale; 336-427-0498
- ◆ SciWorks: 400 W. Hanes Mill Road, Winston-Salem; 336-714-7109
- ◆ The Winston Cup Museum: 1355 N. Martin Luther King Jr., Winston-Salem; 336-724-4557
- ◆ Hanging Rock Park: 1790 Hanging Rock Park Road, Danbury; 336-593-8480