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Great towns to walk

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Walk across Reedy River on the Liberty Bridge in downtown Greenville, S.C. WWW.GREENVILLECVB.COM

ASHEVILLE (Montford area): Asheville is a great place to stroll. There are always new galleries, shops and eateries to sample downtown. Next time, though, walk through the Montford area just north of the business district, on the other side of Interstate 240 between Cumberland and Montford avenues. It was built between the 1880s and 1920s - a time when Asheville mushroomed as an upscale vacation destination - and is loaded with sizable Queen Anne's, Colonial Revivals, sturdy bungalows and more. Much of Montford was made a Historic District and listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1977. The neighborhood is chock full of B&Bs. Details: www.exploreasheville.com

CAMDEN, S.C: It may be closer to Charlotte than Charleston, but Camden is the oldest inland town in the Palmetto State. Camden was the site of a dreadful Redcoat victory in 1780; Historic Camden Revolutionary War Site (www.historic-camden.net) is a 107-acre outdoor museum complex that shows what life there was like in Colonial/Revolutionary times. In the 1880s, Camden became a destination for the earliest wave of snowbirds: Polo and steeplechase often seem the sports of choice. If your interest is antiques on a smaller scale, check the galleries downtown on Broad Street. Details: www.camden-sc.org.

NORFOLK, VA. (Ghent area): Norfolk is long underappreciated as a tourist destination. The downtown's Nauticus maritime museum (www.nauticus.org) is the permanent anchorage of the USS Wisconsin. But just as nifty is Norfolk's Ghent district just north of the (fabulous) Chrysler Museum. The fun and funky heart of yuppified Ghent is Colley Avenue near 21st Street. Great dining spots, coffeehouses, arthouse cinema, live theater - it's all here. On a warm and sunny Saturday morning, it's hard to beat a sidewalk table and a cup of Colombian on Colley before walking Ghent's tree-lined residential side streets. Pick up the "Ghent Guide" brochure/map at a tourist information site in Norfolk. Details: www.destinationghent.com.

GREENVILLE, S.C.: Easily one of the best weekend destinations not on the coast. Greenville's gem of a downtown focuses on a four-block stretch of Main Street that sports widened walkways where locals and visitors stroll on weekends and evenings. There are coffee shops by day, lounges by night, and interesting non-chain stores for other waking hours. Step south a tad to the redeveloped Reedy River, which is now graced by a pedestrian bridge. Five stories below, water splashes over and around the rocks of Falls Park. Head down to the park to visit its gardens; follow the trail east for 20 minutes to reach the zoo and sprawling, river-hugging Cleveland Park. Details: www.greenvillecvb.com.

RICHMOND, VA. (Fan District): Leave downtown on West Broad Street, cross busy Belvidere Street, and plunge into the triangular 85-block stretch to your left that's called the Fan District. It was "the" place to live in the 1900s and remains so today. Get an eyeful of centenarian mansions, and sit a spell in one of the eight pocket parks. And don't miss Monument Avenue - the long boulevard named one of the 10 Great Streets in the country by the American Planning Association. It's decorated with monuments honoring Confederate leaders, plus - the westernmost, at Roseneath Road - one for Richmond-born tennis legend Arthur Ashe. Details: www.fandistrict.org; www.monumenthouse.com/richmond; www.visitrichmondva.com.

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