

Hospitality Data Shows Couples Combine Outdoor Recreation with Urban Dining in Travel Destinations

ASHEVILLE, NC, UNITED STATES, July 29, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Travelers increasingly choose trips that combine outdoor activities with local food experiences. The American Express 2026 Global Travel Trends Report shows that 87 percent of surveyed travelers prefer leaving space in their schedules for unplanned local discoveries. Additionally, 89 percent of Millennial and Gen Z respondents emphasize the importance of trying regional flavors and visiting local food businesses during their trips. This shift away from highly structured travel itineraries demonstrates a growing preference for vacations that integrate both physical activity and local dining.

The demand for trips that combine outdoor recreation and city dining heavily influences local tourism. In Western North Carolina, Buncombe County generated \$2.65 billion in direct visitor spending in 2024, representing the third-largest tourism economy in the state according to data from Visit North Carolina. Within this local visitor economy, expenditures on food and beverage accounted for \$718 million, while recreation and entertainment spending reached \$329 million. These statistics show that travelers heavily rely on tourism markets that support both mountain activities and downtown dining within a single destination.

Consumer research shows that couples traveling together are moving away from quiet, passive vacations in favor of active trips that balance physical adventure with urban dining. The JQ List



2026 report on romantic travel indicates that modern couples seek destinations that allow them to explore and connect through a mix of outdoor activities, local culture, and shared culinary discovery. Furthermore, Booking.com's 2026 Travel Predictions report reveals that 43 percent of travelers actively seek opportunities to connect with the natural world, while 69 percent express interest in hotels that facilitate direct engagement with the wilderness. This specific combination of mountain access and downtown dining options has become a central focus for travelers planning romantic getaways in Asheville NC.



DoubleTree by Hilton Asheville Downtown operates as an example of a hospitality business that supports these traveler preferences. Located in the downtown district, the hotel functions as a base camp for couples looking to coordinate daytime mountain hikes with evening dining. Guests can view the surrounding Blue Ridge Mountains from the hotel's rooftop lounge before walking to local dining establishments and cocktail bars in the central business district.

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[About DoubleTree by Hilton Asheville Downtown](#)

DoubleTree by Hilton Asheville Downtown is an eight-story hotel located at 199 Haywood Street in Asheville, North Carolina. The building features 140 guest rooms, including specialty corner-view rooms and five suites. The property contains 2,020 square feet of flexible indoor meeting space divided among five conference rooms. Guest rooms are equipped with 42-inch televisions featuring premium cable channels, mini-refrigerators, coffee makers, and digital key access. On-site facilities include an indoor heated pool, a fitness center equipped with Precor treadmills and a selection of free weights, the Dogwood Cafe and Bar on the lobby level, and the award-winning Montford Rooftop Bar situated on the eighth floor.

Jack Benton

DoubleTree by Hilton Asheville Downtown

+1 828-505-8500

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