A MUSIC AND FASHION ICON MOVES BEYOND THE STAGE

CIARA
The two distinctive cities represented in the name “Raleigh-Durham International Airport” have personalities all their own—as reflected in each one’s culture, architecture and food scene. Representing two corners of the “Triangle” region of North Carolina, the cities of Raleigh and Durham (with the college town of Chapel Hill completing the triangle) are sometimes lumped together by outsiders. And yet, exploring the lively culinary center in each city’s downtown gives visitors a sense of the unique characteristics of these towns located a little more than 20 miles apart.

Downtown Raleigh is a large area, so it’s best to narrow your focus. Start a stroll on East Davie Street in the historical Olde East neighborhood, where the 43,000-square-foot Transfer Co. Food Hall awaits. This gathering space for the community hosts 12 vendors ranging from a craft brewery to a classic seafood market, to shops selling empanadas, wood-fired bagels, cookies and ice cream sandwiches.

Head west on Davie and then north on South Blount Street to Brewery Bhavana, a brewery, taproom, dim sum restaurant, library and flower shop, all in one. You can’t come to the South without indulging in some fried chicken, and luckily, a few blocks away is Beasley’s Chicken + Honey, the fried-chicken restaurant owned by the queen of Raleigh cuisine, Ashley Christensen. Named the 2019 Outstanding Chef in the United States by the James Beard Foundation, Christensen has built a food empire in Raleigh with six different restaurants and bars centered in downtown.

Round out your evening with a 10-minute walk that culminates with tea and mochi doughnuts at Heirloom Brewshop, an Asian-inspired establishment that also offers coffee, sake, small plates and rice plates. A short drive northwest on Interstate 40 brings you to Durham, nicknamed “Bull City” due to the city’s history as the home of Bull Durham Tobacco and to honor the tough and resilient spirit of Durhamites. Locals here take care of their own and tend to support restaurant owners who are rooted in their community and who create diverse, fantastic food.

Start your food tour at M Pocha, a Korean restaurant that focuses on tapas-style plates and well-paired drinks. From there, choose your adventure. Continue on East Chapel Hill Street for crispy-crusted wood-fired pizzas at Pizzeria Toro and for steaming herbal brews from all over the world at Jeddah’s Tea, a Turkish/Moroccan-style teahouse. On Main Street, Boyo Caffe is a longtime go-to for Durham locals for hearty and delicious breakfasts and gourmet coffee. Farther down Main, Bar Brunello serves an eclectic selection of wines from across the globe. Other great options within a few blocks: seasonal “ground-to-glass” cocktails at Kingfisher and handmade ice cream at The Parlour. The Salted Butter Caramel ice cream is a citywide favorite.

FLAVORS OF NORTH CAROLINA
By Shayla Martin

Raleigh and Durham highlights include, clockwise from top: cocktails at Kingfisher; Pizzeria Toro’s wood-fired pizzas; the flower shop at Brewery Bhavana; and fried-chicken-and-waffle plates at Beasley’s Chicken + Honey.

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