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## **Greater Raleigh Quick Facts**

**From area weather and population to the latest news on hotels and facilities, here are some at-a-glance facts about Raleigh and Wake County.**

**MAYOR:** Charles Meeker

**POPULATION:** Raleigh: 403,892; Wake County: 900,993; Raleigh/Durham/Chapel Hill MSA -- 1.6 million

### **RALEIGH CONVENTION CENTER:**

- New \$220 million Raleigh Convention Center will provide 500,000 square feet of rentable space with construction beginning in April 2005 with completion in September 2008.
- Former facility was torn down to make way for new center, 400-room convention headquarters Marriott hotel and almost 1,000 car parking deck.

**SIZE:** Raleigh : 110.5 square miles; Wake County: 833.92

**GEOGRAPHY:** 434 feet above sea level, Raleigh lies in east-central North Carolina, where the hilly Piedmont region meets the flat coastal plain.

**VISITORS:** 11.5 million annually to Greater Raleigh

**SALES TAX:** 4.5 percent state tax; 2.5 percent county tax

### **RALEIGH FACTS:**

- Raleigh was founded in 1792 as North Carolina's capital city. It was named for Sir Walter Raleigh, who attempted to establish the first English colony on the shores of the new world in the 1580s.
- The only state capital to have been planned and established by a state as the seat of state government.
- Largest city in a metropolitan area known as the Research Triangle.
- The city's founding fathers called Raleigh the "City of Oaks," and dedicated themselves to maintaining the area's wooded tracts and grassy parks.
- Home of the N.C. State Fair, North Carolina's largest event.

### **WAKE COUNTY FACTS:**

- Includes Raleigh and 11 other Wake County municipalities. Often referred to as Greater Raleigh.
- Home to Raleigh-Durham International Airport and a portion of internationally renowned Research Triangle Park.
- Accessed by I-40 and four major U.S. Highways. I-85 and I-95 pass nearby.
- Home to seven colleges and universities.

**CLIMATE:** Summers range from the mid-60's to the mid-80's; fall averages in the 70's; Winters hit the high 20's to mid 50's. Mean annual rainfall (inches): 44.23.

- Annual Avg. Temp. (°F) -- 71 (h), 50 (l)
- Annual Avg. Snowfall (inches) -- 4.5
- Avg. Relative Humidity (%) -- 71.3
- Avg. Annual Precipitation -- 44.19 in.

#### **DISTANCE TO MAJOR CITIES (IN MILES)**

Asheville -- 241  
Atlanta -- 424  
Charlotte -- 143  
Chicago -- 784  
Nashville -- 515  
New York -- 489  
Orlando -- 588  
Washington, D.C. -- 251  
Wilmington, N.C. -- 123

#### **STATE FORESTS AND PARKS:**

Raleigh boasts more than 4,300 acres of parkland and almost 1,400 acres of water, offering recreational activities year round. A nationally- acclaimed greenway system spans 41 miles, providing walking, jogging and hiking trails that connect many of the city's 150 major parks.

#### **FAUNA/FLORA:**

Greater Raleigh's hardwood and mixed conifer forests are home to a wide variety of wildlife, including wood ducks, white tailed deer, Canadian geese and wild turkeys.

#### **SPORTS:**

Sports and outdoor enthusiasts will find plenty to cheer about. Hockey fans can catch the excitement of the NHL Carolina Hurricanes. Relax outdoors at a Carolina Mudcats Double AA baseball game or at WakeMed Soccer Park watching the Carolina RailHawk's, the men's professional expansion team in the United Soccer League. The area is also home to stock car racing and great college athletics.

#### **RBC CENTER**

- Construction of this 20,000-seat multipurpose arena began in July 1997.
- Home of the NHL's Carolina Hurricanes and NC State basketball.
- Opening day was Oct. 29, 1999, when the Carolina Hurricanes hosted the New Jersey Devils.
- The arena is ideal for professional and amateur sports, convocations, large meetings and a variety of special events.

**ARTS & CULTURE:** Raleigh has an exceptionally diverse art scene. Visitors can see a Broadway show, view original plays in the theatre and outside in the park, listen to the N.C. Symphony or the Opera Company of North Carolina, or watch the Carolina Ballet. The Progress Energy Center for the Performing Arts has several facilities for any size performance, including a state-of-the-art symphonic music hall.

**MUSEUMS:** Raleigh is home to three major state museums of art, history and natural science (all are free). The N.C. Museum of Art celebrated its 50th anniversary in April 1997 and readies for a new \$75 million expansion of iconic gallery and public spaces in 2008. The N.C. Museum of History, which moved to its new facility in 1994,

provides innovative exhibits that tell the state's history. Across the Bicentennial Plaza , the N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences moved into a beautiful new facility in April 2000 as the Southeast's largest natural history museum and looks toward its \$100 million Green Square Project in 2009. Marbles Kids Museum gives kids a chance to be hands-on with role playing and special exhibits. Marbles is also home to North Carolina's only 3D IMAX theatre.

## **MAJOR HISTORIC SITES**

- The N.C. State Capitol, a National Historic Landmark.
- The N.C. Executive Mansion, home to more than 25 governors and their families since 1891.
- Historic Oakwood, a neighborhood of 19th-century Victorian homes listed on the
- National Register of Historic Places.

**SHOPPING:** Even the most seasoned shoppers will find an impressive array of well-known retail stores, boutiques, and locally owned shops in and around Raleigh. Browse the Fairgrounds Flea Market and the Raleigh Flea Market Mall, or the more than 30 antique stores spread throughout the area. The furniture capital of the world, High Point, is just over an hour away and has more than 125 manufacturing plants offering great discounts.

Major malls include Briar Creek, Beaver Creek Commons, Cameron Village, Cary Towne Center, Crabtree Valley Mall, North Hills, Triangle Town Center and White Oak Crossing. The list of specialty stores and upscale shops is impressive—and just keeps expanding.

**CUISINE:** Greater Raleigh's array of cuisine serves up something to satisfy almost any craving. Menus range from upscale fine dining to brewpubs to traditional southern cooking.

**NIGHTLIFE:** Enjoy nightlife in downtown Raleigh in the City Market, Glenwood South, and the Warehouse District. Listen to live music performed by popular local bands or international superstars at one of the area's concert venues or entertainment complexes, or dance the night away.

**TRANSPORTATION:** Raleigh is easily accessible by car, bus, rail or airlines.

**Driving:** North Carolina has the largest state-maintained highway system in the nation. Three interstate highways intersect the Research Triangle area, giving the area excellent access to many East Coast destinations.

**Bus:** Capital Area Transit (CAT) offers bus service throughout Raleigh. The Triangle Transit Authority provides daytime intercity service between Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill, and also serves Morrisville, Cary, RDU Airport, and Research Triangle Park. Local and national service is available from Carolina Trailways/Greyhound Bus Lines.

**Rail:** Amtrak offers direct service to 56 cities from Raleigh. The Silver Star provides daily service to Richmond, Washington, New York, Miami, and many points in between. Additional north-south service on the Silver Palm and the Silver Meteor is available through Rocky Mount, located an hour from Raleigh. The Carolinian and the Piedmont provide morning and afternoon service between Raleigh, Rocky Mount, Greensboro, and Charlotte.

**Airline Services:** Raleigh-Durham International Airport is just 15 minutes west of downtown Raleigh , between I-40 and U.S. 70. Each year, more than 12 million travelers use it to catch almost 450 daily flights to 37 non-stop destinations. International cities served non-stop include London and Toronto .

**PRINCIPLE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES:**

Women's Colleges: **Meredith College, Peace College**

Religious College: **Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary**

Technical School: **Wake Technical Community College**

Historically Black Colleges: **Saint Augustine's College, Shaw University**

University: **North Carolina State University**

**GREATER RALEIGH CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU**

- Non-profit organization that promotes Raleigh and Wake County for convention and visitor business to enhance the economic growth and development of the area.
- Initially formed in 1987 as the Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau.
- Named the Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau by the Wake County Board of Commissioners and the Raleigh City Council in 1992 following legislation passed by the N.C. General Assembly.
- Funded by a 15 percent share of both the 6 percent Wake County Hotel Occupancy Tax and 1 percent Prepared Food and Beverage Tax.
- 21 full-time and 1 part-time staff members.