

Sculpture of a swamp rabbit in Travelers Rest along the Swamp Rabbit Trail.



# ARTSY SOUTHERN COMFORT IN GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA

**Story and photos by Robin Tierney**

**T**his place has a great atmosphere -- and Artisphere too.

We're talking Greenville, S.C., which is getting props in art circles for its annual May Artisphere ([artisphere.org](http://artisphere.org)) festival. Greenville made the "places to visit in 2018" list published by *Travel + Leisure*, so a visit was in order.

This South Carolina town boasts a hot arts scene, trendy eateries, boutiques, festivals and urban and Blue Ridge Mountain beauty. It's also a natural for fall leaf-peeping.



Vegan handmade soaps at Magnolia Scents.





Dig into a delicious totally plant-based eggplant dish at The Lazy Goat.



Go Persian with a rich hearty vegan dish at Pomegranate on Main.

## FARM-FRESH EATS

**Kitchen Sync:** Having nailed a sky-high Certified Green rating, their locally sourced ingredients ensure top-flight deliciousness. Try the Banh Mi, with vegan toppings such as crispy tofu and crispy beets, and the amazing Thai Pie (just hold the top crust).

[facebook.com/kitchensyncgreenville](https://facebook.com/kitchensyncgreenville)

**Southern Pressed Juicery:** 100% organic and local. What to get? Bees Knees Energy Bowl, oatmeal cookies and the donuts. So good that an outpost is opening in Austin, Texas. [southernpressedjuicery.com](https://southernpressedjuicery.com)

**The Swamp Rabbit Cafe and Grocery** features the bounty of nearly 250 area farms and delicious vegan dishes made from locally sourced ingredients, from power smoothies made with just-picked berries to their Turkish-inspired Vegan Pogacha (pogacha is a bread baked in fireplace ashes) made with artisan vegan cheese and chorizo. [swamprabbitcafe.com](https://swamprabbitcafe.com)

**Pomegranate on Main:** Authentic Persian cuisine based on owner Ali Saifi's family recipes. Greatest hits include veggie kabobs, Persian eggplant and tomato stew, the eggplant dip and authentic tea service.

[pomegranateonmain.com](https://pomegranateonmain.com)



Sip a yummy power smoothie at Southern Pressed Juicery.



Munch on a fresh vegan Banh Me salad at Kitchen Sync.



**The Lazy Goat:** On the terrific Greenville History Tour restaurant walking tour led by John Nolan ([greenvillehistorytours.com](http://greenvillehistorytours.com)), I had a wonderful eggplant dish that made my non-vegan companions envious [thelazygoat.com](http://thelazygoat.com)

**The Anchorage:** At this James Beard 2018 Best New Restaurant semifinalist, combine vegetable dishes for an entree. [theanchoragerestaurant.com](http://theanchoragerestaurant.com)

**Cantinflas:** The award-winning menu is half vegetarian, and vegan and gluten-free diners are treated very well at this downtown hotspot [cantinflasmexican.com](http://cantinflasmexican.com)



At the Anchorage, order a fresh off the farm designer salad.



Order great mellow coffee drinks with soy and almond milk at Port City Java downtown.



Chef Brian creates amazing healthy donuts at Southern Pressed Juicery.

**Willy Taco:** Order a vegan Crispy Avocado Taco. [www.willytaco.com/home](http://www.willytaco.com/home)

**Sidewall Pizza:** Their flavorful pizzas and dairy free ice-cream are custom-made. [sidewallpizza.com](http://sidewallpizza.com)

**Roost:** Local, seasonal cuisine includes a vegan menu. [roostrestaurant.com](http://roostrestaurant.com)

**Swad Vegetarian Indian:** Sumptuous spot owned by a lifelong vegetarian. [facebook.com/SwadIndianRestaurant](https://facebook.com/SwadIndianRestaurant)

**Yellow Ginger:** At this southeast Asia-focused dining room, ask for the vegan menu. [yellowgingerasian.com](http://yellowgingerasian.com)

**Port City Java:** Sip mellow Brazilian coffee & drinks handcrafted with soy/almondmylk here. [portcityjava.com/location/loc/greenville](http://portcityjava.com/location/loc/greenville)

## ART ALL AROUND

**Artisphere:** Visit May 11 - 13 for the city's award-winning festival. See awesome artworks, visual and culinary arts demonstrations and hands-on activities for adults and children. [artisphere.org](http://artisphere.org)

**Arts in Public Places:** 70 works include "Octo 2," a kinetic, wind-powered stainless steel sculpture made up of linked stainless shapes rotating around a circular axis. A steel sculpture reminiscent of





See this amazing sculpture and wonderful shows at the Peace Center downtown.





Look for imaginative sculptures, some of them kinetic, all around downtown Greenville.



Find this friendly pig sculpture at the Children's Garden along Swamp Rabbit Trail.

Gumby adds red to Falls Park at one end of The Liberty Bridge. Il Porcellino represents a handsome wild boar of legend. At the Children's Garden, look for Vincenzo, a whimsical pig sculpture, and Fear Not, depicting a child drawing courage in the embrace of a lion. Bonus: you can view the City of Greenville Public Art Walking Tour on your digital device.

[gis.greenvillesc.gov/publicarttour/index.html](https://gis.greenvillesc.gov/publicarttour/index.html)

The Mice on Main, inspired by the book "Goodnight Moon," appear along Main Street between the Hyatt and the Westin Poinsett hotels. This fun project was conceived by a local community-minded high school student and sculpted by Greenville-based artist Zan Wells.

## STIR YOUR SENSES

**Falls Park on the Reedy:** This urban park's amazing features include beautiful rocky waterfalls and the Liberty Bridge, a curved ultra light architectural feat spanning 345 feet. Held in the air by a single suspension cable, it floats over the gardens and the waterfalls that were once used to power mills.

[fallspark.com](https://fallspark.com)

**Swamp Rabbit Trail:** Bike 21 miles each way on one of America's most awesome trails. On the way to the cute community of Travelers Rest, take a break to see the lake and clock tower at Furman University. [greenvillerec.com/swamprabbit](https://greenvillerec.com/swamprabbit)

**Downtown Alive:** Each Thursday for 24 weeks, it's a party on Main Street, with regional bands rocking out while people dance in the street. [greenvillesc.gov/1321/PNG-Downtown-Alive](https://greenvillesc.gov/1321/PNG-Downtown-Alive)

**Carolina Music Museum:** Based in a former Coca-Cola bottling plant at the Heritage Green museum campus, this is the new home to spectacular restored harpsichords, early pianos and other instruments. [carolinamusicmuseum.org](https://carolinamusicmuseum.org)

**Magnolia Scents:** A master chandler, Tina, helps you create soy candles in scents such as orange chili pepper and Greenville. The shop uses vegan ingredients for its candles, bath bombs and lotions. [magnoliascents.com](https://magnoliascents.com)

Tina also shared with me information about Greenville's vegan supper club ([greenvillevegan.com](https://greenvillevegan.com)).



## SLEEP IN

**Swamp Rabbit Inn** is a modern bicycling-themed B&B that's an easy walk to downtown. The kitchen is stocked with goods to make breakfast, and the on-property Bike Shed is the place to rent bikes. Owner and cycling guide-book author Wendy Lynam moved here from Chicago in 2005 after experiencing Greenville's southern-cosmopolitan vibe. [swamprabbitinn.com](http://swamprabbitinn.com)

So bring comfy shoes, a camera and your appetite and dig into Greenville. Here are two more servings of southern comfort. The friendly international airport makes getting here easy. And for a free ride, hop the cool trolley!

## MORE INFORMATION

[visitgreenillesc.com](http://visitgreenillesc.com)



This wonderful "bookcase" staircase is among delights at the Swamp Rabbit Inn.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Robin Tierney** travels the world in search of creativity, beauty, fun and great plant-based food.

