

COASTAL LIVING®

APRIL 2015

NAVIGATOR (DREAM TOWN)

EDENTON

Founded more than 300 years ago, this North Carolina harbor town is a beacon of preservation

A **WHITE CLAPBOARD** house built in 1782 stands on the shore of Edenton Bay, with inviting double porches and a row of glossy black rocking chairs facing out to the tranquil water. Just steps away from this Welcome Center, slips dot the harbor, where two nights' docking are complimentary for boaters traveling through Albemarle Sound.

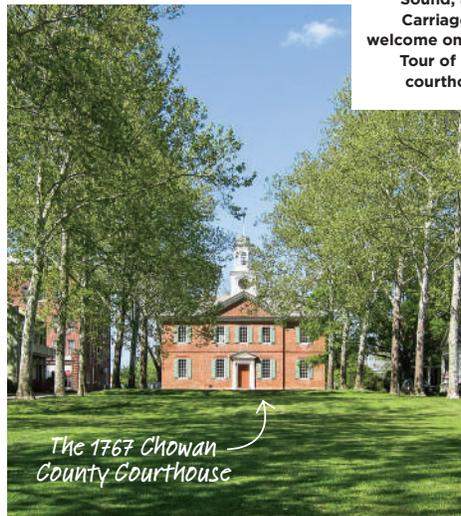
It's a friendly tradition in this town of 5,000 that, at a scant few square miles, specializes in friendly. Bald cypress trees in the middle of the bay used to hold a stash of rum for good-luck toasting as ships sailed from this first colonial capital of the state. Now, an electric tour boat with nautical flags flapping sharply in the breeze cruises past historic landmarks, while other boaters tie up for excursions into town.

Ashore, Edenton's streets are lined with vintage storefronts and grand homes with gables, sleeping porches, and historical markers. Houses range from more than \$1 million on the waterfront to less than \$100,000 for a fixer-upper close to downtown.

History often attracts visitors here, but locals such as Soda Shoppe owner Frank Jones say it's the community that convinces people to call it home. "When we were considering moving here, my daughter said, 'We must look like someone who lives here, because everyone has said hi!'" Capt. Mark Thesier of Edenton Bay Cruises felt at home right away: "We looked at eight different communities to find a coastal place to settle. I turned on Broad Street



Clockwise from top, left: a replica Perlauger boat in Edenton's harbor; Mulberry Hill, a B&B on Albemarle Sound; an Edenton Carriage Company welcome on the Pilgrimage Tour of Homes; the courthouse green



and said, "This is it." This town has a wonderful, authentic old charm."

Main Street

Broad Street's independent shops and restaurants lead you straight to the water. The cozy and hopping 309 Bistro and Spirits is a must for fresh seafood dishes, such as bierre blanc crab cakes. (They tend to sell out fast.) Waterman's Grill sends a clear menu message even before you're inside, with a charming painting of a fish above the door, and follows through with delicious steamed oysters and big, flaky

flounder. Just off Broad Street, near the courthouse, you find the bewitching colonial storefront of Summerhouse, a boutique of jewelry, books, and home accessories that will keep you exploring its nooks for more.

Architecture

Edenton is a surprisingly rich score for design buffs, boasting Georgian, Federal, Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Queen Anne, and more architectural styles within a few blocks. Just passing by cottages with starfish on the windowsills will make you

BY JENNIFER BRUNNEMER SLATON

smile. The town's 1767 courthouse (the state's oldest) faces the water and presides over a lawn lined with gracious homes, including the site of the first known political rally of women in the British American colonies, where a group of 51 signed a petition boycotting English tea. (A teapot sculpture marks the spot.) A \$10 guided walking tour (visitedenton.com) gets you inside several Colonial sites, including the beautiful, Jacobean-style 1758 Cupola House, with hand-etched inscriptions on an upstairs windowpane. Spring brings the biennial

Pilgrimage Tour of Homes, as well as Easels in the Gardens, when artists paint the beauty of the town's outdoor spaces.

Community

Locals fiercely preserve the town heritage. Broad Street's historic Taylor Theater nearly closed when it was unable to convert to digital technology, but private citizens raised the funds, so you can still stroll today to a movie at this nearly 90-year-old marquee a couple blocks from the water. The town's historic cotton mill has been preserved as condominiums, and even a 100-year-old pharmacy was reinvented as

the Soda Shoppe's ice cream, milkshake, and lunch counter.

Life on the Water

This inner reach of Albemarle Sound centers around boating, paddling, and casting. (Beaches are an hour east of here along the Outer Banks.) You can rent canoes, kayaks, and paddleboards on the town waterfront from the harbor's dockmaster, and head across the bay to John's Island, where it's just your tent, woodsy wilderness, and water all around. Anglers enjoy frequent fishing tournaments here or cast a line off the breakwater by the

lighthouse to catch catfish and perch.

Where To Stay

Just one turn off Broad Street leads you to the sumptuous and homey Granville Queen Inn, where wicker rockers greet you on a large veranda, breakfast is a delight, and seven pretty guest rooms have private baths and modern comforts along with storied antiques. (The third floor, under the eaves, is especially charming.) Rates start at \$105; granvillequeen.com.

ARE YOU READY TO MOVE IN?



SOUND CHOICE

4 bedrooms, 3½ baths
3,800 square feet • \$797,000

DETAILS: On the original homestead of North Carolina's first governor; custom-designed with oversize brick and quarried stone; pier and covered boat lift

NEIGHBORHOOD: Albemarle Sound
MLS #74439; pacsir.com



PLANTATION PARADISE

4 bedrooms, 3½ baths
4,300 square feet • \$549,000

DETAILS: Built circa 1785 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places; library and five fireplaces; walk to downtown

NEIGHBORHOOD: On the outskirts of Edenton
MLS #76275; pacsir.com



HILLTOP CHARMER

4 bedrooms, 3 full/2 half baths
5,500 square feet • \$1,300,000

DETAILS: Greek Revival-style home listed on the National Register of Historic Places; front and back porticos and wine cellar

NEIGHBORHOOD: Downtown historic district
MLS #63558; pacsir.com