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Just a Three Day Weekend Away: Winston-Salem

I am so fortunate to do all the things I do, and love the fact that my position with Competition Dining takes me all across the Carolinas meeting new chefs, visiting local farmers markets, and exploring new places to go back to for some regional R&R, to eat, to visit and to enjoy.

In the course of a sixteen battle series you get to know a city as it becomes a home away from home. When I find a place I love, I'll tack on an extra day or two after a couple of nights of culinary competition to really delve into all a city has to offer.

Winston-Salem, NC home to the Triad regional GotToBeNC Competition Dining Series is a city I have come to love and plan to go back and visit often, and so should you! Just an hour and half from the Queen City – Winston is an easy drive from

Charlotte. It's a sophisticated city, with small town charm and Southern hospitality. The city is filled with arts, and antiquing, history and then some and, of course, a good deal of food and drink. Home to Krispy Kreme, Texas Pete, the Largest Mast General Store to date and the gateway to the Yadkin Valley NC Wine region, just to name a few, there is plenty to do, see, eat and drink, and after a three day weekend, your cup will runneth over and you'll be ready to plan for more.

Where to stay – Always fun to check out B&Bs in the area, and one in Old Salem, the Augustus T Zevely Inn, a restored 1844 Moravian home, will have you a living part of Winston-Salem's history. Just a quick walk away from Old Salem is The Brookstone Inn. Built in 1837, the inn was originally

home to the Salem Cotton Manufacturing Company. Now each recently renovated and beautiful room holds its own special character, and guests will also enjoy the outdoor patio and frequent visits from Sally, the cat who calls Brookstone her home.

If you'd rather base out of downtown, near the 6th Street arts district, the west end antique district and a stone's throw from the new Mast General Store, then give the Embassy Suites or Downtown Marriot in the Twin City Quarter a call. For the ultimate in historic luxury – make a reservation at Graylyn. This glorious and historic estate boasts 86 private guest rooms, 15 meeting rooms and is considered to be one of the finest conference centers in America. The Estate also offers butlered service insuring that guests be treated like the Lord or Lady of the manor. Treat yourself, you can thank me for the idea another time.

Restaurant and dining options abound in Winston-Salem. Start with baked breakfast goods and coffee anytime of the day at Atelier on Trade, smack dab in the middle of the arts district. The talents of owner and patissier Pablo DelVile and pastry chef Lucia Bobby will help make every morning a sweet way to start the day. For bigger southern, local and organic breakfasts, stop in at Mary's of Course! Also known as Mary's Gourmet Diner, it is located on Trade as well – several blocks down in the Arts District.

For lunch and dinner there are many choices, so pace yourself and try them all – here is just a taste of what's in store. Can't eat in Winston without stopping at Graze, located downtown off the lobby of the Marriot Hotel. Graze is home to the 2015 Triad Regional Championship Competition Dining Series team. Chef Richard Miller heads the team with a menu of seasonal tapas style offerings. Sweet Potatoes for classic Southern Soul food; Mozelles on West Fourth Street for Southern Bistro Style fare



with comfy dining inside and out.

For more upscale dinners, don't miss a few of my favorite spots: A Noble Grille on Knollwood Street, Spring House and its sister restaurant QuantoBasta, Italian Eatery and Wine Bar, Meridian Restaurant located near Old Salem, River Birch Lodge on Robinhood Road, and Bernardin's Restaurant in Winston's West End in the Museum district of uptown (worth noting that one of Bernardin's sister restaurants is located in Uptown Charlotte).

Once you are rested and well fed, take advantage of all Winston has to offer and explore. The team at Visit Winston can help you out with details in planning your trip around many special events the city has to offer. Visit Winston offices are located in the same complex as The Brookstone Inn. Enjoy a trip to visit gardens at Reynolda Village, a stroll through old Salem, a shopping trip through the arts district; and be sure to include a visit to the Cobblestone farmers market in Old Salem in you are visiting on a weekend. Plan a tour of historic gardens and homes and for sure and if you'd rather roll than walk – look into booking a Segway tour of the city.

Just outside Winston you can day trip to Mt Airy, home of Andy Griffith, Pilot Mountain for some hiking or to the Yadkin Valley to sip, smell, swirl and savor the bounty of the NC Wine Country.