



# Chetola Resort & Spa: Blue Ridge Parkway Escape

Written by Katherine Rodeghier

June 14, 2022

**Historic Chetola Resort & Spa on the Blue Ridge Parkway has welcomed travelers to Blowing Rock, NC for more than a century. Discover this historic resort on the Blue Ridge Parkway.**

After several days of driving and touring along the Blue Ridge Parkway in [Virginia](#) and North Carolina, my husband and I were ready to rest. We found the perfect place to relax at the Chetola Resort — the Cherokee name meaning Haven of Rest. The 78-acre, historic resort is a magical property nestled in the [Blue Ridge Mountains](#) of northwest North Carolina.

The family-friendly [Chetola Resort & Spa](#) is an institution in Blowing Rock, NC. The first recorded owner purchased the land in 1846 as a family home and later a boarding house and summer resort, doubling as an ice house in winter.



Chetola Resort and Spa on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Photo by Katherine Rodeghier

## Cola King Created Buzz

J. Luther Snyder, the Coca-Cola King of the Carolinas, came along in 1926 using his wealth from operating ten bottling plants to purchase and expand the Chetola estate. Tales of parties given by the much-loved Snyders, a family with six children, were hot topics on the local social scene in the 1930s and 1940s.



J. Luther Snyder, Coca-Cola King of the Carolinas. Photo courtesy of Chetola Resort

## Three Lodging Choices at Chetola Resort

Chetola's current owners have been careful to preserve the resort's colorful history, while adding modern amenities. The manor house became the [Bob Timberlake Inn at Chetola Resort](#), an eight-room bed-and-breakfast graced by the designs and furnishings of its namesake, North Carolina's [most recognized living artist](#). To my eye,

the guest rooms and communal gathering space had a cozy, the 1940s feel with overstuffed chairs and sofas, alongside dark wood tables that would have fit perfectly in my grandmother's house. Some guests rent all eight rooms for friend getaways and family gatherings, procuring their meals from Timberlake's Restaurant downstairs.

We stayed in Chetola's 42-room [The Lodge at Chetola Resort](#), also decorated with Bob Timberlake's signature furnishings and artwork. Its three floors have been renovated, one per year beginning in 2019. Pet-friendly rooms welcome canine companions with treats and bandanas. With no dog to walk, I enjoyed the view of Chetola Lake from my balcony. Guests lounged along the shoreline and cruised about on pedal boats, kayaks, and stand-up paddleboards.



The newly renovated 42-room The Lodge at Chetola Resort & Spa. Photo by Katherine Rodeghier

For those guests who want more of a home-away-from-home experience, book the fully furnished [Chetola Premier Condominiums](#). These 75 privately-owned condos come in one, two, three, and four-bedroom sizes, offering good choices for couples, families, and groups. While the condos have full or efficiency kitchens, guests who

don't want to cook do what we did—head over to Timberlake's for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

### **Dining at Timberlake's**

[Timberlake's Restaurant](#) has three dining rooms, a wine room, and a lakefront patio. In addition, the adjoining Headwater's Pub has libations and live entertainment.



Timberlake's Restaurant showcases a seasonal menu featuring the finest ingredients.

Photo by Stacey Van Berkel courtesy of Chetola Resort

On the evening we dined, we couldn't decide between the pork osso buco, the cast iron-seared elk short loin, or North Carolina trout. Since elk doesn't appear on most menus, I ordered it and was rewarded with tender and tasty meat.

Breakfast prompted further decisions. For instance, would it be country eggs benedict, chicken and biscuits, or the bananas foster waffle?

### **Chetola's Shepherd's Pie**

My husband and I brought home a taste of Chetola in a recipe for shepherd's pie, one of Timberlake's signature dishes.



Shepherd's Pie is a signature dish at Chetola Resort's Timberlake's Restaurant. Photo courtesy of Chetola Resort

## Shepherd's Pie (serves 4-6 people)

### INGREDIENTS FOR MASHED POTATOES

- 3 lbs Yukon gold potatoes
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1/4 cup of sour cream
- 1/4 cup of grated parmesan
- salt and black pepper

### INGREDIENTS FOR WORCESTERSHIRE GRAVY

- 2 qt of reserved stock
- 1/4 cup Worcestershire
- 2 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 3 tbsp tomato paste
- 2 tbsp picked fresh thyme
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1/2 cup flour
- salt and black pepper

### INGREDIENTS FOR BRAISED LAMB SHANK

- 4 lb lamb foreshanks
- 2 cups chopped onions
- 1 cup chopped carrots
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 1/2 cup chopped garlic

- 1 cup tomato paste
- 3 sprigs of fresh thyme
- 1 sprig of fresh rosemary
- 1 gallon of beef stock
- 2 cups red wine (burgundy, cabernet, etc.)
- salt and black pepper
- oil for searing
- 1 lb frozen vegetables

#### **PREPARATION FOR BRAISED LAMB**

1. Preheat the oven to 300 degrees.
2. Place a large dutch oven over high heat.
3. Season lamb generously with salt and black pepper, then once the pan is very hot, sear lamb on all sides. Set lamb aside.
4. In the same pan, turn the heat down to medium and add oil and onions, carrots, celery, and season with salt and black pepper.
5. Cook for 5 minutes, then add garlic and tomato paste.
6. Cook for 2 minutes, then deglaze with wine.
7. Add fresh herbs.
8. Add lamb shanks back to the pan with the vegetables, and add beef stock until the lamb is almost covered. Place lid on pan, and place in preheated oven for 3.5 hours or until meat is tender and falling off the bone.
9. Once cool, pull the lamb meat from the bones and strain the stock. As stock cools, the fat will rise to the top. Skim off as much fat as possible and save the stock to make the gravy.

#### **PREPARATION FOR MASHED POTATOES**

1. Peel and chop potatoes.
2. Place butter and cream in a small pot on low heat.
3. Boil potatoes in water until tender. Drain.
4. Add cream, butter, and sour cream to potatoes, and use a whisk or hand blender to mash potatoes until smooth and creamy. Add salt and pepper to taste. Set aside.

#### **PREPARATION FOR WORCESTERSHIRE GRAVY**

1. In a large pot, add oil and flour, and whisk over medium heat for a few minutes until the flour smells a little nutty and is a light brown color.
2. Add stock and rest of the ingredients, constantly whisking to eliminate any lumps.
3. Bring to a simmer, reduce heat to low, and cook for a few minutes until desired consistency. Season with salt and pepper if needed.

#### **ASSEMBLY**

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
2. In a mixing bowl, combine vegetables and lamb.
3. Add gravy until the mixture is wet and saucy but not soupy.
4. In a 4-quart casserole dish, add meat mixture leaving a half-inch from the top. Now add mash potatoes and smooth with a spatula.
5. Cover with plastic wrap then aluminum foil, and place in the preheated oven for 30 minutes. Remove foil and plastic wrap, and bake for additional 10 minutes or until mashed potatoes are golden brown. Let rest at room temperature for 15 minutes.
6. Garnish with scallions or chives.

#### **Massages for the Road-Weary at Chetola Resort**

Sadly, I did not have time to book a massage or facial at The Spa at Chetola Resort, but I peeked inside at the Mission motif and décor inspired by Bob Timberlake, Charleston Forge, and other local artists. The spa has five treatment rooms, including one for couples, a nail treatment area, a hair salon, and the Swan Bar with complimentary teas and coffees—you can pay for prosecco.



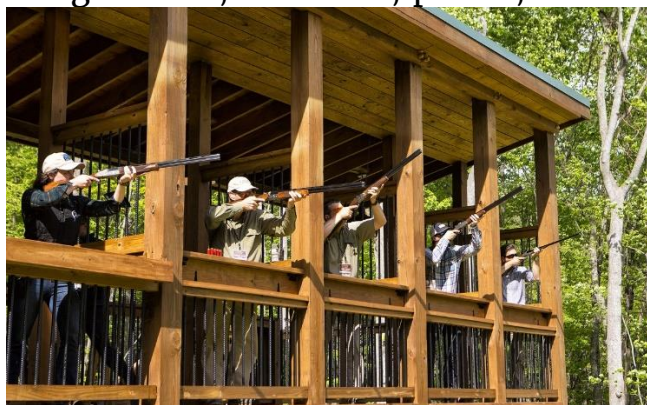
Guests enjoy a full line of services in a relaxing atmosphere at the Spa at Chetola Resort.

Photo courtesy of Chetola Resort

While *chetola* means rest, the resort presents plenty of opportunities for active play. For example, the Highlands Sports and Recreation Center has an indoor pool, sauna, tennis and pickleball courts, disc golf, lawn games, a fitness center, and classes. And for visitors with children, a kids' camp operates during the summer and school holidays.

### **Chetola Sporting Reserve**

In 2014, Chetola's owners bought 67 acres of the nearby Blue Ridge Mountain Club to create the Chetola Sporting Reserve. The private club is a 1,784-square-foot clubhouse and includes a five-stand, 13-station, clay shooting course, and rifle, pistol, and archery ranges.



Chetola's Sporting Reserve has a five-bay shooting stand. Photo courtesy of Chetola Resort



Twenty-seven miles of hiking and ATV trails wind through the grounds of the resort. In addition, Chetola is the first Orvis-endorsed fly-fishing lodge in North Carolina. Anglers arrange to go after trout on float trips and wade trips in public or private waters.

### **Motoring on the Blue Ridge Parkway**

Blowing Rock is North Carolina's only town directly on the Blue Ridge Parkway, so Chetola made a convenient basecamp for our excursions. Running 469 miles between [Shenandoah National Park](#) in Virginia and Great Smoky Mountains National Park on the North Carolina and Tennessee border, the Parkway ranks among America's top [scenic drives](#). We found the section through North Carolina's high country had some of the best vistas and attractions.



Motorists on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Photo by Katherine Rodeghier

The [Moses Cone National Memorial Park](#) at Parkway Milepost 294 lies within walking distance of Chetola. The one-time country estate of a textile magnate has 27 miles of carriage trails weaving through its 3,500 acres, one of which connects to Chetola. The estate's former manor house is now the home of the [Parkway Craft Center](#), featuring the work of regional artists.

### **Mountain Detours**

[Grandfather Mountain](#) lies about 14 miles from Chetola via the Parkway. The big thrill at this private mountain park is a walk across its Mile High Swinging Bridge, leaving some visitors weak in their knees. You'll also find animal habitats, a nature museum and theater, and more than 12 miles of hiking trails at the park.



One of the top attractions in northwest North Carolina, Grandfather Mountain is just off the Blue Ridge Parkway. Photo by Katherine Rodeghier

[The Blowing Rock](#), a tourist attraction owned by the mayor of Blowing Rock, perches on a cliff, hanging 3,000 feet above the Johns River Gorge. When the wind is in the right direction, the gorge becomes a flume blowing upward, causing light objects tossed over the edge to sail back. The phenomenon prompted Ripley's "Believe-It-Or-Not" cartoon to dub it "the only place in the world where snow falls upside down."



Blowing Rock in North Carolina. Photo by [McElspeth](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Although the winds were calm during our visit to the Blowing Rock, the clear skies allowed us to drink in a panorama of peaks from cliffside observation areas. Hawksbill Mountain and Table Rock rose on the southwest, Grandfather Mountain, the highest peak in the Blue Ridge, claimed the west, and farther down the Parkway, we spotted Mount Mitchell, the highest peak east of the Mississippi River.



### **Written by Katherine Rodeghier**

During her extensive career as a travel journalist, Kathy has researched destinations in nearly 100 countries and has taken cruises across the globe. Her travel experiences span all seven continents, including close encounters with penguins and leopard seals in Antarctica, lions in Tanzania and tortoises in the Galapagos Islands. She has waded into a cranberry marsh in Wisconsin, danced the two-step in the Texas Hill Country and hiked into Havasupai Canyon in Arizona. Her travel journalism career began in suburban Chicago writing and editing an award-winning newspaper travel section for the Daily Herald. She continues to write about travel as freelancer for the Daily Herald as well as for other newspapers, including the Chicago Tribune, St. Louis Post-Dispatch and Dallas Morning News. Her work also can be found in Global Traveler magazine, Cruise Travel magazine and auto club publications and on websites FoodieTravelUSA.com and GoNOMAD.com among others. She's a member of the Society of American Travel Writers, is on the board of Midwest Travel Journalists Association.

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