



MOVING TO RALEIGH, NC

THE 2026 RELOCATION HANDBOOK

HELPING FAMILIES FIND THE RIGHT HOME, COMMUNITY & LIFESTYLE ACROSS THE TRIANGLE

RESULTS

COMPASS

A NOTE FROM US



WELCOME!

If you're considering a move to Raleigh or the Triangle, welcome—we're glad you're here.

Relocating comes with a lot of questions. Which area is right for you? How much home can you afford? What should you know before making the move? As Raleigh natives who have spent years helping people discover and navigate life in the Triangle, we've created this guide to help answer those questions and provide a local perspective you won't find in a typical online search.

Davis Holt, Principal Broker of The Results Team, has helped hundreds of buyers and sellers throughout the Triangle, while Whitney Greenway leads the team's marketing and relocation initiatives, helping newcomers better understand the communities, lifestyle, and opportunities that make this area so special.

Our hope is that this guide gives you a clearer understanding of the Triangle, helps you avoid common relocation mistakes, and makes your next move feel a little less overwhelming. When you're ready, we'd be honored to help you take the next step.

Warmly,

Davis Holt & Whitney Greenway

The Results Team | Compass

RESULTS

COMPASS

WHY SO MANY PEOPLE ARE MOVING HERE

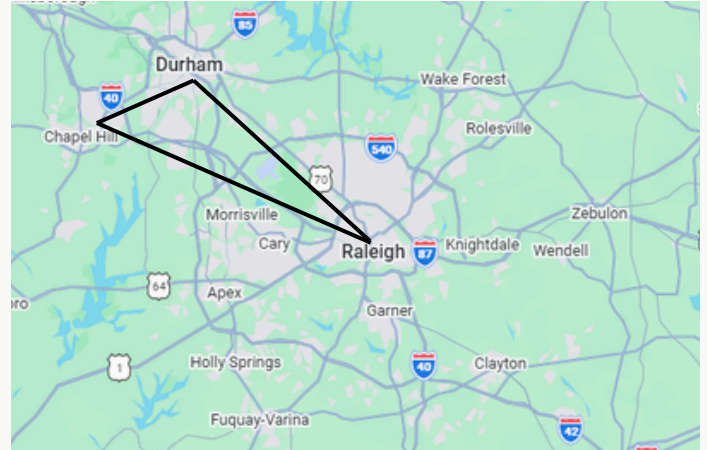
Strong job growth, Research Triangle Park, highly regarded universities, a mild climate, and a high quality of life continue to attract new residents from across the country.

But for many people, the decision to move here goes beyond career opportunities. The Triangle offers a lifestyle that balances growth and opportunity with everyday livability. Residents enjoy extensive greenways and parks, vibrant downtown districts, award-winning restaurants, family-friendly communities, and easy access to both the mountains and North Carolina's beautiful coastline.

While Raleigh is no longer the bargain it once was, many buyers still find greater value and lifestyle opportunities here than in larger metro areas. Whether you're seeking more space, a strong sense of community, top-tier amenities, or a place to put down roots, the Triangle continues to offer something that many growing regions struggle to maintain: a high quality of life.



UNDERSTANDING THE TRIANGLE



The Raleigh area is commonly referred to as "**The Triangle**" because it is anchored by three major cities—Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill—which form a roughly triangular shape on the map. The name also reflects the region's three internationally recognized research universities: **North Carolina State University** in Raleigh, **Duke University** in Durham and the **University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill** in Chapel Hill.

Raleigh, Cary, Apex, Holly Springs, Fuquay-Varina, Wake Forest, and Wendell each offer a different lifestyle. Choosing the right community is often more important than choosing the right house.

- **Raleigh** – Urban convenience and established neighborhoods
- **Cary** – Parks, greenways, and strong resale value
- **Apex** – Small-town charm and family-friendly communities
- **Holly Springs** – Newer homes and growing amenities
- **Fuquay-Varina** – More space and strong value
- **Wake Forest** – Charming downtown and larger homesites
- **Wendell** – Affordability and future growth potential

WHAT DOES IT COST TO LIVE IN THE TRIANGLE?

Beyond your mortgage payment, here's what newcomers should know about the everyday cost of living in Raleigh and the surrounding communities.



AS A GENERAL GUIDE: \$400K–\$500K: ENTRY-LEVEL SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES; \$500K–\$750K: BROAD SELECTION OF ESTABLISHED HOMES; \$750K–\$1M+: PREMIUM NEIGHBORHOODS AND UPGRADED PROPERTIES; \$1M+: LUXURY HOMES AND CUSTOM CONSTRUCTION



OWNING A CAR IN RALEIGH TYPICALLY COSTS BETWEEN **\$4,000 AND \$7,000+ PER YEAR**, DEPENDING ON THE VEHICLE. THIS INCLUDES AUTO LOAN PAYMENTS, INSURANCE, FUEL, MAINTENANCE, AND LOCAL TAXES.



IN RALEIGH, NC, THE AVERAGE COST OF GROCERIES IS ABOUT \$350 TO \$450 PER MONTH FOR A **SINGLE PERSON** AND \$900 TO \$1,200 PER MONTH FOR A **FAMILY OF FOUR**. OVERALL, FOOD AND GROCERY EXPENSES IN THE AREA ALIGN CLOSELY WITH OR ARE SLIGHTLY ABOVE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE.



THE AVERAGE MONTHLY UTILITY COST FOR A **STANDARD APARTMENT OR SMALL HOME** IS ROUGHLY \$180 TO \$260 FOR COMBINED ELECTRICITY, WATER, GAS, AND TRASH COLLECTION. FOR **SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES**, THIS TOTAL TYPICALLY RANGES FROM \$250 TO \$350+, HEAVILY DEPENDING ON THE SEASON AND ENERGY HABITS.



AVERAGE DAYCARE COSTS RANGE FROM \$1,300 TO \$2,000+ PER MONTH FOR INFANTS, WHILE **TODDLER AND PRESCHOOL CARE TYPICALLY SPAN \$1,000 TO \$1,600 PER MONTH**. RATES VARY HEAVILY BASED ON THE CHILD'S AGE, WHETHER IT IS A LICENSED CENTER OR IN-HOME CARE, AND THE SPECIFIC FACILITY



IN RALEIGH, NC, THE **AVERAGE COST OF EATING OUT** TYPICALLY RANGES FROM \$220 TO \$300 PER MONTH FOR A SINGLE PERSON, OR ROUGHLY \$500 TO \$600+ PER MONTH FOR A FAMILY.



IN RALEIGH, NC, THE COMBINED PROPERTY TAX RATE IS ROUGHLY \$0.8721 PER \$100 OF ASSESSED VALUE. THE STATE CHARGES A FLAT INDIVIDUAL **INCOME TAX RATE OF 4.25%**, AND THE COMBINED SALES TAX IN RALEIGH IS 7.25%.

HOUSING



WHAT DIFFERENT BUDGETS CAN TYPICALLY BUY *in the Triangle*

For most people relocating to the Triangle, housing will be the largest piece of their monthly budget. While home prices have increased considerably over the past decade, many buyers still find they can get more space, newer homes, larger yards, and access to desirable communities than they could in many larger metro areas.

The Triangle offers housing options for a wide range of budgets, from downtown condos and townhomes to luxury homes, new construction communities, and properties with acreage. The key is understanding how far your budget will go in different areas.



\$350K - \$500K

This price range often includes townhomes, newer starter homes, and smaller single-family homes in communities such as Garner, Wendell, Clayton, Zebulon, and portions of Fuquay-Varina and Durham.

Good fit for: First-time buyers, downsizers, and those prioritizing affordability.



\$500K - \$750K

This is one of the most active price points in the Triangle and offers a wide variety of options. Buyers may find established neighborhoods in Cary, Apex, Holly Springs, Wake Forest, and Raleigh, along with many newer construction opportunities.

Good fit for: Families looking for more space, good amenities, and strong community options.



\$750K - \$1M

Buyers in this range typically gain access to larger homes, premium neighborhoods, upgraded finishes, desirable school districts, and more established communities.

Good fit for: Move-up buyers and relocators seeking a balance of location, lifestyle, and home size.



\$1 MILLION +

The Triangle's luxury market offers custom homes, golf course communities, homes with pools, larger homesites, and some of the area's most sought-after neighborhoods.

Good fit for: Buyers prioritizing luxury finishes, premier locations, privacy, or specialized lifestyle amenities.



Local Insight

ONE OF THE BIGGEST SURPRISES FOR NEWCOMERS IS HOW MUCH HOUSING COSTS CAN VARY WITHIN A RELATIVELY SHORT DRIVE. TWO HOMES WITH SIMILAR SQUARE FOOTAGE MAY HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT PRICE POINTS BASED ON LOCATION, SCHOOL ASSIGNMENTS, LOT SIZE, NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES, AND COMMUTE CONVENIENCE.

THAT'S WHY WE ENCOURAGE BUYERS TO FOCUS NOT ONLY ON THE HOME ITSELF, BUT ALSO ON THE LIFESTYLE, COMMUNITY, AND DAILY ROUTINES THEY WANT TO CREATE AFTER THEY MOVE

TRANSPORTATION



TRANSPORTATION + COMMUTING

in the Triangle

Compared to many major metropolitan areas, getting around the Triangle is relatively straightforward. Most residents rely on personal vehicles for daily transportation, and while traffic has increased as the region has grown, many newcomers still find commutes more manageable than those in larger cities such as New York, Washington D.C., Boston, Atlanta, or Los Angeles.

That said, where you choose to live can have a significant impact on your daily routine. A neighborhood that looks perfect online may feel very different once you factor in school drop-offs, work commutes, airport access, and weekend activities. Understanding your typical travel patterns is one of the most important factors when selecting the right community.

Key Transportation Hubs

- Research Triangle Park (RTP) - One of the largest employment centers in North Carolina, RTP is home to thousands of jobs in technology, life sciences, healthcare, and research. Many relocators prioritize commute times to RTP when choosing where to live.
- Raleigh-Durham International Airport (RDU) - Conveniently located between Raleigh and Durham, RDU provides nonstop service to dozens of domestic and international destinations, making it a major draw for frequent travelers and remote workers.

Major Roadways

The Triangle is connected by several major highways, including:

- I-40
- I-540 / Triangle Expressway
- US-1
- NC-147
- I-87

APPROXIMATE DRIVE TIMES TO MAJOR DESTINATIONS

CARY	APEX	HOLLY SPRINGS	WAKE FOREST	FUQUAY VARINA
RTP 10-20 minutes	RTP 15-25 minutes	RTP 25-35 minutes	RTP 30-45 minutes	RTP 30-45 minutes
DOWNTOWN RALEIGH 15-25 minutes	DOWNTOWN RALEIGH 20-30 minutes	DOWNTOWN RALEIGH 30-40 minutes	DOWNTOWN RALEIGH 20-30 minutes	DOWNTOWN RALEIGH 30-40 minutes
RDU 10-15 minutes	RDU 20-25 minutes	RDU 25-35 minutes	RDU 30-40 minutes	RDU 30-40 minutes



Local Insight

ONE OF THE MOST COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS WE HEAR IS THAT "EVERYTHING IN THE TRIANGLE IS 20 MINUTES AWAY." WHILE THE REGION IS HIGHLY CONNECTED, COMMUTE TIMES CAN VARY DRAMATICALLY DEPENDING ON WHERE YOU LIVE, WHERE YOU WORK, AND THE TIME OF DAY YOU'RE TRAVELING.

FOR MANY FAMILIES, FINDING THE RIGHT LOCATION ISN'T JUST ABOUT THE HOUSE—IT'S ABOUT CREATING A LIFESTYLE THAT MINIMIZES STRESS AND MAXIMIZES CONVENIENCE.

GROCERIES



GROCERIES + EVERYDAY ESSENTIALS *in the Triangle*



From weekly grocery runs to specialty finds, the Triangle makes it easy to stock your pantry and support local.

You'll find all the national grocery stores you know and love plus local markets, international grocers, and many fresh, locally source options.

THE GOOD NEWS:

Most residents shop at a mix of stores depending on the week and what they need. Grocery prices in the Triangle area are close to the national average and you'll have no shortage of options for every budget and lifestyle.

POPULAR GROCERY OPTIONS



WHAT SURPRISES PEOPLE MOST

- ✓ Harris Teeter stores are *everywhere*—and many are open late.
- ✓ The State Farmers Market is open year-round, not just during the summer.
- ✓ Many neighborhoods are within a 10-15 minute drive of several different grocery options.
- ✓ The Triangle has an incredible variety of international grocery stores and specialty food markets.



Local Insight

ONE THING WE LOVE ABOUT LIVING IN THE TRIANGLE IS THE CONVENIENCE. IN MANY COMMUNITIES, YOU'RE JUST MINUTES FROM MULTIPLE GROCERY STORES, PHARMACIES, RESTAURANTS, FITNESS CENTERS, AND EVERYDAY ESSENTIALS. THAT LEVEL OF CONVENIENCE OFTEN BECOMES ONE OF THE UNEXPECTED PERKS OF LIVING HERE.

Davis and Whitney's Local Favorites



BEST FARMER'S MARKET

The NC State Farmer's Market



BEST LOCAL COFFEE SHOPS

NoRa Cafe, New World Cafe and 321 Coffee



BEST SHOP-IN CATERING

Donovan's Dish, Raleigh Cheesy, Ladyfingers



BEST LOCAL MARKETS

Butcher's Market and Weaver Street Market



BEST INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

Sassool, Capri Flavors, Golden Hex, K-Town Market

These are some of our go-to spots we love sharing with friends and clients!

UTILITIES



UTILITY + MONTHLY EXPENSES

in the Triangle

Utility costs in the Triangle are generally in line with national averages, though your monthly expenses will depend on factors such as your home's size, age, energy efficiency, and the season.

Although, North Carolina experiences all four seasons, with hot, humid summers and generally mild winters. However, the summers are quite hot and very humid. Many homeowners find that their highest utility bills occur during the summer months when air conditioning is running consistently.



TYPICAL MONTHLY UTILITIES INCLUDE:



ELECTRIC

\$145-\$263/mo



WATER/SEWER

\$35-\$90/mo



NATURAL GAS

\$35-\$90/mo



INTERNET

\$30-\$80/mo



TRASH/RECYCLING

\$26/mo

While these costs are averages to Raleigh and vary from home to home, they're an important part of your overall monthly budget and should be considered alongside your mortgage payment.



Local Insight

ONE OF THE ADVANTAGES OF LIVING IN THE TRIANGLE IS THE CONTINUED INVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE. MANY COMMUNITIES HAVE ACCESS TO HIGH-SPEED FIBER INTERNET, MAKING THE AREA ESPECIALLY ATTRACTIVE FOR REMOTE WORKERS.

WHAT SURPRISES PEOPLE MOST?

- ✓ Summer electric bills are often higher than winter bills because of air conditioning.
- ✓ Internet options can vary from neighborhood to neighborhood—even within the same town.
- ✓ Some newer communities include trash and recycling through HOA dues, while others bill these services separately.
- ✓ Utility costs can differ significantly between an older home and a newer, energy-efficient home of the same size.

BEFORE YOU BUY, ASK ABOUT...

- Average monthly electric bill
- Internet provider availability and speeds
- City water & sewer vs. well & septic
- HOA dues and what they include
- Age of HVAC and windows

CHILDCARE





CHILDCARE *in the Triangle*

Finding the right care for your little ones is an important part of your move – and we want to make it a little easier!

The Triangle is full of amazing options for children of all ages and stages.

OPTIONS FOR EVERY FAMILY

CHILDCARE CENTERS

Full-time, part-time, and drop-in care options are widely available.

PRESCHOOLS

Half-day and full-day programs focused on early learning and school readiness.

FAITH-BASED PROGRAMS

Many churches in the area offer excellent childcare and preschool programs.

IN-HOME CARE

Nanny shares, in-home daycares, and babysitters are great options for many families.

AFTER-SCHOOL CARE

Before and after-school programs are widely available at schools, centers, and recreation facilities.



DID YOU KNOW?

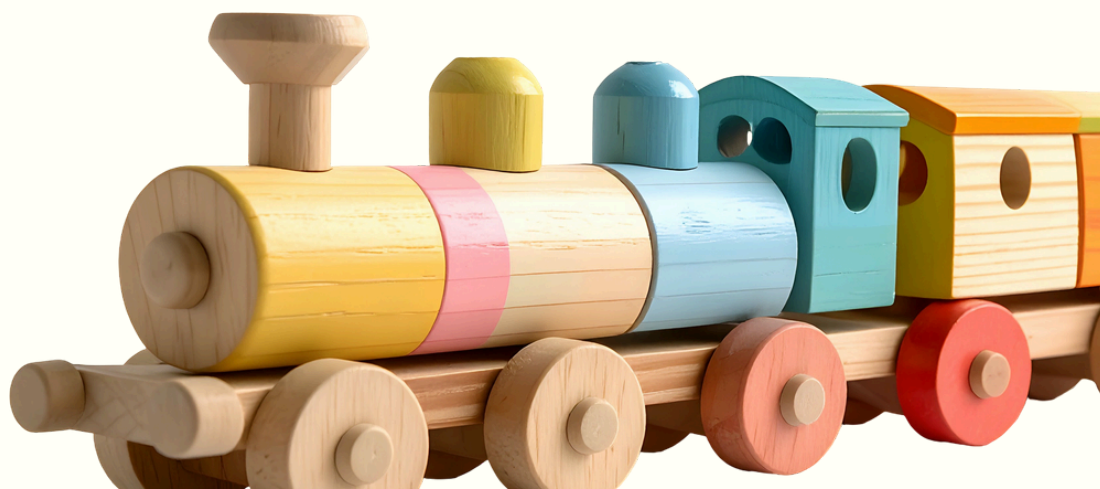
- ♡ Spots at high-quality centers can fill up quickly – especially for infants and toddlers.
- ♡ Many families join waitlists before they even move to the area.
- ♡ Costs vary based on location, age of child, and the type of care you choose.
- ♡ NC Pre-K is available for 4-year-olds at many centers and public schools.
- ♡ Don't forget to ask about schedules, school breaks, summer care and extracurriculars.



Local Insight

WE'VE HELPED MANY FAMILIES FIND CHILDCARE OPTIONS THEY LOVE. REACH OUT ANYTIME – WE'RE HAPPY TO SHARE OUR FAVORITE LOCAL RESOURCES!

TODDLER AND PRESCHOOL CARE TYPICALLY SPAN \$1,000 TO \$1,600 PER MONTH IN THE TRIANGLE PER CHILD.



DINING OUT





DINING OUT

in the Triangle

The Triangle is a foodie's paradise! Whether you're grabbing tacos after work, meeting friends for brunch, celebrating a special occasion, or trying the newest chef-driven restaurant, you'll find no shortage of great places to eat.

WHAT IT TYPICALLY COSTS

(per person)



COFFEE & PASTRIES

\$4-\$8



QUICK BREAKFAST

\$8-\$15



CASUAL LUNCH

\$12-\$20



CASUAL DINNER

\$15-\$30



DATE NIGHT

\$35-60



FINE DINING

\$75-\$150+



CRAFT BEER

\$6-\$9



COCKTAILS

\$12-\$18

Keep in mind that prices vary by restaurant and gratuity of 18-20% is customary.

WHERE THE LOCALS GO



DOWNTOWN RALEIGH

A vibrant mix of chef-driven restaurants, rooftop bars, breweries and local favorites.



DOWNTOWN CARY

Elevated Southern cuisine, craft cocktails, coffee shops and walkable charm.



DURHAM

Known for its innovative chefs, food halls and diverse international flavors.



MIDTOWN

A favorite for upscale dining, happy hours and date nights.



APEX + HOLLY SPRINGS

Growing restaurant scenes with everything from family-friendly eateries to locally owned gems.



Local Insight

ONE THING NEWCOMERS OFTEN NOTICE IS HOW MUCH THE TRIANGLE EMBRACES LOCAL RESTAURANTS. WHILE YOU'LL CERTAINLY FIND NATIONAL CHAINS, MANY RESIDENTS LOVE SUPPORTING INDEPENDENT RESTAURANTS, BREWERIES, BAKERIES AND COFFEE SHOPS THAT GIVE EACH COMMUNITY ITS OWN PERSONALITY.

WHAT SURPRISES PEOPLE?

- ✓ Reservations are recommended for most popular restaurants, especially on weekends.
- ✓ Brunch is practically a weekend tradition in the Triangle.
- ✓ Outdoor dining is available year-round thanks to North Carolina's mild climate.
- ✓ Breweries often welcome families and are popular gathering places with food trucks, live music and events.
- ✓ Restaurant Weeks and local food festivals happen throughout the year, making it easy to explore new places.



Dampf Good BBQ



Trophy Brewery + Pizza



Dos Taquitos

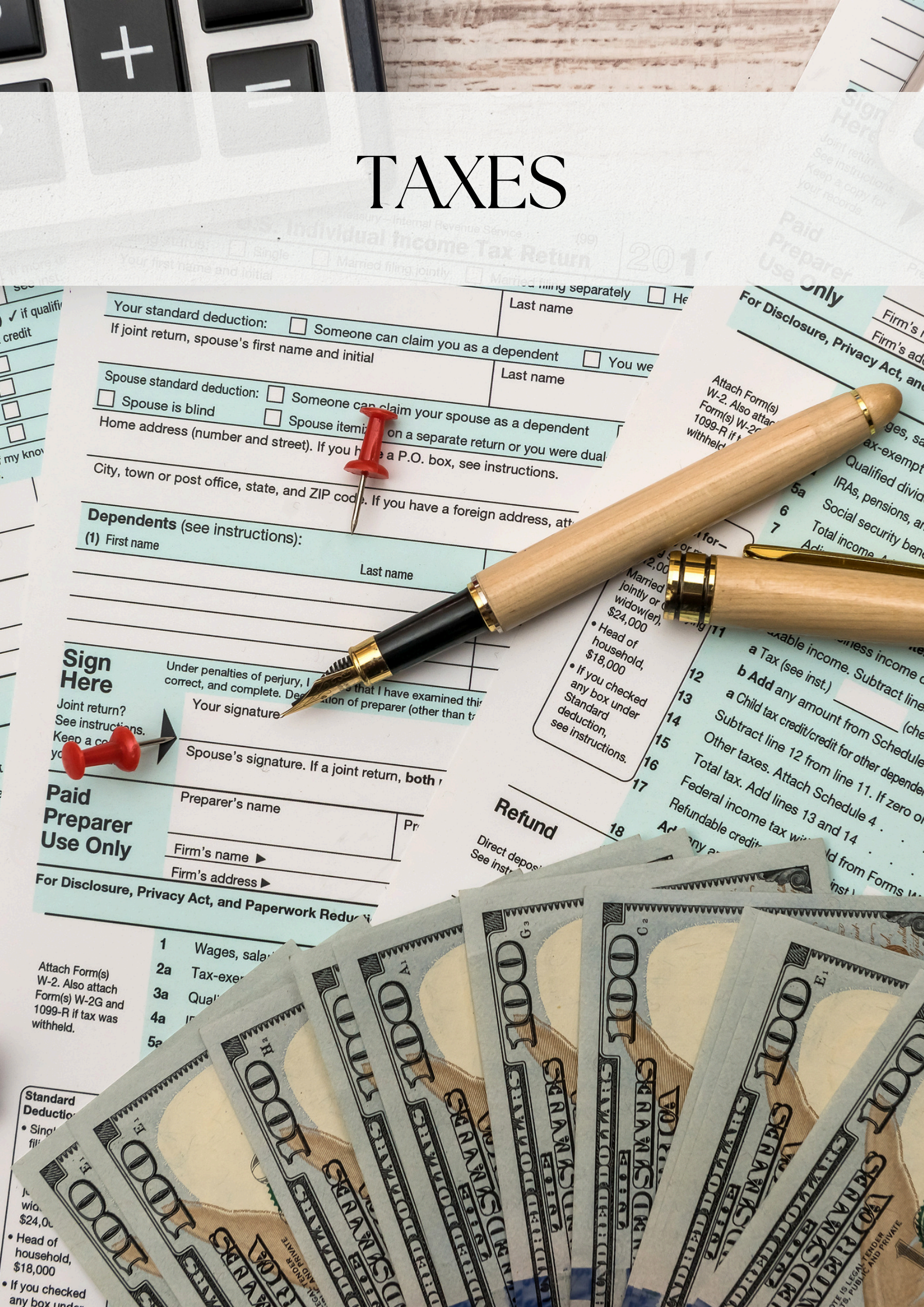


Tamasha



St. Rock Fine Oysters + Bar

TAXES



UNDERSTANDING TAXES

in the Triangle

NC TAX HIGHLIGHTS



**STATE
INCOME
TAX OF
3.99%**



**NO TAX ON
SOCIAL
SECURITY
BENEFITS**



**RETIREMENT
INCOME TAX
OF 3.99%**



**PROPERTY
TAX
RATES VARY
BY COUNTY**

Taxes are an important part of understanding the true cost of living, and for many people relocating to North Carolina, they're often a pleasant surprise.

Compared to many states, North Carolina offers a competitive tax environment with relatively low property taxes, a flat state income tax, and a moderate combined sales tax. While everyone's financial situation is different, many newcomers find that they can keep more of their monthly income than they expected.



For example, all cities in the Triangle area, besides Durham, operate with a 7.25% sales tax. Durham has a sales tax rate of 7.5%

North Carolina has a statewide sales tax of 4.75%. Local rates in the Triangle range from 1.00% to 2.75%.

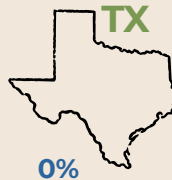
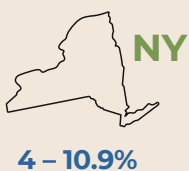
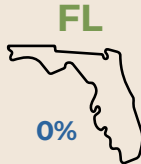
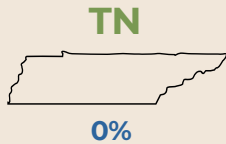
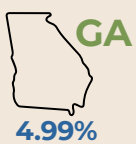
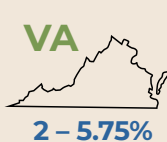
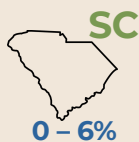
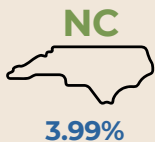
Property Taxes

2024-2025 AVG. RATE (per \$100 of assessed value)

COUNTY

Wake	\$0.537
Durham	\$0.554
Chatham	\$0.60
Johnston	\$0.52
Orange	\$0.638
Harnett	\$0.591

HOW WE COMPARE



Local Insight

NORTH CAROLINA IS ONE OF THE MOST TAX-FRIENDLY STATES IN THE COUNTRY, MAKING IT AN IDEAL PLACE TO LIVE, WORK AND RETIRE.



Welcome Home



The Triangle is more than a place on the map – it's a place to belong.

RELATIONSHIPS. COMMUNITY. HOME.

Relocating is about so much more than buying a house—it's about finding the place where your life will unfold. It's discovering the neighborhood where you'll meet friends, the coffee shop that becomes part of your morning routine, the park where your kids spend countless afternoons, and the restaurant you'll celebrate life's milestones in for years to come.

We hope this guide has given you a better understanding of what makes Raleigh and the Triangle such a special place to call home. While every move is unique, one thing remains the same: having local guidance can make all the difference.

At The Results Team, we believe every successful move starts with listening. We take the time to understand your goals, lifestyle, budget, commute, and priorities before recommending neighborhoods or homes. Our role isn't simply to help you buy real estate—it's to help you find the community that's the right fit for your next chapter.

Whether you're relocating in the next few weeks or simply beginning your research, we'd love to be a resource for you.

HOW WE CAN HELP

- Personalized relocation consultations
- Community and neighborhood recommendations
- Virtual home tours for out-of-state buyers
- Local vendor and service recommendations
- School and commute guidance
- New construction expertise
- Trusted inspectors, contractors, and moving resources



Davis Holt
Principal Broker



Whitney Greenway
Marketing + Relocation
Specialist

RESULTS

TEAM

Powered by: **COMPASS**

We can't wait to welcome you to the triangle!

— *Let's build your relocation plan* —

If you're ready to take the next step, we're here to help.



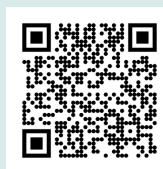
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Scan here to learn more about relocating to Raleigh, NC!





A BIG
THANK YOU



Davis + Whitney