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## Discovering the Diverse Geography of North Carolina



North Carolina, often referred to as the Tar Heel State, is a place of remarkable geographic diversity. From the rugged Appalachian Mountains in the west to the beautiful Atlantic coastline in the east, the state offers a wide range of landscapes and features. In this passage, we will explore the fascinating geography of North Carolina in great detail.

### **Mountains and Peaks**

In the western part of North Carolina, you'll find the majestic Appalachian Mountains. These ancient mountains are home to the highest peak in the eastern United States, Mount Mitchell, which rises 6,684 feet above sea level.

### **Rolling Hills and Piedmont**

Moving eastward, the terrain transitions into rolling hills and the Piedmont region. This area is characterized by gently sloping hills and fertile farmland, making it ideal for agriculture.

### **Coastal Plain**

Further east, the landscape levels out into the Coastal Plain, which stretches to the Atlantic Ocean. This region includes low-lying areas, swamps, and estuaries, as well as sandy beaches along the coast.

### **Barrier Islands**

North Carolina's coastline is famous for its barrier islands, including the Outer Banks. These narrow strips of land protect the mainland from the ocean's fury and offer unique ecosystems and stunning beaches.

### **Cape Hatteras Lighthouse**

The Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, located on Hatteras Island, is one of the most iconic lighthouses in the United States. It stands 198.5 feet tall and is known for its distinctive black and white stripes.

### **Great Smoky Mountains National Park**

North Carolina shares the Great Smoky Mountains National Park with Tennessee. This park is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is renowned for its biodiversity and pristine wilderness.



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### **Waterfalls and Rivers**

The state boasts numerous waterfalls and rivers, with the Linville Falls and the French Broad River being notable examples. These natural features provide recreational opportunities and scenic beauty.

### **The Blue Ridge Parkway**

The Blue Ridge Parkway is a scenic highway that winds through the Appalachian Mountains, offering breathtaking views and access to hiking trails, waterfalls, and overlooks.

### **The Biltmore Estate**

Located in Asheville, the Biltmore Estate is America's largest privately-owned home. It features a stunning mansion, beautiful gardens, and a winery, all set against the backdrop of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

### **The Outer Banks**

The Outer Banks, a string of barrier islands, are a popular tourist destination known for their beaches, water sports, and historical sites like the Wright Brothers National Memorial.

