

Drinking in Knoxville

The SDA Guide to the Best Bars in Town

Great Beer

Preservation Pub (www.preservationpub.com)

Smoker friendly - last call 2 AM - located in Market Square

Small, loud, smoky, and dive-ish, Preservation Pub (or Pres Pub, as the locals call it) is the local academic's pub of choice. Pres Pub maintains an excellent beer list, mostly bottles. Check for seasonal beer selections on the chalkboard on the left as you enter. Pres Pub is also a music venue, and there is usually a door fee of \$3-5 after 9pm. If you are *not* a fan of smoke (or noise) but still want a great beer selection, you should consider going to Barley's Taproom instead.

Barley's Taproom and Pizzeria (www.barleystaproom.com/knoxville)

Non-smoking - last call 2 AM - located in the Old City

Located in a spacious refurbished grain warehouse, Barley's has an awesome beer selection, countless taps, fantastic pizza, and plenty of bar stools and booths. There are also pool tables and darts upstairs, along with additional booths. Barley's is also a music venue, and a \$3-5 door fee is common if you arrive after 9 pm. If you want a quieter area after 9 pm, request a table upstairs.

The Downtown Grill & Brewery (www.downtownbrewery.com)

Non-smoking – last call 2 AM – located on Gay Street

The Downtown serves in-house craftsperson-brewed beer. In fact, you can stop by the fermenting tanks on the way to the bar, which is located at the center of a massive two story restaurant. The food is so-so and the conversations are loud, but the beer is plentiful and affordable.

Great British Beer

The Crown & Goose (www.thecrownandgoose.com)

Non-smoking – last call at 2 AM – located in the Old City

The Crown & Goose is a gastropub with a very cozy atmosphere and a 19th century replica London bar. There's also a beer garden on fair weather days and nights. The Crown & Goose serves three excellent (and exclusive) house beers: a stout, an IPA, and a bitter. And if there's a televised football (soccer) game somewhere in the world, you can bet it will be on the telly at the bar.

See also:

Patrick Sullivan's (under Great Whiskey)

Great Wine

Oodles Uncorked (www.oodlesuncorked.com) (865) 521.0600

Non-smoking - bar closes 12 AM-ish – located in Market Square

Wine drinkers will feel at home at Oodles. Oodles has a respectable wine list and a trendy (but comfy) bar and patio suited for a night of sampling and conversation. Visit their website for the full wine list. Oodles is also an Italian restaurant, but reservations are recommended.

Sangria's (865) 951-0165 (no website)

Non-smoking – bar closes around 9 PM – located in Market Square

Sangria's is a new tapas bar on the Square. If you want sangria, this is literally the place to go. They also serve authentic Spanish tapas, but reservations are recommended. Sangria's also has an excellent selection of Spanish red wines varietals such as Tempranillo and Rioja.

Le Parigo (865) 525-9214 (www.leparigo.net)

Non-smoking – 5-10 PM on weekdays, 5-12 AM on weekends –located at 416 W. Clinch

Avenue (turn right on Clinch from Market Square)

The bar at La Parigo is small (four or five stools), but the wine list is superior in this small, French bistro. Plan to spend a lot of money, both on the wine and on the cheese plate or foie gras that you will likely decide to order to go with it. Well worth the money if you are not on a budget.

Great Drinking and Dancing

Latitude 35 (www.latitude35.com)

Smoker friendly on the patio – last call at 2 AM – located in Market Square

If you are looking to mix drinking and dancing, head over to Latitude 35. The beer, wine, and liquor selection is average, but they keep live DJs going until the wee hours of the morning at the dancehall downstairs and maintain three bars.

Sassy Ann's (www.sassyanns.com)

Smoker friendly – last call at 2 AM – located at 820 N 4th Ave (take a cab, it's too far to walk for most)

Located in a three story renovated brothel, Sassy Ann's is a legendary Knoxville haunt. Once famous as a blues venue, Sassy Ann's now provides a full bar, loud DJs, and plenty of dancing in a one of a kind space. Be sure to look for Ann sitting downstairs at the bar. But be warned: a visit to Sassy Ann's is usually correlated with a hangover the next day (p<.001).

When You Need a Drink Right NOW

The Library Lounge (<http://www.crowneknox.com/Dining.html>)

Non-smoking (we think)—last call: we're not sure—located in the Crowne Plaza

Hotel bars are usually nothing to write home about, but academics will appreciate the eighteenth century library feel of the bar inside the Crowne Plaza. Doing double duty as a coffee bar, the atmosphere is vibrant without being too loud, and the bartenders won't try to tell you that Jack Daniels is bourbon (because it isn't.)

Great Whisky/Whiskey and Bourbon

Patrick Sullivan's (www.patricksullivans.com)

Non-smoking – last call at 12 AM or later – located in the Old City

Patrick Sullivan's is rich in history and the water of life. The bar sits at the heart of the Old City in a renovated brothel, and looks somewhat like a hunting lodge on the interior. Located next to the railroad tracks, this was a hangout of Jesse James in the nineteenth century. Patrick Sullivan's has an excellent selection of bourbon and Scotch, many of which are not your usual suspects. They also serve Boddingtons and Guinness on tap. This is an excellent place to drink whiskey until they kick you out. If you get hungry before then, the steaks are excellent.

Great Martinis

Sapphire's (865) 637-8181 (www.sapphire-knoxville.com)

Non-smoking – closes around 12 AM – on Gay Street

Located in a former jewelry store, Sapphire's has an uber-modern meets the 1930s décor that is something to see. Mixed drinks are Sapphire's forte, and they are an excellent option for both the person who wants an outstanding apple or chocolate martini and the person who thinks that martinis should be dry, clean, and gin. Sapphire's also has an interesting bar menu that ranges from truffled potato chips to sushi.

Great Places to Hang Out

Urban Bar and Corner Café (no website)

Smoker friendly on the patio— last call 2 AM – located in the Old City

Urban Bar escapes definition. The bar is pretty average, the food only slightly tastier, and the décor is lacking (although the patio is nice and airy). But this is where everyone in Knoxville hangs out for some reason or another. Great place to nurse a hangover. Try the burritos.

Bistro at the Bijou Theatre (www.thebistroatthebijou.com)

Non-smoking – typically closes around 12AM, 11AM on weeknights – located on Gay St.

The Bistro is a lovely bar and restaurant located next to the historic Bijou Theatre. The Bistro has a relaxed, cozy vibe and some of the nicest staff in town. The bar is quite nice and the wine selection, while not spectacular, has a few gems. Best medium rare burger in Knoxville.

Most Interesting

Cairo Café: The Mirage of Knoxville (<http://www.cairocafeknoxville.com>)

Smoking!—closes late, times vary—located on Gay Street.

The Mirage is an East meets West multipurpose venue featuring décor from Egypt, Lebanon and Morocco. Although billed as an Arabic restaurant, almost everyone who goes there goes there to smoke the hookah, have a drink, and watch some belly dancing. The candle dancers are particularly worth a look.

Poor Student/ Dive Bar award:

The Pilot Light (www.thepilotlight.com)

Non-smoking (go smoke outside) – opens at 9pm, closes as late as 4am – located in the Old City

So, you are a poor graduate student with a tight budget, or perhaps looking for loud dive bar? Go to The Pilot Light, a nationally famous (and not for profit) Indie music venue. Expect to pay a few dollars at the door to help the bands out with gas. But once inside, enjoy a delightful selection of canned beers (including PBR tallboys) at grocery store prices. The Pilot Light is probably the only place in Knoxville that still sells Schlitz.

Basic Walking Directions around Downtown Knoxville

To Gay Street:

From the Crown Plaza's front door, turn left onto Summit Hill Drive. Gay Street is the first street you will come to, and you will see the Knoxville Visitor Welcome Center's marquee on the corner. Turn right onto Gay Street. All the bars are easy to find, except the Bistro, which is located underneath the Bijou Theatre's marquee. (NOTE: Gay Street also runs into the Old City. Just turn left (instead of right) at the corner of Gay and Summit Hill, then turn right on Jackson Ave).

To Market Square:

From the Crown Plaza's front door, go directly across the street. Walk between the TVA towers and take the stairs down beside the fountains. You will be standing in Market Square.

To The Old City:

From the Crown Plaza's front door, turn left onto Summit Hill Drive. Follow Summit Hill to the foot of the hill, and turn left onto Central. Keep walking to the corner of Jackson Ave and Central St., and you will pass the Crown and Goose. Patrick Sullivan's and Urban Bar will then be in front of you, the Pilot Light and Barleys will be to your right down Jackson.