

Magnificent Manors of the Potomac – Visiting Alexandria & Prince William

Steeped in historical significance, catch a glimpse into the past as you explore the grand homes from the 18th and 19th centuries. These homes lined the Potomac River in Alexandria and Prince William, Virginia and were a vital part of the area’s economy and history.

Day 1

Once you arrive in Alexandria, VA, your first stop will be the **Carlyle House**. Built in 1753, the house was built by a British merchant for his lovely bride. Take a tour of this pre-revolutionary Palladian-style stone house then look out for PBS’s newest drama *Mercy Street* which takes place at the Carlyle House! (Suggested time: 45 – 60 minutes)

Your journey continues with a delectable lunch at **Gadsby’s Tavern**, where George Washington would hold important meetings with the founding fathers and his Masonic Lodge brothers. After lunch, head over to the Gadsby’s Museum where the tavern was the setting for dancing assemblies, theatrical and musical performances, meetings of local organizations, and frequented by George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, and the Marquis de Lafayette. (Suggested Time: Lunch plus 30 minutes)



Carlyle House

After lunch, hit the road to George Washington’s **Mount Vernon Estate** to learn about Mount Vernon’s rich history and how acquiring the land and keeping it together sparked the creation of the Mount Vernon Ladies Association. Then discover why George Washington himself opened his estate to guests year-round just as is done today. (Suggested time: 2.5 – 3.5 hours)

Continue to see **Woodlawn**, a plantation that was once part of George Washington’s Mount Vernon but gifted to George Washington’s nephew and Martha’s Granddaughter before they wed. The estate was designed by the architect of the U.S. Capitol. (Suggested time: 1 – 1.5 hours)



Historic Occoquan

Make **Occoquan, VA** your dinner stop, less than one mile from Interstate 95. Today, you can see and feel the charm of this quaint 18th-century town which sits along its namesake river, Occoquan. All the restaurants and shops in town are independently owned and operated so you’ll get a true taste of the town! (Suggested time: 1 – 1.5 hours)

After dinner, meet the **Mayor of Occoquan, Earnie Porta**, for a guided tour through the historic district. A noted author, historian and entrepreneur, Mr. Porta will share stories and facts of the town’s rich history as a bustling port and mill town as it developed throughout the 1800’s. Be sure to

ask him why the building in the middle of town is called the *Artists Undertaking Gallery*. (Suggested time: 45 – 60 minutes)

Day 2

Begin your morning by visiting **Rippon Lodge**, an 18th century property known for growing tobacco, wheat and other commodities. Built in 1740's and one of the oldest known homes in Prince William County, the property overlooks the Potomac River and is close to the former bustling port town of Dumfries. The owners used their proximity to the waterways to export their goods to England. (Suggested time: 1 hour)



Rippon Lodge



Manassas Battlefield

Travel on to Manassas, VA for a tour of **Manassas National Battlefield Park**, the site of the first major battle of the United States Civil War. Here you'll be able to stand right where the Union soldiers surrendered to the Confederates. It'll be a trip you'll never forget, especially if you snapped a picture with Stonewall Jackson! (Suggested time: 1.5 – 2 hours)

Following your tour, spend a leisurely afternoon enjoying **lunch** at one of the numerous nearby restaurants. Group-friendly staples such as Golden Corral, Uno's Chicago Grill, and Golden Corral are available, as well as independently operated eateries such as Great American Buffet and Uptown Alley (Suggested time: 1 – 1.5 hours)

The last stop on today's tour is **Ben Lomond Historic Site**, a home turned field hospital during the Battle of First Manassas/Bull Run. The property was owned by a descendant of the very powerful Carter family and was leased to the Pringle family during the Civil War. Both families helped produce corn and wheat, as well as care for the almost 500 Merino sheep. A tour of the home will illuminate what it was like for the Pringle family during the Civil War. You will also see the recently preserved graffiti left behind by the soldiers! (Suggested time: 1 hour)



Ben Lomond Historic Site

Need more inspiration?

Check out additional group tour inclusion ideas from our blog:

- [History of Marine Corps Base Quantico](#) – a presentation on the creation of the base during World War I, its expansion during World War II, historical information on activities on base, and the Town of Quantico
- [No Longer Forgotten: The Missing in America Project experience](#) – a memorable experience to honor the service and sacrifice of veterans who were previously forgotten

To book this itinerary, contact your personal travel partners, [Mark Kowalewski \(mkowalewski@pwcgov.org\)](mailto:mkowalewski@pwcgov.org) and [Mike Stoupa \(mstoupa@pwcgov.org\)](mailto:mstoupa@pwcgov.org) for help with your suggested itinerary, dining suggestions and hotel selection.