VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS®

Virginia by Rail: From Vibrant Cities to Coastal Shores

More people than ever are choosing to take the train to travel around Virginia. With Amtrak, visitors to the Commonwealth can experience much of the state without relying on personal and rental cars. So, stow your luggage, settle into your seat, and prepare to embark on an extraordinary expedition that will take you from historic towns right outside our Nation's Capital, to the coastal getaway that is Virginia Beach, all while unveiling the hidden treasures of Virginia.

Day 1 & 2 – Alexandria

Begin your Virginia adventure either upon arrival via air at Dulles International Airport (IAD) or Reagan National Airport (DCA). Not flying into Virginia? Head direct to Alexandria, home of the northern-most Amtrak station in the state. For those flying into IAD, getting to Alexandria and the Amtrak station has never been easier with the opening of the Metrorail Silver Line extension. Now, travelers can simply take the Metro Silver Line from IAD to the transfer station in Rosslyn, then hop on the Blue Line to Alexandria. For DCA arrivals, you're only a couple quick stops away from Alexandria via the Blue Line.

Once in Alexandria, grab a quick bite at a local spot such as Mason Social, a neighborhood restaurant focused on local, creative food and craft beer and libations. Spend some time exploring historic Old Town Alexandria, a bustling center of local boutiques and impressive arts and culture, all nestled within a landscape of colonial-era architecture and cobblestone streets. As you take a stroll along the waterfront enjoying the Potomac River views, consider a visit to the Torpedo Factory Art Center, a vibrant art venue showcasing local artists.

After exploring, treat yourself to a lovely dinner at Ada's on the River. An upscale, colorful setting right on the waterfront, Ada's is built around a wood-burning oven, the inspiration for most menu items.

Check-in for the night at the Archer Hotel, or the lavish Morrison House, a AAA Four Diamond Hotel offering boutique luxury paired with unrivaled historic charm.

Start your next morning with breakfast at one of the fine establishments along King Street and the surrounding blocks, such as Fontaine Bistro or Café du Soleil.

Take some time out of the day to head to Fairfax County and visit George Washington's Mount Vernon, the famous home of the United States' Founding Father and First President, George Washington. Tour the beautifully restored mansion, four distinctive gardens, and get a glimpse of Mount Vernon's working farm. For a more scenic route, rent a bike from one of the many Capital Bikeshare stations and ride the Mount Vernon Trail along the river to the historic estate.

Back in Old Town Alexandria, exploring King Street is one of the most iconic things to do and the free King Street Trolley makes covering ground easy. With stops every two to three blocks from Alexandria City Hall/Market Square to the King St – Old Town Metrorail station, trolleys provide on-off access to conveniently get around Old Town Alexandria.

Grab dinner and drinks along the waterfront at BARCA Pier & Wine Bar – the ultimate waterfront dining experience perched literally on the Potomac River, BARCA offers Spanish & Mediterranean influenced tapas, small plates, wine and cocktails as well as the best views around.

Day 3 & 4 – Alexandria to Norfolk (approx. 4.5 hours by train)

Depart in the morning from the Alexandria train station to Norfolk. Known for its rich maritime heritage, with a deep connection to the sea, Norfolk will captivate you with its waterfront charm and bustling harbor. The Elizabeth River runs through the city, providing stunning views and a picturesque backdrop. You can witness various vessels, from sleek sailboats to massive cargo and Naval ships, navigating the waterways.

Grab lunch along Granby Street, Norfolk's vibrant Restaurant Row, featuring more than 30 locally owned, chef-driven restaurants. After lunch, head to Mermaid Winery to sip locally crafted Virginia wines and enjoy a taste of Norfolk's unique food and wine scene.

Use the afternoon to explore Norfolk's military and naval heritage. Head to Nauticus, the maritime-themed museum, and take a tour of the USS Wisconsin, a historic battleship. Explore the various decks and learn about the ship's fascinating past.

Next, leave the land and get your sea-legs ready to embark on a harbor cruise to see the city from the water. There are many to choose from, including The Victory Rover, which offers incredible views of the Norfolk harbor and the America Navy's Atlantic Fleet.

For those who are more sensitive to seasickness, skip the boat and head to the Elizabeth River Trail. This popular scenic path allows for walking, jogging, or cycling along the river, to enjoy the outdoors and soak up the waterfront views. E-Bike Alley is conveniently located right downtown and offers e-bikes for rent to make getting around even easier.

Make your return to the downtown area for dinner at Todd Jurich's Bistro. This urbane restaurant serves modern spins on Southern fare complemented by a substantive wine list amid warm-wood decor.

The city offers many elegant accommodations for the tired traveler. The Hilton Norfolk the Main offers amazing views of the Elizabeth River and Downtown Norfolk with a rooftop bar and restaurant. The boutique Glass Light Hotel & Gallery, part of the Marriott Autograph Collection, features unique glass art throughout.

Start your morning with breakfast at The Stockpot in Norfolk, a cozy local favorite serving fresh, made-from-scratch dishes, hearty breakfast classics, and delicious coffee. Then take a cab or rideshare to visit the Norfolk Botanical Garden. Spread across 175 acres, the beautiful gardens feature a variety of plants, themed areas, and even a Japanese garden. Take a leisurely stroll or rent a bike to fully experience the natural beauty.

Spend your afternoon strolling through the Historic Ghent District. This neighborhood is known for its charming architecture, tree-lined streets, and unique shops. Get a bite to eat at one of the local restaurants and browse through the boutiques and art galleries. Stop by AW Shucks Raw Bar & Grill, focused on local and seasonal ingredients.

Walk or rideshare over to the Chrysler Museum of Art which houses an impressive collection of American, European, and contemporary art. Don't miss the glass art collection, featuring works by renowned artist Dale Chihuly, or a live glassblowing demonstration at the Perry Glass Studio, offered daily at noon.

Finish the day exploring the nearby NEON District. Norfolk's first official arts district, the NEON District, is home to a new wave of passion and creativity. Their vast collection of murals and local artworks will amaze. Enjoy dinner at Gershwin's , inspired by the glamour and romance of the Roaring Twenties, featuring elegant décor, creative American cuisine, and handcrafted cocktails. Enjoy live music in an intimate, jazz-inspired atmosphere.

Day 5 & 6 –Norfolk to Virginia Beach (approx. 1 hour by bus)

Upon arrival in Virginia Beach, you'll understand why it's considered one of the best destinations on the East Coast with its delightful combination of beautiful beaches, outdoor activities, and a vibrant boardwalk.

Immerse yourself into the beach life culture at the famous Virginia Beach Boardwalk where you can walk, bike, or even rollerblade along the expansive paved lane. Stretching for three miles, the boardwalk offers stunning ocean views, a lively atmosphere, street performers, souvenir shops, and delicious dining options. For lunch, stop at foodie favorite Waterman's Surfside Grille, which has been serving locals and visitors since 1981.

Discover the wonders of the underwater world at the Virginia Aquarium, offering a variety of exhibits, including the impressive Chesapeake Bay Touch Tank, the Restless Planet Aquarium, and the Outdoor Aviary. Don't miss the chance to witness fascinating marine creatures up close, including sharks, sea turtles, and playful otters.

Continue the local wildlife theme by partaking in a dolphin or whale watching tour where you can enjoy a scenic boat ride along the coast with knowledgeable guides providing insight on the ever-present dolphins and other surrounding marine life. Try to scope out some of the 'finned' locals by boat on one of the Rudee Tours or get right up close and personal on a GoKayak! Paddle with a Porpoise! tour.

Lodging is not hard to find in Virginia Beach with the Cavalier Resort conveniently located along the beachfront. Consisting of The Historic Cavalier Hotel and Beach Club, the Marriott Resort Virginia Beach Oceanfront and the new Embassy Suites Hilton, no matter your choice, you are destined for a relaxing stay.

Treat yourself to an upscale dinner at the Cavalier's Becca, the resort's Four Diamond dining experience. Wrap up the night with a visit to the onsite Tarnished Truth Distilling Company , the Nation's first in-hotel distillery, where you will taste and experience award-winning bourbon, as well as rye, vodka, gin, and other specialty spirits.

Fuel up for your second day at Virginia Beach with breakfast at Commune, a rustic, chic spot serving seasonal New American dishes, many with produce from their backyard garden.

But save some of your appetite for the next stop as it wouldn't be a coastal vacation in Virginia without oysters. Join a Pleasure House Oyster Chef Table Tour for a truly unique on-the-water experience. This is dining you won't forget, as you stand in waders knee-deep in the Lynnhaven River at a table set up directly in the water at their oyster farm.

Finish the day exploring the ViBe Creative District, a vibrant and evolving neighborhood that celebrates arts, culture and creativity. The district is also a food lover's paradise, with a wide array of restaurants, cafes, and breweries offering delicious and innovative cuisine. Try an inspired cocktail at Chesapeake Bay Distillery before delighting in the wood-fired New American cuisine at Hearth for dinner.

Day 7 – Virginia Beach to Alexandria (approx. 5 hours by mixed transit)

After you've taken in Virginia's amazing scenery from right outside D.C. to the stunning coastline, a roughly five-hour mixed transit ride will finish the loop, taking you back to Alexandria where you can continue your train journey out of state or take the Metro back to

Dulles International Airport. Or simply catch a flight at nearby Norfolk International Airport, only 29 kilometers from the Beach.

For more itineraries, visit www.virginia.org/international-visitors/suggested-itineraries/