

George Washington's Footsteps

Virginia's Northern Neck,
Fredericksburg, VA & Fairfax, VA

Discover the life of America's first President through the
places he called home.



America's 250th Anniversary.

On July 4, 2026, our nation will celebrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. This historic milestone is an opportunity for the country to pause and reflect on all that we have achieved in the last 250 years and consider all that work that is still unfinished. The signing of the Declaration of Independence may have started a revolution, but that revolution is far from complete. The Founding Fathers knew at the time of the Declaration's signing that this was an experiment. They did not have all the answers, but they knew that future generations would work to improve upon the framework they created. By studying the events of the past and honoring the contributions of those who have come before, we inform the continued efforts towards a future that includes the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all.

The State of Virginia played a significant role in the creation of the United States of America. From the first permanent English colony at Jamestown in 1607 to the ultimate battle of the Revolutionary War at Yorktown in 1781, Virginia's history is central to this story. Many of the nation's most distinguished and notable Founding Fathers resided in Virginia. Commander of the Continental Army, General George Washington, called the Commonwealth home throughout the entirety of his life. Learn more about the man who played such an important role in the outcome of the American Revolution by visiting the places he called home.

To stay informed about events related to the America's 250th celebration in individual localities and throughout the country, visit the following sites below. Events will populate on a rolling basis so check back often for the most up to date information.

State of Virginia 250th Commission:

<https://va250.org/>

National 250th Commission:

<https://america250.org/>

Day 1

11:00 AM

Begin your journey through the life of George Washington where it all started with a visit to the **George Washington Birthplace National Monument**. Located in the Northern Neck of Virginia, this site encompasses 551 acres of the former **Pope's Creek Plantation**, the American ancestral home of the Washington Family. George Washington was born at this site on February 22, 1732. A young Washington would later leave Pope's Creek when he was just three years old. Visit areas such as the Washington Family burial ground and the Memorial Area to gain a greater insight into not only the life of George Washington, but the lives of all who lived, worked and died at this site. (<https://www.nps.gov/gewa>)



1:30 PM

For lunch, delight in fresh seafood and oysters provided by Colonial Beach favorite, **Denson's** hosted by Ingleside Vineyards. Denson's is committed to providing quality foods with a focus on healthy living by using their Chesapeake Bay inspired farm to table model. This unique catering company offers customizable menus for every client they serve and will provide your group with a menu that will satisfy all group needs. Next, relax and enjoy the scenery and wines of Ingleside Vineyards. **Ingleside Vineyards** is one of Virginia's oldest and largest wineries; producing over 18 types of wine from its estate grown grapes. For more than 40 years, their hand crafted wines have won numerous awards and top honors in state, national and international wine competitions. While on-site, a wine educator will lead your group on a private tour of the vineyard and conclude with a private tasting. (<https://inglesidevineyards.com>) (<https://www.densongrocery.com>)



Photo Courtesy of Ingleside Vineyards



3:30 PM

Continue your exploration of George Washington's life with a visit to his boyhood home, Ferry Farm. **George Washington's Ferry Farm** is where young Washington spent his formative years. The future general and first president was 6 years old when his family moved to King George County (now Stafford County), Virginia, in 1738. The guided tour of the Washington house replica explores the lives of George, his mother Mary, other Washington family members, and the enslaved community. It recounts the adversity all of these individuals faced after the death of Augustine Washington, George's father. You can walk Ferry Farm's grounds before and after your house tour. The Visitor Center features the introductory exhibit, *The Science of History at Ferry Farm*, with colonial and Civil War artifacts excavated at Ferry Farm and windows into the Archaeology Lab, where you can see archaeologists identify and study thousands of artifacts found at Ferry Farm. (Kenmore.org/visit-ferry-farm)



Photo Courtesy of FXBG EDT

6:00 PM

Conclude your day with dinner at **The Alpine Chef Restaurant**, located in Fredericksburg's historic 1910 Train Station. Specializing in modern and old world German cuisine, enjoy family size portions that are so large you will be sure to leave pleased. You may even catch a train rumbling by as you enjoy your meal in the old station waiting room. (<https://www.alpinechefrestaurant.com>)



Photo Courtesy of FXBG EDT

Day 2

10:00 AM

Begin day two by exploring the sites of several key Washington Family members and friends.

Acquaint yourself with George Washington's mother, Mary Ball Washington, by visiting the **Mary Washington House**. In 1772, George Washington purchased this home in Fredericksburg, Virginia for his mother. Mary Ball Washington spent her last seventeen years in this comfortable home. The white frame house sits on the corner of Charles and Lewis Streets and was in walking distance to Kenmore, home of Mary's daughter Betty Washington Lewis. Tradition has it that, during the Revolution, General Lafayette came by the home seeking a visit with Mrs. Washington and found her working in her garden. The President-to-be came to this home to receive his mother's blessing before attending his inauguration in 1789. You will also learn about the lives of the enslaved workers who lived on this property and how their work supported Mary Washington's daily activities and lifestyle. Unlike other enslavers, we know the names of the people enslaved by Mary Washington and they are Old Bet, Little Bet, Lydia, George, Tom and Frederick. So little is known about what happened to them. It does appear, the enslaved Black man, George, was sent to Mount Vernon. (washingtonheritagemuseums.org)



Photo Courtesy of FXBG EDT



Next, pay a visit to the **Rising Sun Tavern**. Built by George Washington's youngest brother Charles around 1760 as his home, this frame building became a tavern in 1792 when it was purchased by the Wallace family. It operated for 35 years as a stop-over for travelers in the bustling port town of Fredericksburg. While it is no longer an operating Tavern, historical interpreters in period attire guide guests through the Tavern experience as if you were an 18th century traveler. (washingtonheritagemuseums.org)



Photo Courtesy of FXBG EDT



Photo Courtesy of FXBG EDT

Lastly, explore the **Hugh Mercer Apothecary Shop**, a small museum of colonial-era medicine and pharmacy. In the 18th century building interpreted as the Apothecary Shop, your group will learn how George Washington's friend, Dr. Hugh Mercer, served the citizens of Fredericksburg for 15 years with medicines and treatments of the periods. Learn about some of the remedies he employed such as leeches, lancets, snakeroot and crab claws. If weather permits, explore the Physick garden to view the many herbs and plants that 18th-century physicians would have used in treating affliction. Dr. Mercer left his practice in Fredericksburg to join the Continental Army, dying as a Brigadier General at the Battle of Princeton in 1777. (washingtonheritagemuseums.org)



Photos Courtesy of FXBG EDT

12:00 PM

After a morning full of history, take a break and have lunch on your own at one of over 40 chef or family owned restaurants in **Downtown Fredericksburg**. Whether you are looking for fine-dining or a quick sandwich, there is something to meet your cravings. Dining guides will be provided.

Following lunch, discover the beauty of **Historic Kenmore**, home of George Washington's sister, Betty Washington Lewis, and her husband, Fielding Lewis. This beautiful Georgian style brick mansion contains some of the finest decorative plasterwork in the country and reflects the pre-Revolutionary War wealth and gentry status of Fielding and Betty Lewis. The guided tour focuses on the Lewis family and the sacrifices it made to support the American cause during the War for Independence as well as how the Eighteenth-century furniture and accessories accurately depict the Lewis' gentry-level wealth. Don't forget to visit the Bissell Gallery inside the Crowninshield Building Visitor Center for the featured exhibit *Here's to the Ladies: A Century of Preservation at Historic Kenmore*. This exhibit commemorates the centennial of the saving of Kenmore, and the remarkable group of women who led the effort in 1922. Experience rarely-seen early 20th century pieces from Kenmore's collection. (<https://kenmore.org/visit-kenmore>)



As you exit Historic Kenmore via **Washington Avenue**, take in the beauty of one of Fredericksburg oldest neighborhoods from the comfort of your motorcoach. This wide tree-lined avenue is filled with monuments to great men and women, all with connections to George Washington.

The **Thomas Jefferson Religious Freedom Monument** commemorates Thomas Jefferson's drafting of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom which was completed in Fredericksburg. This statue inspired the First Amendment to the US Constitution and was incorporated into the Bill of Rights in 1789.

Throughout the later years of her life, Mary Washington loved to visit the area known as **"Meditation Rock."** This was a natural outcropping located along the Northwestern boundary of the Lewis estate, her daughter's home. Here she would reflect and pray. Upon her death she was buried here in accordance with her wishes. The specific location of her gravesite is unknown to this day, but the area is marked by a tall obelisk. In the early 1890s, the Mary Washington Memorial Associate was formed and they raised money to install a monument in her honor. The monument was unveiled in 1894 and was the first monument ever erected for a woman by women.



The **Hugh Mercer Monument** honors Dr. Hugh Mercer, a Scottish physician who fled Scotland after the Battle of Culloden in 1746. He came to Fredericksburg and established an apothecary shop in order to continue practicing medicine. He joined Washington's forces in 1775, rising to the ranks of brigadier general. He was gravely wounded at the Battle of Princeton where he died. General Hugh Mercer was the great-great-great grandfather of World War II four-star General George Patton.



4:30 PM

Take a guided tour of **Fredericksburg Masonic Lodge No. 4** (*Washington's Mother Lodge*), one of two Masonic Lodges of great importance to the life of George Washington. This Masonic Lodge is one of the oldest in the Americas and is considered one of the most historic in the world. George Washington became a member in 1752 and remained a member of the Lodge until his death in 1799. Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4 is in possession of several artifacts of historical value, including the Bible that George Washington took his Masonic obligations on, an original Gilbert Stuart painting of George Washington, three hand-crafted colonial Warden's chairs, a lock of Washington's hair, a punchbowl used during the visit of Washington and the Marquis de Lafayette to the Lodge in 1824, and a hand-written eulogy of Washington delivered to the lodge upon his death in 1799. (<https://masoniclodge4.org>)

6:00 PM

After a day filled with the family and friends of George Washington, conclude with dinner overlooking the Rappahannock River, a view that was very familiar to George. At **Brocks Riverside Grill**, enjoy American steak and seafood with a southwestern flair. Offering 3 full service bars, there is no shortage of specialty cocktails and tasty entrees to satisfy all cravings. (<https://brocksgrill.com>)

Day 3:

10:00 AM

Begin your group's final day in Fairfax County with a visit to **George Washington's Mount Vernon**, one of the nation's most beloved historic sites. Mount Vernon offers a glimpse into 18th century life through the restored 21- room mansion, beautiful gardens and grounds, intriguing museum and education center exhibits and immersive programs that honor George Washington's life and legacy. During our visit, enjoy a guided tour of the Mansion to learn about America's most visited historic home and see the "New Room," the grandest space in the house, the Key to the Bastille, given to Washington by the Marquis de Lafayette and many other Washington family artifacts and spaces. Don't miss the two-story porch that overlooks the Potomac River with an incomparable view! This is one of the Mansion's most iconic architectural features and was designed by Washington himself. Following your Mansion tour, explore the historic area comprised of more than a dozen historic outbuildings. In these outbuildings learn how the labor of more than 300 enslaved individuals made life possible for the Washington family. Lastly, visit the Tomb of George and Martha Washington, located in a gently wooded enclosure on the Mount Vernon grounds. (<https://www.mountvernon.org>)



Photo Courtesy of VTC/Sarah Hauser



Photo Courtesy of Mount Vernon

11:30 AM

Enjoy a mid-day break with lunch at the iconic **Mount Vernon Inn Restaurant**. Offering modern dining staples and a few colonial favorites, this dining experience will be sure to leave your group recharged and ready to continue their adventure. To enhance your dining experience, enjoy a visit from a costumed character from George Washington's world. First person interpreters can greet your group while you enjoy your meal at the Mount Vernon Inn. Imagine dining with Martha Washington!



Photo Courtesy of Mount Vernon



Photo Courtesy of Visit Fairfax

1:00 PM

Next, tour **George Washington's Distillery and Gristmill**. This fully functioning reconstruction of the original distillery and gristmill is located 2.7 miles from Mount Vernon's main entrance. In 1799, George Washington's distillery produced nearly 11,000 gallons, making it one of the largest whiskey distilleries in America. Today, the distillery produces small batch spirits on site using the same 18th century methods and recipes that Washington employed. On the guided tour you will get to see these features in action. Tastings are not included as a part of the tour, but products are available for purchase on-site, including George Washington's Signature Rye Whiskey, which in 2017 was named the Official State Spirit of the Commonwealth of Virginia.



3:00 PM

Finish up your sojourn into the life of George Washington by visiting the **George Washington Masonic National Memorial** in Alexandria. The Alexandria-Washington Lodge is the second most closely associated Lodge to George Washington. This is where he was elected Charter Master under the Grand Lodge of Virginia. Through the generosity of Washington's family and friends, the Alexandria-Washington Lodge became the repository of many artifacts pertaining to George Washington and the Washington family. However, a fire in 1871 destroyed much of the original lodge and artifacts. The current George Washington Masonic National Memorial was completed in 1970 and remains a lasting monument to George Washington, the Man, the Mason, and Father of our Country. (<https://gwmemorial.org>)



To conclude, have dinner on your own at one of the many restaurants in **Old Town Alexandria** before departing.



Looking for more ways to customize your itinerary? Consider the suggested additional stops below:

Stratford Hall – A National Historic Landmark located in Westmoreland County, Stratford Hall preserves the legacy of the Lee family and its surrounding community. It inspires an appreciation of America's past, and encourages commitment to the ideals of leadership, honor, independent thought, and civic responsibility. Established by Thomas Lee in the 1730s, Stratford Hall is one of the great houses of American history. Four generations of the Lee family passed through its stately doors including Richard Henry Lee and Francis Lightfoot Lee, the only two brothers to sign the Declaration of Independence, Revolutionary War hero "Light Horse Harry" Lee, and his son, Civil War General Robert E. Lee, who was born at Stratford Hall in 1807. At this site, learn about George Washington's connections to the Lee Family through military pursuits, family ties, and educational interests, which continues at Washington and Lee University in the twenty-first century. (stratfordhall.org)

Woodlawn Estate – Located, 5 miles from Mount Vernon, this 1805 Federal-style mansion has a pedigree reaching back to George Washington. It was a gift to Eleanor (Nelly) Park Custis, Martha Washington's granddaughter who was raised at Mount Vernon and her husband, Lawrence Lewis. George Washington helped design it on a parcel of his own property (George's estate stretched that far!), along with Dr. William Thornton, who designed the U.S. Capitol. The site was operated as a plantation where the couple enslaved over 90 people. The home is a National Historic Landmark and the first site ever owned and operated by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The Education Staff at Woodlawn are dedicated to filling in the gaps in the site's cultural heritage, especially the stories of the enslaved, Freed Black communities and their descendants. (woodlawnpopeleighey.com)

Gadsby's Tavern Museum – Located in Alexandria, Gadsby's Tavern Museum consists of two buildings, a ca. 1785 tavern and the 1792 City Tavern and Hotel. The young Republic began to take shape through the conversations and choices being made in these tavern spaces; the impacts of which are still being felt today. Named for Englishman John Gadsby who operated the buildings from 1796 to 1808, the tavern businesses were central to Alexandria's port-based economy, offering spaces to dine, entertain, and spend the night. A large, enslaved labor force made Gadsby's renowned hospitality possible. Notable patrons that enjoyed this hospitality included George and Martha Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and the Marquis de Lafayette. The most well-known event to take place at Gadsby's Tavern was the Birthnight Ball, which celebrated George Washington's birthday in 1798 and 1799. (www.alexandriava.gov/GadsbysTavern)

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