

A ROAD TRIP THROUGH VIRGINIA

Highlighting Abingdon, Staunton, Fredericksburg, and Alexandria

Day 1: Abingdon

Abingdon has been welcoming visitors for over 200 years. Named one of the Coolest Small Towns in America, this Blue Ridge Mountain town is rich in history, art and heritage music. Stroll the brick sidewalks of the downtown historic district, take in a show at the State Theatre of Virginia, or immerse yourself in the headquarters of the Crooked Road, Virginia's Heritage Music Trail. Abingdon is the perfect home base for an Appalachian adventure.



ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Take a private guided tour of The Birthplace of Country Music Museum, in nearby Bristol.
- See history in action at White's Mill, a 19th century grist mill, now fully restored. Take home some stoneground grits!
- See how backwoods militia men helped win the Revolutionary War at the Abingdon Muster Grounds, a National Park Service site.
- Make a pilgrimage to the nearby Carter Family Fold, the homeplace of the "first family of country music".
- Shop the exquisite heritage crafts for sale at the Southwest Virginia Cultural Center and Marketplace, and see an artisan working.



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See history come alive as a costumed character guides you through Abingdon's rich history, dating back to its founding in 1778. Enjoy lunch in one of Abingdon's 30 independently owned restaurants - we're the Best Small-Town Food Scene in the Country (2019 & 2020)!

After a wine-tasting on the idyllic riverside property of Abingdon Vineyards, you'll check in to the gracious Martha Washington Inn & Spa, a AAA 4-diamond resort property. Or, choose from one of Abingdon's 8 other properties, representing all major brands and price points.

Get hands-on with a make-and-take art project in the ArtLab at William King Museum of Art. Heritage crafts meet cutting-edge technology at this fine art museum. Explore the galleries devoted to contemporary and early Appalachian art, then head into the studio to create your own masterpiece.

Dine at the iconic Tavern Restaurant, built in 1778 and lovingly restored, while you're entertained with the authentic Appalachian sounds of old-time music.

Be sure to arrive early at the famous Barter Theatre to take in the luxury and history of the space. Founded in 1933, its actors originally bartered theatre tickets for food from local farmers. It went on to launch the careers of legends like Gregory Peck and Ernest Borgnine. Now, you can see Broadway-quality performances on two stages.

Head back to The Martha Washington Inn & Spa for your complimentary nightcap, which you can enjoy on the spacious verandah or in the cozy library by a roaring fire.

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A VIRGINIA ROAD TRIP: Abingdon, Staunton, Fredericksburg, and Alexandria

Day 2: City of Staunton

Staunton is a bustling mountain town with an eclectic vibe. With the scenic Blue Ridge Mountains as the backdrop, Staunton is often named one of the most celebrated “Main Streets” in the U.S. Staunton’s historic downtown delights visitors with its distinctive architecture, historic sites and vibrant arts & culture scene.



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With four distinct seasons, plan an unforgettable group trip—any time of year—to the heart of the Shenandoah Valley: Staunton, Virginia.

Just 20 miles from downtown Staunton lies the entrance to both the Blue Ridge Parkway and Shenandoah National Park. Start your day with a scenic drive, offering breathtaking mountain views and overlooks ideal for photo ops and picnics. They also provide access to a number of the area’s most popular hiking destinations for all ages and abilities.

Next, discover the life and legacy of the 28th President at the Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library and Museum. Take a guided tour of the Presbyterian Manse where Wilson was born. Next stop is the museum, which includes Wilson’s Pierce-Arrow limousine, an interactive World War I trench and seven exhibit galleries.

Explore downtown Staunton from the comfort of your bus, with a step-on guide, or go on a walking tour! Learn about the history and architecture of this award-winning “Main Street.”

Visit working farmsteads from Africa, England, Germany and Ireland as you learn about daily life of the Shenandoah Valley’s earliest settlers at the Frontier Culture Museum.

End the day with an award-winning performance at the Blackfriars Playhouse. The American Shakespeare Center produces a wide array of performances. Choose from: Shakespearean staples, contemporary works, and world premiere musicals. Arrive early for the pre-show concert; you don’t want to miss it!

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Led by a docent, tour the sanctuary of Staunton’s oldest church which includes twelve Louis Comfort Tiffany-stained glass windows.
- Join cheesemaker Louella Hill with a 101 on the basics of home cheesemaking complete with cheese and wine tasting.
- Watch live glassblowing demonstrations and “Blow Your Own Ornament” at Sunspots working studio and gift shop.
- Hop on the Shenandoah Beerwerks Trail with 19 craft breweries to try and each offering a unique experience.
- Step aboard Virginia’s newest rail excursion, the Virginia Scenic Railway. Sit back and enjoy the modernized ambiance of a 1940s passenger car through the legendary Shenandoah Valley and Blue Ridge Mountains.



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Day 3: Fredericksburg Region

The Fredericksburg Region is comprised of Fredericksburg, Stafford and Spotsylvania. See where George Washington grew up. Experience the 40-block historic district. Visit A. Smith Bowman distillery with award-winning small-batch spirits. Enjoy an evening at the Riverside Center for the Performing Arts boasting off-Broadway talent. Learn about an enslaved black man, John Washington, on the Trail to Freedom. Incorporate a Civil War battlefield into your schedule. New stories being developed: A Civil Rights Trail.



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Start with Trolley Tours of Fredericksburg, a 75-minute trolley tour, to see some of Old Town Fredericksburg's most historic sites and streets. Learn about the many famous and interesting people and events that have taken place since the city was established in 1728.

Head over to the Fredericksburg Battlefield Visitor Center to visit the exhibits and take a short walking tour of the Sunken Road, scene of the Battle of Fredericksburg. See the Innis House with bullet holes in the walls that date from the battle in December of 1862.

Take the Trail to Freedom walking tour to hear the story of John Washington, an enslaved black man who lived and worked in Fredericksburg and escaped across the Rappahannock River to the Union Army.

Allow time for lunch and shopping in the historic district with 50+ restaurants downtown to choose from. Specialty shops include chocolate, olive oil, books, gift and home décor as well as clothing boutiques.

Visit George Washington's Ferry Farm, a replica of what the Washington Family home may have looked like. The house is furnished and sits on the original foundations. At the age of 11, George inherited the plantation upon his father's death, and his mother, Mary Ball Washington, lived here until 1772 when George bought a house in Fredericksburg for her.

A. Smith Bowman Distillery has won multiple awards for their spirits. Groups to the area can experience a behind the scenes glimpse into the production of hand-crafted spirits. Tours explore the process of making bourbon, include a visit with Mary the still and end with a tasting and visit to the gift shop.



Victoria Matthews

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ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Shannon Air Museum is home to a collection of vintage aircraft including the only known surviving Vultee V-1A.
- Gari Melchers Home and Studio at Belmont is a richly furnished country house of American impressionist painter Gari Melchers.
- Additional Museums: Rising Sun Tavern, Hugh Mercer Apothecary, Mary Washington House, Kenmore, James Monroe Presidential Library and Fredericksburg Area Museum.
- Winner: 2019 Theater of the Year, Central Virginia, the Riverside Center for the Performing Arts features "Broadway Musicals" with dinner.
- Chancellorsville Battlefield took place in Spotsylvania County, April 1863 – May 1863, and is known for brilliant military maneuvers.

Day 4: Alexandria

Just five miles from Washington D.C. and an easy drive from major East Coast hubs, Alexandria, Virginia is the perfect spot for your next group tour. Named a Top 5 Best Small City in the U.S. 2020 by the Condé Nast Traveler Readers' Choice Awards, Alexandria offers a relaxed, walkable setting with a small-town feel, lots of history, and the amenities of a cosmopolitan city.



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Alexandria, recognized for its role in American history as George Washington's adopted hometown, and find an extraordinary backdrop for unique boutiques, award-winning dining, a bustling art scene at world famous sites like the Torpedo Factory Art Center, and vibrant nightlife nestled amidst a beautifully-preserved architectural landscape.

Experience the city's rich past and trace the steps of key figures in America's history as you wind through this insider itinerary, tasting and exploring extraordinary Alexandria.

The tour will begin at the Carlyle House, one of the grandest mansions in early Alexandria. Then move to the Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum, the colonist's pharmacy, and then stop for lunch at Gadsby's Tavern Museum, the local tavern frequented by America's first six presidents.

After lunch, explore the George Washington Masonic Memorial to view historic artifacts and take the elevator to the top for spectacular views of the Capital Region. Shop along King Street, then end the day at The Fish Market, a local favorite.



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ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Boat Tour on Potomac Riverboat Company.
- Do a Food Tour.
- Visit Port City Brewery.
- Shop Old Town Farmers Market in Market Square.
- Explore on a walking tour.