

# ***"Visiting America's Historic Triangle of Williamsburg, Jamestown And Yorktown In Virginia"***

***By Melody Wren, travel writer***



**For first-time visitors to the United States, Virginia is an ideal starting point to get an overview of American history.**

Recently I took my 10 year old granddaughter as she has never been to the United States. The trip was a blend of history, coastal culture, a visit to an enormous amusement park and outdoor adventures.

Along with my adult daughter, we started out with a thoroughly entertaining breakfast with singing Chef Greg at Kingsmill Resort before heading out to visit nearby Colonial Williamsburg on our first morning.



Naturally we started with a carriage ride, where much of the old town functions just as it did in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The baby-blue carriage was pulled by large horses named General and Brigadier who were coaxed through the character-filled village by driver, Nathan.

The wonderful ride immediately took us back in time far removed from busy modern streets. Costumed interpreters strolled through the village adding layers to the ambience. It's a prime movie set for Hallmark movies, and granddaughter Charlotte added that it gave her "Gilmour Girl vibes."

## **We joined Trish Thomas for an African America walking tour of Colonial Williamsburg.**

She shared dates and stories from the 1700's slave trading days to the George Washington era. As a master storyteller, she wove dates and personal stories from slaves together to create a detailed picture of the truth, the angles we don't often hear about of the history from that time period.

With her background of history and cultural anthropology, she shared information we would never hear anywhere else. She reads back copies of the Virginia runaway notices to glean information on the history of slaves and their personal stories.

As we walked past a historic garden filled with foxgloves in flower, Trish asked if we knew why they were called foxgloves. Celtic lore says that foxes wore the petals on their little paws to keep the dew off.

**After fueling** for the day at Mobjack Roasters, we headed next door for a walk through the Yorktown Battlefields where our guide, Celeste, gave us a detailed informative tour of the site of the last major battle of the Revolutionary War.

On that site, the decisive battle of the American Revolution in October 1781, was won by combined American and French forces. We touched cannon balls lodged into the side of local homes, saw the enormous Lady of Victory statue near the hill where the slaves were once walked from the arriving ship and marched down Main Street in chains towards the courthouse to be sold off.

**Yorktown is a small** thriving community despite the siege that formed the history and character surrounding it. The casual walking tour was filled with historic facts showing the lineage of the three towns.

## **Where to eat**

Everyone who visits the area talks about history and golfing but every visitor needs to know what a foodie paradise this area is. With seafood and fish fresh from Chesapeake Bay, we dined out royally on clam bake sandwiches, fish tacos, seared tuna and indulged in churros, key lime pie, coconut crême brûlée and some of the best homemade salad dressings this writer has ever tasted.

### **Kingsmill Resort**

**Eagle's Landing:** this casual bistro beside one of the four golf courses features a broad menu and an ideal place for lunch or dinner.

**Elements:** the breakfast buffet is a wonderful start to the day with an omelette bar where the delicious omelettes are tossed successfully high in the air and topped with loads of choices, pastries, fresh fruit and gluten free offerings. You might be lucky enough to have singing chef Greg entertain you over your omelettes.

**James Landing Grill:** onsite restaurant at Kingsmill Resort, overlooking the marina and James River, the casual friendly atmosphere and delicious seafood straight from Chesapeake Bay made it a memorable meal in many ways.

**Culture Cafe:** the creative decor captured our attention immediately. It's a place where people take shoes off and sit cross legged. A gathering of left wing millennials to eat together. Like the bar mosaics, the clients are colorful and unique. Grand-daughter devoured the Avocado smash burger and my daughter enthused about her shrimp tacos,

We then returned to Little York confectionery where handcrafted chocolates were recently added by Master confectioner, Valerie . She walked us through the process of developing recipes for and making the chocolates emphasizing the importance of using a thin layer as a “vessel to store the flavor.”

She learned how to make bonbons from one of the best bonbon confectionery chefs in the world to which a guest quipped, “I didn’t know bonbons were that serious.” We tasted Key Lime, Lemon Ganache, Earl Grey and peppermint patty chocolates, all tantalizing taste treats. With such richness and quality ingredients, a small taste is all you need.

**Jamestown Settlement** was an important part of America’s first permanent English colony. We started out with the brand new Ruth E. Carter exhibit that is on until December and not to be missed. A costume designer, her vision boards are on display with sketch pads, fabric swatches and photos that inspired her as well as life sized mannequins wearing her incredible creations from movies she has designed for including Shaft, Selma, The Butler, and a brand new Eddie Murphy movie.

Details on not only the fabrics but cuffs, buttons, shoes and hats are absolutely incredible. The lighting over the displays draws your eyes to where they are meant to be.

**Exhibits guided** us through the layers of history from December 1606 when ships carrying men left London arriving in Jamestown May 13, 1607. Jamestown was made up of Powhatans, English and West Central Africans from Angola. Many interactive displays emphasized the details.

Reconstructions of Powhatan shelters were open to walk into showing the rugged conditions they

afterwards sharing a freshly baked bear claw.

**Mobjack Bay** coffee roasters: having coffee and Bombolinis outside under a huge shade tree set the tone for our days experience in Yorktown. With the largest coast guard training center in the U.S. nearby, we saw many military people in full uniform enjoying the on-site made pastries.

The building was originally the Ferry Keeper’s house in the 1600’s and now belongs to the National Park. Owner, Celeste is carrying on the history as it was a woman owned business in the 1800’s. She and her husband Joe have built up the business including Yorktown Tours to revive the local community which is now thriving.

As they roast and ship coffee all over the U.S. next door the **Little York Confectionary** recently added hand crafted chocolate bonbons to the thriving business.

We spoke to Confectioner Valerie who walked us through the process of making and developing recipes for chocolates. She emphasized the importance of using a thin layer as “this vessel is to store the flavor” learned from one of the best bon bon confectionery chefs in the world to which @Stormy blue quipped “I didn’t know bonbons were that serious.”

We tasted Key Lime, Lemon Ganache, Earl Grey and Chocolate Peppermint patty chocolates, all tantalizing taste treats for the tongue. With such richness and quality ingredients, all you need is a

lived in. We then walked to the Jamestown pier where the replicas of three ships brought the journeys to life of the 71 men who lived onboard in 1607 for the long six months travel to Jamestown. We also explored the recreated Powhatan Indian village plus the colonists' fort.

**The American Revolution** Museum illustrates the stories of the Nation's founding from the twilight of the colonial period to the dawn of the Constitution and beyond. Galleries exhibit period artifacts, immersive environments and we were all captivated by the film "Siege of Yorktown" with 180 degree surround screen and dramatic special effects.

We truly were immersed and felt as if we were on the front line with deafening gunshots, smoke billowing near our seats and costumed actors on the screen acting in character authentically. The outdoor area features recreations of camp life, cooking where we learned about the life of a soldier with demonstrations. Frequent firings of a flintlock musket are guaranteed to startle anyone.

It seemed an appropriate end to the day to take a scenic sail with **Yorktown Sailing Charters** on the York River with Captain Eric and his crew on a 75' sailboat for a relaxing sunset sail with a warm wind at our backs, while a crew member taught my granddaughter the ropes.

We sailed under the Coleman Bridge, the largest double swing bridge in the U.S. and second largest in the world. A perfect ending to a day steeped in history.

A multi-generational trip needs to include adventure and fun for all layers and embracing a tree top adventure at **Go Ape** was just that.

We were challenged by the Tree top adventure with high wires to balance on, rope ladders and

small taste. There were vegan and dairy free options.

**Lunch at Barrett's** seafood restaurant and tap house grill: fresh from Chesapeake Bay the crab cake sandwiches on English muffins were a treat as was the seared tuna. Centrally located--stay parked in the long term parking lot and explore nearby Merchants Square for quirky character filled shops including bookstores, one of a kind jewellery shops and home accessories stores that had me swooning.

**Water St. Grill:** sitting on an outdoor patio, we enjoyed a view of York River and the Coleman Bridge, the only operating side draw bridges in the world. The extensive menu made it difficult to choose, but the Mahi Mahi tacos turned out to be an exceptional choice.

**Food for Thought:** the creative surroundings set the tone with conversation cards on each table promote thought provoking talks during your meal. Inspiring quotes line colorful walls punctuated by large letters dangling randomly, delicious lunch with attention to dietary needs.

Homemade dressings were delicious with the raspberry vinaigrette being the best I've ever tasted thanks to rice wine vinegar and fresh raspberries. Wonderful vegan and vegetarian options. A family vote concluded that if we return we would choose to return to Food for

narrow walkways followed by a zipline to the ground.

Levels 1-3 can be done as many times as you want within your allotted hour. Once you are shown the ropes (literally) you are left to your own devices. Ten year old Charlotte shone and was unstoppable leaping from wire to walkway saying "I'm scared but I love it" choosing to do each course repeatedly.

**Busch Gardens** injected more fun mixed with massive screaming. As the world's most beautiful theme park with a European theme, it's divided into countries to make navigating easier which also helped by downloading the app before a visit.

Take the tram from parking lots to the main park and choose your rides with over 100 amusement rides. We started with the Battering Ram which is an enormous ship that swung back and forth going higher and higher, stomachs plummeting along the way.

The rides got more intense as we went along. A train will take you from one country's choices to another visiting areas of England, Scotland and France to another. Several of them contain restaurants and public washrooms are plentiful. There is live entertainment and many of the rides are geared for smaller children giving choices to every layer of the family.

**For 10 year old** grand- daughter Charlotte's first visit to the United States, she was able to discover why our past isn't just important but it's unforgettable thanks to authentic learning and experiences from historic experts.

She also learned that learning can be fun, immersive which we mixed it up with a lot of fun adventures including sailing, zip lining, a tree top obstacle course and experimenting with new culinary delights including her first time trying

Thought first as one of the best meals we had.

***Water Street Grille at Riverwalk:*** we dined outdoors with a fabulous view of Coleman Bridge and the York River indulging in Mahi Mahi tacos with enormous side of chips, a thoroughly delicious meal.

### **Where to stay**

Where you stay has a huge impact on your holiday.

**Kingsmill resort** gave us an ideal base to relax and feel at home in with an ideal location to explore nearby Williamsburg, Yorktown and Jamestown.

Our luxurious four bedroom cottage was filled with all the comforts of home. All the bedrooms were all en-suite with a full kitchen and four balconies overlooking the James River. Our mascots for the week were two bald eagles who stayed in a picturesque tree outside.

**We managed to eat** at all of the onsite restaurants and enjoy the gym, the indoor and outdoor pool and admired the golf courses and walking trails. Three golf courses set it apart from other resorts bringing snowbirds from Canada for the entire season as golfing is available year round. Three pools including one large indoor, one outdoor and the River Pool with an enormous lazy river.

Whispers of luxury and abundance were clear, and Gabi, the marketing manager gave us a tour first by walking then by golf cart necessitated by the sheer size of the grounds, sprawling over 3,000 acres.

grits, Churros and crab cakes. She now has added “Y’all” to her daily conversations.



**Melody Wren is a regular contributor to online and print outlets around the world, including the Independent, Readers Digest, Fodor’s Travel, CAA, Inspired Seniors, ActiveOver50, Explore Magazine and Canadian Traveller.**

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Fronting onto the James River which is so wide it looks like an ocean but it flows into Chesapeake Bay which then flows into the Atlantic ocean.

**Anhauser Busch** had the property as his playground over 50 years ago and had the resort built on over 3,000 acres and built Busch gardens nearby. It’s natural that it hosts many conferences and outdoor weddings under trees beside the James River filling the dreams of many couples.

The newly renovated gym has with over 193 pieces

of equipment and has spectacular river views. Meditation and yoga classes will be held outdoors. There are also 14 tennis courts, pickle ball courts and many walking trails.

Overlooking the brackish James River, the onsite marina rents kayaks, paddle boards and pontoon boats.

Dog friendly, this resort brings golfers and snowbirds who enjoy warm weather year round. It’s an ideal location to explore nearby Colonial Williamsburg, Yorktown and Jamestown and return to the comfort of home at the end of the day.



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