

The Man Getting Metro
Back on Track p. 56

Nearby Small Towns With
Holiday Spirit p. 206

Why We're Buried in
Political Texts p. 64

WASHINGTONIAN

Our annual
ranking of **the
area's best
physicians**,
chosen by
their peers.
Did your
doctor
make
the list?

Top Doctors

Physicians
Amjad Nasr Anaizi,
Chi-Tsui Vivian
Liang, and
Latoya Edwards

NOVEMBER 2024 \$5.95





Williamsburg gets decked out for the season.

Tinsel Towns

Celebrate the holidays in these charming destinations with festive shops

By Nevin Martell

MIDDLEBURG

Distance from DC: 45 miles.

This equestrian town sparkles with a merry lineup of festivities. Visitors can watch *The Nutcracker* at Middleburg Community Center (November 17), dine with Santa at Middleburg Community Charter School (December 7), and listen to carolers at the Jingle Jam (December 11 and 18). Riders in red coats are accompanied by hounds

for the annual “hunt review” on December 7, and canines get the spotlight at the National Sporting Library & Museum’s holiday dog parade on December 21.

WHERE TO SHOP: The Christmas Sleigh (5-A E. Washington St.) is stocked floor to ceiling with European imports, from hand-blown glass ornaments and glittered Advent calendars to scene-stealing nutcrackers and traditional German and Austrian clothing, including dirndls and lederhosen.

WILLIAMSBURG

Distance from DC: 152 miles.

The Yuletide vibe lasts for weeks in this history-rich city. At Christmas Town in Busch Gardens, millions of twinkling lights cast a cheery glow on holiday-inspired eats, rides, and roller coasters (November 15 through January 5). Warm up with a mug of hot cider on the banks of the York River as the boat parade shimmers by (December 7) or marvel at the Grand Illuminations fireworks over Colonial Williamsburg, accompanied by concerts on the streets below (December 7, 14, and 21).

WHERE TO SHOP: Bring home some bling

for your tree from the Christmas Shop (405 W. Duke of Gloucester St.), offering locally made Williamsburg-themed ornaments plus nutcrackers, German-made incense smokers, and collectible figurines.

HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA

Distance from DC: 130 miles.

Sweet teeth will relish Winter Wonderfest’s Cookie Tour (December 7), a carb crawl visiting about a dozen bakeries across the decked-out Shenandoah Valley town. After indulging, explore the rest of the Wonderfest programming by riding in a horse-drawn carriage, saying hello to Santa, and enjoying the tree lighting and holiday parade. Close out your visit by voting in the gingerbread-house competition.

WHERE TO SHOP: Go full-out festive at the Snow and Ice Christmas and Gift Store (4080 Evelyn Byrd Ave.), a sprawling emporium bursting with wreaths, trees, lights, figurines, ornaments, and holiday flags.

SMITHFIELD, VIRGINIA

Distance from DC: 178 miles.

Christmas in this ham-obsessed burg starts

Find hand-painted German ornaments at the Christmas Sleigh.



Shop artisanal gifts at the Christmas Store in Smithfield.



Bethlehem, a.k.a. Christmas City USA

with the tree lighting in Main Street Square, complemented by musical performances (November 22). Stock up on presents at the Mistletoe Marketplace (November 23), featuring more than 80 vendors along Main, or try the buzzy Yuletide Spirits Holiday Market (November 30) at Blue Sky Distillery, with 45 sellers, live music, and a visit from Saint Nick.

WHERE TO SHOP: Explore 5,000 square feet of decor at the Christmas Store (108 Main St.), home to a massive selection of glass ornaments as well as artisan-crafted angels and snowmen.

GARRETT COUNTY, MARYLAND

Distance from DC: 174 miles.

In the state's northwestern corner, this outdoor-rec destination embraces the Christmas spirit across its small towns,

starting with the Festival of Trees at the Garrett County Fairground (November 29 and 30), where you can wander through a forest of adorned trees, centerpieces, and wreaths created by local designers. Grantsville's "Christmas in the Village" (December 6 and 7) includes a tree lighting, live music, and children's art workshops, while Oakland's "A Great Small Town Christmas" (December 14) features sleigh rides, treats from Santa, and a shoppers' stroll.

WHERE TO SHOP: Chockablock with cheer, the Christmas Chalet (19895 Garrett Hwy., Oakland) brims with Nativity sets, aromatic candles, Elf on the Shelf memorabilia, festive figurines, and ornaments inspired by scenic Deep Creek Lake.

BETHLEHEM, PENNSYLVANIA

Distance from DC: 195 miles.

The town known as Christmas City USA

is abuzz in the weeks leading up to the big day, starting with Christkindlmarkt (November 15 through December 22), a market showcasing artisan-made crafts. Next up: the high-spirited Annual Holiday Cocktail Trail (November 16 and 23) and cozy carriage rides to see the lights (November 17 through January 13). At Central Moravian Church, take in the traditional "putz," a Nativity scene featuring carved figurines in a bucolic setting forged from moss, rocks, and driftwood (November 29 through December 31).

WHERE TO SHOP: You'll think you've reached the North Pole when visiting Dear Santa (458 Main St.), a chic boutique offering attention-grabbing ornaments, Moravian stars, and nostalgic holiday decor. Bring kids to visit Father Christmas in his workshop to make toys, decorate cookies, and paint ornaments. **W**