Local charm, cozy curios and open arms make these small towns in Virginia worth exploring.

WRITTEN BY MARY & BILL BURNHAM

Hotel Weyanoke—Farmville

The phrase “small towns” evokes nostalgia, authenticity and heartfelt warmth in many of us. What’s not to love? They are authentic, accessible, friendly and stocked with locally-owned businesses. These are communities where you can get off the crowded highway, park the car and walk, ride a bike or even kayak through downtown. Small, family-run businesses offer one-of-a-kind handmade items, from jewelry and art to craft beers and wine. Farmers markets offer locally-grown produce and seafood spring through fall. With almost 200 incorporated towns, dozens more villages and hamlets, plus nearly 30 designated Virginia Main Street Communities, the hard part is deciding which Virginia towns to visit.
Harrisonburg
Set amongst the vast playground of the idyllic Shenandoah Valley, Harrisonburg has been called “one of the best mountain bike towns in America” by National Geographic.

Forward-thinking entrepreneurs and artisans have blended the past with the present to create a lively melting pot that is distinctive to this college town.

Named Virginia’s first Culinary District in 2014, Harrisonburg’s cultural diversity serves up fare from around the world, while taking advantage of locally-sourced farm-to-table ingredients.


The arts scene is equally diverse, epitomized by the Agora Downtown Market, a community of small businesses under one roof in an historic building.

Named for James Madison, fourth president and the “Father of the Constitution,” are the stunning Hotel Madison and James Madison University (JMU), where nearly 20,000 students lend a youthful vitality to this historic town.

Fun Festival: Harrisonburg International Festival, September

Farmville
This formerly industrial town has been reinvented for recreation, craft beverage and shopping lovers.

The Appomattox River that once carried tobacco barges is now a designated Scenic River carrying paddlers in search of whitewater or the calmer four-mile Farmville Blueway.

The railroad that once carried coal now carries hikers, bikers and equestrians on the 30-mile-long High Bridge Trail State Park.

Repurposed tobacco packing houses and lumber warehouses are reincarnated to house Appomattox River Company, Green Front Furniture and the Third Street Brewing Company, serving up local beer, live music, games for the kids and a pet-friendly beer garden.

Together with the Virginia Tasting Cellar and the soon-to-open second location of James River Brewing, Farmville is fast becoming a destination for craft beverage lovers.

Fun Festival: Heart of Virginia Festival, May

Big Stone Gap
Southwest Virginia’s coal-mining history comes to life in the “Trail of the Lonesome Pine,” Virginia’s longest-running outdoor drama, performed Thursday through Saturday nights, late June through August.

Before you go, be sure to read the Big Stone Gap novels by Adriana Trigiani, or watch the Hollywood film by the same name starring Ashley Judd and Whoopi Goldberg.

Upon arrival, you can visit places featured in the film, such as Mutual Pharmacy, the Book Mobile, the Farmers Market, as well as the outdoor drama.

Fine, well-preserved period homes house The John Fox Jr. Museum, the Southwest Virginia Museum and the June Tolliver House. Cozy B&Bs, cafes and a variety of antique and curio shops round out this small town gem.

Fun Festival: 100th annual Tri State Singing Convention, June

Here are some of our favorites, starting in southwest Virginia, and ending with a shameless plug for our hometown on the Eastern Shore.

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ROANOKE’S HISTORIC GRANDIN VILLAGE
This walkable urban village is eclectic and family-friendly at the same time. Spend Saturday morning at the Community Market, dine on an outdoor patio, shop independently-owned boutiques and take in a first-run or classic film at the 1930s Grandin Theatre.

CLARKSVILLE
Immerse yourself in Virginia’s Lake Country at Virginia’s only lakeside town. Buggs Island Lake, also known as Kerr Reservoir, draws anglers to dozens of fishing tournaments yearly, and the annual Hydroplane Challenge fast boat race.

Stay in style at Cooper’s Landing Inn and Traveler’s Tavern, or a bit more rustic in a lakefront cabin at Occoneechee State Park.

The craft beverage scene is brewing with Buggs Island Brewing Company. At Three Sisters of Shiny Rock, the three Powell sisters are reviving Native American grape-growing such as Muscadine and Scuppernong. (Open Saturdays only and by appointment other days.)

Fun Festival: Virginia Lake Festival, July

FLOYD
Back-to-the-earth bohemian blends with traditional bluegrass in this town of less than 500, but with as much to offer. Along Virginia’s Crooked Road Music Trail, The Floyd Country Store hosts jam sessions and performances. Just like in days gone by, the Country Store is the heart of town, boasting Friday Night Jamborees and square dancing sessions and selling all the things you’d expect from a country store (and some that you wouldn’t!), from local preserves to suspenders.

Surrounding town is the expanse of the Blue Ridge Mountains, offering a spectacular view of the mountains and valleys. The Blue Ridge Parkway and scenic drives await along the 469-mile route.

Onancock
With five miles of sheltered waterway leading to the Chesapeake Bay, it’s no wonder Onancock has been an active port on the Eastern Shore since 1680. Today you can take a sailing or motorboat excursion, rent a kayak or paddleboard to hop the ferry to Tangier Island, or catch a world-class concert at The Wharf.

The craft beverage scene is brewing with Onancock Distillery. Visit the artist studios at the Onancock School, the Federal-period Onancock School, or the newly opened Ker School House Museum. Surrounded by the shimmery waters of Onancock Creek, you can enjoy some of the best seafood restaurants that Onancock has to offer.

Fun Festival: Onancock Blue Ridge Blues Bash, July

Lis’s Bench to watch the fishing boats come and go and the osprey and great blue heron feed.

Visit the artist studios at the Historic Onancock School, the Federal-period War Place House Museum or the newly opened Samuel Outlaw Blacksmith Shop.

LUXURIOUS B&Bs housed in Victorian beauties, an eclectic dining scene, from Irish pub fare to Thai fusion, live theatre and an old-fashioned movie house showing first-run films promise that Onancock will not disappoint.

Fun Festival: Ice Cream Social and Patriotic Band Concert, July

Virginia is for Lovers.
As a single mother balancing work, school and family, Latisha Boone wanted a budget-friendly getaway with her daughter. What better way to explore Virginia than with a LOVEworks journey for quality family fun and adventure? Latisha and Jai have now “Love Toured” the entire state three times, visiting more than 200 LOVEworks!

Q. What prompted you to start visiting the LOVEworks?
A. Our #LoveVA journey started in February 2017. Valentine’s Day was approaching and I recalled always wanting to stop to take pictures with the LOVEwork at the East Coast Gateway Welcome Center in New Kent; we’d driven past it several times in our travels, but never had time to stop. I looked up its address for a future visit and discovered there were many other LOVEworks all over the state. Our first LOVEwork road trip, nicknamed “Love Tours,” started with a local tour of several LOVEs near our home in Hampton Roads. From there, we visited each region until we eventually explored the entire state.

Q. Have you met anyone new on your Love Tours?
A. Meeting locals has been our favorite part of this journey because they’ve taught us so much about their communities. Everyone we’ve encountered along the way has been welcoming and intrigued by our journey. We’ve met fellow LOVE travelers through social media who have been part of our journey from the start and become like family to us, sharing a love of our beautiful state.

Q. Have you discovered anything unexpected while visiting a LOVE?
A. Visiting LOVEworks has uncovered many hidden gems around the state. As a “Mountain Lover,” my favorite is Powell Valley Overlook. It is one of the most beautiful mountain overlooks – and doesn’t require a hike or driving up a mountain! I always plan a stop there when I’m in Southwest Virginia. Jai’s favorite is definitely the delicious popcorn at Northern Neck Popcorn in Kilmarnock. She’s the “Food Lover” in our family.

Q. What are your three favorite LOVEs?
A. Beagle Ridge Herb Farm (Wytheville), Silver Hearth Lodge (Bent Mountain) and Liberty Hill Farm (Somerset) will always be our favorite LOVEworks. We cherish our time spent at these LOVEworks the most because of their amazing owners. We were welcomed with open arms and spent hours chatting with them. Each owner made our visit memorable and we will always appreciate their kindness. We left those visits feeling as if we have friends for life in Ellen, Bob and Farmer Kent. Not only did we find LOVE at their locations, but we also experienced it through them.

Q. How have you and Jai grown as a result of your travels?
A. Jai and I developed a stronger bond over the past two years as a result of our #LoveVA journey. We’ve discovered more of each other’s interests and aspirations through our explorations of Virginia. LOVE encouraged us to take risks and be adventurous. Now we feel we can take on any challenge that comes our way!

Q. Last summer, you took a week-long trip to visit more than 30 LOVEs. What were some highlights from this trip?
A. The scenic mountain views, friendly and welcoming locals, stunning lodging accommodations and kindness of LOVEwork owners! I highly recommend taking a week or more of vacation to Love Tour in Southwest Virginia. Every visit to a LOVEwork there will inspire you to experience more of that well-known Virginia charm.
LOVE VIRGINIA BEACH. ALL YEAR.

The recipe for our culinary scene is born from the rich culture of our surroundings. Come get a taste of the good life, straight from the hands of the people who grow, catch and brew the best of what we have to offer.
GET AWAY AND RELAX

Virginia has long been acclaimed for its history and outdoor beauty. But tucked among these iconic sites and sweeping vistas is a lesser-known wellness scene where visitors and Virginians alike can unplug and unwind.

HISTORIC GETAWAY
Hot Springs, VA

Neatled in the northwest region of the state is Hot Springs, where The Homestead can be found. Fit for the ultimate luxury vacation, this historic resort has hosted 23 United States presidents, and provides guests with enchanting views of Virginia landscape and a full-service spa. The spa offerings are like none other, as services are completed using the mineral-enriched water from the surrounding Hot Springs area. Following a salt stone therapy massage, guests can relax in natural-body-temperature, mineral-rich water in the Octagon pool, which dates back to the 19th century, all while taking in the resort’s breathtaking views. For an indoor luxury experience, spa guests may visit the nascent Aqua Thermal Suite, a collection of European-style healing aquatic environments which combines “heat and cool therapy” for relaxation. Lounge, soak, let go.

At Left: Eupepsia Wellness Center

THOUGH OUR ROOTS RUN DEEP IN TRADITION, OUR SELF-CARE AND WELLNESS PRACTICES HAVE EVOLVED WITH THE TIMES – ALL WHILE MAINTAINING THAT CLASSIC VIRGINIA TWIST. FOLLOW THIS GUIDE FOR YOUR IDEAL GETAWAY TO RELAX, RECENTER AND RECONNECT.

WRITTEN BY SYDNEY E. LAKE
TREETOP ESCAPE
Blue Ridge Mountains, VA
For the ultimate stargazing experience, look no further than Primland, the Blue Ridge Mountains resort where an unmatched treetop experience can be found. Condé Nast Traveler ranked this hidden gem on its Gold List of the “Top 100 Resorts and Hotels in the World,” so this elevated experience — literally and figuratively — takes the idea of glamping to a lavish next level. Guests may choose from luxury treehouses or lodge accommodations perched on the 12,000-acre land. Nature walks, massages and horseback riding are popular daytime activities at Primland, while stargazing and peaceful sleeping are just two of the calming nighttime expectations. This observatory experience is like no other, and is the perfect way to allow your own thoughts to melt away before a long night of sleep. Primland’s spa offers exclusive treatments inspired by Native American healing rituals and European spa techniques, utilizing only the finest organic products and essential oils. Inhale, exhale, gaze.

RECHARGE AND RECONNECT
Appalachian Mountains, VA
Escape from the hustle and bustle of day-to-day life in the Appalachian Mountains, just west of Roanoke in southwest Virginia. Here, the Eupepsia Wellness Center is home to an array of self-care plans, providing the ideal atmosphere to truly relax. Of their many health retreats, Eupepsia offers wellness retreats designed for guests to detox, rejuvenate and renew. Strengthen your mind-body connection through yoga and meditation classes, or educate yourself about wellness at one of the many workshops hosted at the vast 256-acre resort. Fitness may also be a focus of your stay, where you can exercise inside with a personal trainer, or go hiking or whitewater rafting in the surrounding Appalachian Mountains. Complete your stay with hydrotherapy or hot stone therapy at the wellness spa. Care, breathe, feed.

SOUTHERN CHARM
South Boston, VA
Just near the southern border of the state sits Berry Hill Resort, a former antebellum estate turned premiere resort venue. Only a short stretch from Richmond and Lynchburg, Berry Hill is the perfect place to escape for European-quality spa services such as massages, body treatments, facials and more — including monthly specials such as detoxifying avocado body wraps and Swedish massages. There’s even a curated gentlemen’s spa menu! While in South Boston, visitors can imbibe some of Virginia’s fine wine on the Southern Virginia Wine Trail, or expend some energy either hiking or biking the surrounding trails. Energize, restore, escape.

COASTAL ELEGANCE
Virginia Beach, VA
Coastal Virginia is a breathtaking year-round destination. Enjoy a beach holiday with the changing of seasons at The Cavalier, located on the Virginia Beach Oceanfront. Kick off your relaxing getaway at the hotel distillery, Tarnished Truth, with samples of their signature bourbon, rye whiskey and AVA Vodka. Or soak in your spirits with the Bourbon Tea nutria-Body Wrap at the spa, designed to leave skin soft and moisturized. For a more secluded beach experience, venture to nearby Sandbridge. If waking up early doesn’t cramp your vacation style, it’s well worth the early alarm to view the sunrise over the pristine sand dunes. Absorb, view, savor.
SPONSORED CONTENT

TASTE
Sip a summery Seyval Blanc – a Michelle Obama favorite – in a rustic-chic oak-paneled tasting room in Middleburg hunt country, or sample classy French-style Bordeaux blends at a mountain-top winery outside Leesburg. Earthy Nebbiolo and Cabernet Francs hold sway in a Tuscan-style villa near the Potomac River to the north, while award-winning rosés are created by an all-women vintner team on a historic farm outside Purcellville.

LOUDOUN COUNTY IS THE EAST COAST’S NAPA VALLEY, ITS TUMBLING HILLS AND LUSH SLOPES HOME TO SCORES OF BOUTIQUE WINERIES AND TASTING ROOMS, ALL IN SPECTACULAR SETTINGS. THERE’S NEVER BEEN A BETTER TIME TO SPEND A WEEKEND IN DC’S WINE COUNTRY.

TOUR
There’s more to wine country than sampling fine vintages. Unique winery-based experiences include barrel tastings (blend and label your own bottle), vine-to-glass tours, romantic horse-drawn carriage rides through the trellises and frequent live jazz and classical music concerts. If you need an energy boost, take a yoga class – Vinyasa in the Vines – your mountain pose enhanced by breathtaking Piedmont panoramas.

FEAST
Loudoun’s family farms provide bountiful fresh produce to our wineries – goat cheese, charcuterie, fresh breads – often complemented by visits from oyster shuckers or guest chefs. But you don’t have to be at a winery to enjoy farm-to-table cuisine. Pair a Loudoun Viognier with a foraged mushroom bruschetta on King Street, Leesburg’s restaurant row; enjoy Potomac views over a glass of Petit Verdot in a hillside gastronomic hideaway; or hunker down in a hunt country bistro over a velvety Cabernet Franc and a grass-fed steak.

EXPLORE
Take a break from all the vino and explore Loudoun’s historic downtowns and villages. Middleburg, the heart of horse and hunt country, is where Jackie O loved to go riding, while Leesburg’s three-acre Dodona Manor was home to statesman General George C. Marshall of the Marshall Plan fame. Learn about Quakers and Revolutionary-era architecture in historic Waterford (Est. 1733), and the Germans who settled beer-friendly Lovettsville nearby. End with a hike at Bear’s Den above charming Bluemont, with imperious Shenandoah River views to the west.

STAY
Check into a boutique B&B or stone cottage, waking to the best vineyard views this side of Tuscany. Of the two swanky Loudoun resorts, one offers a Cabernet Crush vinotherapy spa treatment, the other a Cabernet Cacao Manicure. Wine, wine everywhere!

Carefully crafted beverages, from our land to your hand

Enjoy DC’s Wine Country
Explore more than 40 wineries and tasting rooms on rolling hills and cliff-edged slopes, with wines as sumptuous as the Vognier vineyard views.

Hop onto the LoCo Ale Trail
With 35 breweries and counting, Loudoun is one of the most vibrant craft beer destinations in the US, but with a diversity of settings no other region can match.

Discover Loudoun Cider & Spirits
Loudoun’s cideries highlight the abundance of fresh local produce while our distilleries produce spirits fine enough to be sipped, or perfectly blended into your favorite cocktail.

LOUDOUN
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24 VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS
Nothing expresses a “sense of place” like well-made wine – especially here in Virginia, where more than 300 wineries and 3,800 acres of sweeping vineyard views reflect the fruit of a 400-year experiment.

Today’s winemakers are a community of artisans obsessed with expressing their land – drawing out the story in every vine and vintage and crafting wines that embody the grace, grit and experimental spirit of the Commonwealth.

What’s happening here is bigger than a drink. It’s a way to reconnect – with the land, the locals, our loved ones and ourselves.

And if you ask us, that’s worth raising a glass to.

WITH THE BREAK
OF A BUD,
AN ADVENTURE BEGINS...
WRITTEN BY GINGER WARDER, AUTHOR OF “FIDO’S VIRGINIA”

FIDO

Fun With

From the mountains to the sea, Virginia rolls out the red carpet for its four-legged visitors.

FIVE OF MY FAVORITE THINGS TO DO

Long summer days are perfect for exploring the Monticello Wine Trail in Virginia’s Piedmont region near Charlottesville, and Sundays are fun days for Fido. Include a stop by Keswick Vineyards for its Sunday Yappy Hour, where the fenced, off-leash dog park makes it easy for both you and your pooch to socialize. Or head to Southwest Virginia to Chateau Morrisette — literally called the winery that dogs built — where pups are welcome in the tasting room, on the restaurant balcony and in the courtyard for the winery’s free Sunday music series. While you’re in Virginia’s Blue Ridge, pop into Black Dog Salvage in Roanoke for a little upcycle shopping and meet the human and canine stars of D.I.Y. Network’s Salvage Dawgs. To cool off, I like to head for the water.

In Alexandria, dogs ride free on the Potomac Riverboat Company’s Canine Cruise, a great way to see the city from a different perspective. Or if you’re craving sand between your toes — and paws — head to Virginia Beach. Dogs can play on the north end of Virginia Beach before 10 a.m. and after 6 p.m. during the summer season and are allowed on the public beaches and boardwalk at any time after Labor Day and before Memorial Day. Cape Charles on the Eastern Shore offers the Sandy Paws off-leash dog beach, as well as a beachside dog park.

Pictured: Alexandria Waterfront

TODD WRIGHT

VIRGINIA.ORG

28 VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS
A stroll down Colonial Williamsburg’s is more than a century. Check out the local legend of the black cast iron dog along the banks of the James River. Best Dog Walks

For history hounds – both the two-legged and four-legged species – Northern Virginia, Richmond and the Historic Triangle combine great dog walks with the rich history of our country.

Founding father George Washington was a dog lover – and the inspiration for choosing the American Foxhound as Virginia’s state dog – so it’s no surprise that his historic estate, Mount Vernon, welcomes canine guests on the grounds. You and your pal can literally “smell the roses” in the four gardens on the estate, visit the animals on Pioneer Farm or take a stroll along the river and the wharf. On Saturdays in May and October, Mount Vernon offers a special guided walking tour called All the President’s Pups. The 1.25-mile tour gives detailed insight into canine life on the plantation, Washington’s great love of dogs and his breeding program to improve the quality of his hunting hounds.

Richmond is not only the capital of Virginia, but also a capital city for canines. Five-Woof Stays

Nicknamed the “mother of presidents,” Virginia offers presidential-worthy stays for its furry visitors too, from elegant urban hotels to country estates and river retreats. In Northern Virginia, rest your paws at the Kimpton Lorien Hotel & Spa in Alexandria. With no size or breed restrictions, this luxury boutique hotel welcomes its visitors with pet pillows and beds, food and water bowls, and other fine foods. The hotel’s motto is “all pets that fit through the front door are welcome,” including cats, birds and even reptiles.

For Gilded Age luxury combined with stellar service and gracious Southern hospitality, the Stonewall Jackson Hotel also loves animals and welcomes dogs with no weight or size limits to enjoy this elegantly restored 1928 gem. Located in the heart of downtown Staunton within walking distance of the shops, restaurants and the Woodrow Wilson Birthplace. The beloved president grew up with a greyhound named Mountain Boy and brought his love of animals to the White House, where he kept a herd of sheep to keep the lawn trimmed. The Stonewall Jackson Hotel also loves animals and welcomes dogs with no weight or size limits to enjoy this elegantly restored 1928 gem.

In fact, the estate’s mascot is a miniature horse named Cupcake, who welcomes guests for cocktails in the Living Room during happy hour on Fridays and Saturdays. This 340-acre estate features an equestrian center, luxurious spa and an array of onsite activities. Pets’ welcome amenities including comfy beds, food and water bowls and organic treats – and the resort literally rolls out the red carpet for canine guests, with a “pup-arazzi” area at the entrance for photo ops.

If you’re looking for an outdoor adventure with your pooch, Virginia has you covered! All of our state parks are pet-friendly, and many offer camping and other accommodations. In addition to park cabins, however, some unique hidden gems can be found all across the Commonwealth of Virginia. If your pooch prefers hiking on flatter terrain, head to the Eastern Shore to check out the pet friendly Kiptopeke Mill State Park for miles of hiking trails and a special dog beach that allows leashed pups.

Outdoor recreation for canines includes five diamonds, hosting the glitterati from presidents and movie stars to “The King of Rock and Roll.” There is no weight or size limit and the front desk always has gourmet treats on hand for their special furry guests.

Need a dog walker or groomer? No problem! The concierge can arrange it for you. Located in the heart of horse and wine country in Middleburg, the Salamander Resort and Spa not only welcomes dogs – you can even bring your horse! In fact, the estate’s mascot is a miniature horse named Cupcake, who welcomes guests for cocktails in the Living Room during happy hour on Fridays and Saturdays. This 340-acre estate features an equestrian center, luxurious spa and an array of onsite activities. Pets’ welcome amenities including comfy beds, food and water bowls and organic treats – and the resort literally rolls out the red carpet for canine guests, with a “pup-arazzi” area at the entrance for photo ops.

If your dog is an “outward hound” who prefers mountain trails, head to Shenandoah National Park for a hike through the national park’s archetypical dog trails through the black cast iron dog that has guarded the Reese family for more than a century.

For a glimpse into the beginnings of our country, head to the Historic Triangle. A stroll down Colonial Williamsburg’s Duke of Gloucester Street – appropriately nicknamed Dog Street – will make you feel like a time traveler, while a stroll through the archaeological dog at Historic Jamestowne will transport you to the early days of the first permanent settlement in the New World.

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Welcome to All

COMPiled by Wirt ConFOry

Virginia is truly a state for all lovers, including the LGBTQ+ community. Here are just a few of the small towns that can’t wait to meet you; visit blog.virginia.org/lgbtfaves to discover even more!

Locals Say: “Cape Charles is truly a small town with a big heart.”

Local Picks: Explore: SouthEast Expeditions Indulge: Brown Dog Ice Cream Sip: Cape Charles Distillery

Locals Say: “The growing LGBT community in Colonial Beach is welcomed with open arms and is completely integrated into the town’s character.”

Local Picks: Stay: White Point Manor Play: Dockside Restaurant & Tiki Bar

Locals Say: “JMU’s culture is based on community - it allows students to find themselves and make lifelong friends and connections.”

Local Picks: Shop: Agora Downtown Market Cheer: JMU football game

Locals Say: “We love Roanoke’s can-do attitude and community.”

Local Picks: Savor: The River and Rail Restaurant Visit: Taubman Museum of Art Stroll: SWVA LGBTQ+ History Walking Tour
From Virginia's mountain ranges to rails-to-trails options, there's a hike for everyone (and every ability level). Pick your adventure based on location, skill level or even the type of payoff you'll find at the end.

With waterfalls, stunning vistas and wild ponies, it would be hard to find better reasons to lace up your boots and get outside.

GO FOR A HIKE

WRITTEN BY CARRIE COUSINS
Crabtree Falls Trail
George Washington and Jefferson National Forests, 10636 Crabtree Falls Highway, Tyro

Crabtree Falls is billed as one of the tallest waterfalls on the East Coast and is definitely one of the most stunning in Virginia. There are five major cascades and several smaller ones along this hike, so there’s a definite payoff if you like water views. How’s this for a quick reward? There are several smaller waterfalls along this hike, so there’s a definite payoff if you like water views. How’s this for a quick reward? 

Special considerations: The trail is somewhat steep and includes stairs. It can be busy during peak hiking season, from May to late September.

Distance/skill level: 7.4 miles out-and-back, moderately strenuous with rocks to climb over and significant elevation gains.

McAfee Knob
Appalachian Trail, Catawba Valley Drive, Catawba

Of all the overlooks on the Appalachian Trail, which spans from Georgia to Maine, there’s a reason McAfee Knob is the most photographed: the stunning panoramas at the summit. From the iconic rock outcrop at the top, hikers have a 270-degree view of the Catawba Valley, North Mountain, Tinker Cliffs and the Roanoke Valley.

McAfee Knob is one of three hikes in the Virginia Triple Crown Loop, which also includes Tinker Cliffs (5 miles) and Dragon’s Tooth (4 miles). All three hikes are fairly strenuous and feature gnarly rock formations.

Special considerations: This is a popular hike and can be rather busy on weekends; consider an off-season or weekday trip. There is limited parking with one gravel lot at the top of Catawba Mountain. Parking is prohibited on Route 311; with limited parking at the trailhead, groups are recommended to use the Park and Ride lot in front of the Orange Valley Market at the intersection of Route 419 and Route 311.

Distance/skill level: 9 miles out-and-back, strenuous hike due to distance and elevation gain, but the terrain is not overly technical.

Mount Rogers
George Washington and Jefferson National Forests, 829 Grayson Highland Lane, Mouth of Wilson

Mount Rogers is the tallest peak in Virginia at 6,759 feet, making it a bucket-list hike. Start at Grayson Highlands State Park and cross an open field before starting the climb along the Appalachian Trail to the peak. The interesting part of this climb is that many of the views are hidden by the tree line, making it a serene option. Panoramic views are more visible on the way down.

Special features: Wild ponies roam in the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area. Park rules prohibit feeding the ponies.

Distance/skill level: 5 miles out-and-back, strenuous hike due to distance and elevation gain, but the terrain is not overly technical.

Humpback Rocks
Blue Ridge Parkway (Milepost 5.8), Lyndhurst

It’s only one mile from the car to incredible views of the Blue Ridge Mountains and Shenandoah National Park with this hike. But it’s a steep climb. Add on to the hike with access to Humpback Mountain (another 2 miles), and the Humpback Rocks Picnic Area (3.6 miles). Follow blue blazes to stay on the Humpback Rocks trail system. Humpback Rocks also connects to the Appalachian Trail, which is marked with white blazes.

Special considerations: Access can be limited during the winter when parts of the Blue Ridge Parkway are closed to traffic.

Distance/skill level: 2 miles out-and-back, moderate hike with 800 feet of elevation gain.

Elizabeth River Trail
Harbor Park to Norfolk International Terminals, Norfolk

When you think of hiking trails, the mountains often come to mind, but the Elizabeth River Trail makes the most of a railroad right-of-way. The urban trail features miles of connectivity with flat, paved trails that are highly navigable and accessible. The trail, which runs by the waterfront, includes historical landmarks, public artwork and multiple loop options.

Special features: With asphalt and concrete surfaces, this trail is well-suited for children in strollers or wheelchairs. Distance/skill level: Spanning 10.5 miles, it’s smaller sections so you can get on and off the trail, easy.
Special features: With three trails, a campground and a winery, this is an ideal location for a weekend getaway.

Distance/skill level: Sharp Top, 3 miles out-and-back, moderate; Harkening Hill, 3.5-mile loop, easy; Flat Top, about 5 miles, out-and-back, moderately strenuous.

Limberlost Trail 🍃 Shenandoah National Park (Milepost 43), 3655 US 211, Luray

The Limberlost Trail is an accessible trail that passes through forest land and mountain laurel, which is stunning during the June blooming season. The path includes a boardwalk, bridges and solid ground of mostly crushed greenstone that is navigable for children or those with wheelchairs or walkers.

Special features: The trail is wheelchair- and stroller-friendly. Pets are not allowed.

Distance/skill level: 1.3-mile loop, easy hike with 130 feet of elevation gain.

Woodland and Bivalve Trail 🍃 Eastern Shore, Woodland Trail Access Road, Chincoteague

This combination of trails is great for visitors to the Eastern Shore. The trails are flat, well-marked, and easily navigable. On the Woodland Trail, you might see some flowers and wildlife. The Bivalve Trail, which is only open to hikers, is more wooded and features a wetland cove at the end of the trail. You may also find wildlife such as fiddler crabs in the wetlands and marshlands.

Special considerations: The Woodland Trail is paved and the Bivalve Trail features crushed gravel, making it acceptable for strollers or wheelchairs with assistance.

Distance/skill level: Easy 2.3-mile loop trail that is best hiked between April and September.

---

Old Rag Mountain Hike 🍃 Shenandoah National Park, 2577 Nethers Road, Etlan

With a hike this strenuous, several false summits will have you thinking you've reached the top – but you're not there until after a scramble over rocks more than three-fourths of the way up. You'll know you've made it when you see the Old Rag Mountain elevation sign.

The hike is full of switchbacks and has a steep climb and long descent. The loop trail is among the most popular in Shenandoah National Park.

Special considerations: Pets are not allowed on this trail. Start early because the trail parking lot often fills quickly.

Distance/skill level: 9-mile circuit, difficult with 2,500 feet of elevation gain and rocks to climb.

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Peaks of Otter Trails 🍃 Blue Ridge Parkway (Milepost 86), Bedford

Peaks of Otter includes three trails with varying levels of difficulty and plenty of stunning views. Sharp Top and Flat Top are the most popular of the hikes because of 360-degree views at the top. Flat Rock is less travelled than the other two and more challenging with some rocky spots. Combine the two for almost 10 miles that can be done in a day.

Harkening Hill is a loop trail that includes cool granite formations and is in great condition as the least hiked of the Peaks of Otter trails. Add on a side trip to Balance Rock, which features a boulder on top of a smaller rock. The turn to Balance Rock is about 700 feet beyond the summit.

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Old Rag Mountain—Etlan

**LEAVE NO TRACE**

Be responsible when hitting the trails. Leave everything in the condition you saw it, using Leave No Trace principles to keep trails in top condition for years to come. Leave No Trace is an initiative of the Center for Outdoor Ethics designed so that “every person who ventures outside can protect and enjoy our world responsibly.”

Here’s what you can do on the trail to make sure you leave no trace:

✈️ Travel and camp on durable surfaces; stay on the trail, avoiding unsettled land with green ground cover.

🗑️ Pack in what you pack out and collect all waste and trash, disposing of it properly (not on the trail).

🚫 Don’t take or remove anything from the trail, including rocks, plants or wildlife.

🌿 Respect wildlife and keep your distance; don’t disturb resting or nesting places.

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Virginia is for Lovers

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Discover your Next Adventure in Harrisonburg & Rockingham County

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Old Rag Mountain—Etlan

**NEW ROAD TO OLD RAG MOUNTAIN**

**OLD RAG MOUNTAIN (ETLAN): NATE DENNISON**

**PEAKS OF OTTER (BEDFORD): SARAH HAUSER**

Visit Virginia.org
HIKING
Virginia State Parks trails are as diverse as the parks, so you’re sure to find a great trail for a short and easy family walk or a strenuous hike suited for backpacking. Every park has a trail guide to make planning your visit a snap.

RIDING
With more than 55 miles of mountain biking trails and approximately 256 miles of multiuse trails for bikers, hikers and horseback riders, we are a trail lover’s paradise. From relaxing rides with the kids, to hand-cycle friendly routes, to challenging trails for your thick wheels, Virginia State Parks has trails for you.

STAYING
Cabins are open year-round and are great for peaceful mid-week getaways. RV and tent camping is available March through November and so are yurts. Yurts bridge the gap between tent camping and cabins for when you want to rough it, but not too much.

PADDLING
Virginia State Parks offer canoeing, kayaking, and, for a real challenge, stand-up paddleboards. Other water activities include full-service marinas, car-top, slide and concrete boat ramps. State parks provide access to Virginia’s most popular rivers and lakes, as well as the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean.

WATCHING
Bald eagles soaring thousands of feet overhead. Does and fawns gracefully stepping through the forest. Foxes, raccoons, beavers ... the list goes on and on. You’ll find few places better suited to wildlife than Virginia’s state parks. Remember: Wildlife is wild, so keep a respectful distance.

LEARN ABOUT ALL OF VIRGINIA’S STATE PARKS AT WWW.VIRGINIASTATEPARKS.GOV/_FIND_A_PARK
**National & Regional Parks, Refuges & Forests**

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<td>Algonquin Regional Park, Sterling, VA</td>
<td>703-450-4455, novaparks.com/parks/algonquin-regional-park</td>
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<td>Assateague Island National Seashore, Chincoteague, VA</td>
<td>410-641-2487, nps.gov/assateague</td>
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<td>Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Virginia Beach, VA</td>
<td>757-328-3212, fws.gov/rf/refuge/back_bay</td>
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<td>Blue Ridge Parkway</td>
<td>828-271-4779, nps.gov/blp</td>
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<td>540-350-2510, co.augusta.va.us</td>
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<td>540-744-1107, nps.gov/cg</td>
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<td>708-230-9804, novaparks.com/parks/fountainhead-regional-park</td>
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<td>Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, Suffolk, VA</td>
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<td>Hopewell Botanical Gardens, Vienna, VA</td>
<td>703-251-3511, novaparks.com/parks/hopewell-botanical-gardens</td>
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<td>Hi. Rogers National Recreation Area, Marion, VA</td>
<td>804-455-1290, fws.gov/refuge</td>
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<td>Natural Chimneys Park, Mt. Soled, VA</td>
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<td>Newport News Park, Newport News, VA</td>
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<td>Occoquan Regional Park, Lorton, VA</td>
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<td>Potomac River National Wildlife Refuge-Complex, Woodbridge, VA</td>
<td>703-460-4979, fws.gov/refuge/mason cheek/about_the_complex.html</td>
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<td>Pocahontas National Wildlife Refuge, Chesterfield, VA</td>
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<td>Prince William Forest Park, Triangle, VA</td>
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<td>Red Bank Wilderness Overlook Regional Park, Leesburg, VA</td>
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<td>Shenandoah National Park/ Skyline Drive, Luray, VA</td>
<td>540-989-2500, fws.gov/refuge/shenandoah</td>
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<td>Upton Hill Regional Park, Arlington, VA</td>
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<td>WOOD Railroad Regional Park, Ashburn, VA</td>
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* B-Ball’s Bluff, C-Chesapeake, Co-Coastal, D-Eastern Shore, H-Heart of Appalachia, M-Mountains, N-Northern Virginia, S-Shenandoah, So-Southern.

Explore the wild of Virginia and help keep it wild for future generations.

DGIF invites all lovers of Virginia’s outdoors to join us in our mission to ensure wildlife has healthy places to live and thrive by becoming a Restore the Wild Member. Your membership will help support projects across the state designed to restore and create wildlife habitat vital for their survival.

[dgif.virginia.gov/restore](dgif.virginia.gov/restore)
The State's Best Golf Courses

These Virginia courses offer a perfect day on the greenway for all ages and skill levels.

Nestled in the shadows of the Blue Ridge Mountains overlooking the fabled Shenandoah River, Caverns Country Club Resort creates one of the most scenically beautiful golf opportunities in the Mid-Atlantic region. High above the banks of this storied river, these 6,499 yards of gently rolling fairways seem to touch the mountain foothills. Amid vistas of nearby farmlands, large trees and greens complement this 18-hole, par 72 course.

Caverns Country Club Resort provides comfortable accommodations in partnering motel and hotel properties near the course. Situated in quiet, country settings, each affords magnificent views of the Blue Ridge Mountains and Shenandoah National Park. Golf, scenery, and more. The Golden Horseshoe Golf Club honors the classic traditions of the game – rated a top-5 golf course in Virginia. Designed by the father- and-son team of Robert Trent Jones Sr. and Rees Jones, players experience 45 championship holes over three courses, surrounded by mature woodlands and free from neighboring real estate. Get in touch with nature, focus on your game and get back to the true essence of golf in the heart of Colonial Williamsburg. Toast to a day spent outdoors with your clubs and make a tee time on the River or Plantation Course. For more than three decades, The River Course, now home to the Pure Silk Championship, has hosted the world’s best players on both PGA and LPGA tours.

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Published Rates.

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A Lasting Legacy
Now in Film

Written by Liz Long

Virginia provided multiple locations for the hit movie “Harriet.”

Released in November 2019, “Harriet” is based on the story of iconic freedom fighter Harriet Tubman, her escape from slavery and subsequent missions to free dozens of slaves through the Underground Railroad in the face of growing pre-Civil War adversity. The project from Focus Features will be the first feature length film to tell the story of famed abolitionist Harriet Tubman, who brought hundreds of slaves to freedom in 19th-century America.

Starring Tony-award winning actress Cynthia Erivo, alongside Leslie Odom Jr., Janelle Monae and Joe Alwyn, “Harriet” was filmed in Virginia in fall and winter of 2018. On-site locations include Richmond, Powhatan, Cumberland, Petersburg, Mathews and several other localities that display our state’s beauty and substantial history. Fans can learn more about Harriet Tubman’s legacy with “Following Harriet,” a podcast that takes a closer look at her life. Through interviews with leading historians, educators and even the director of the Focus Features film “Harriet,” it puts the American icon in a broader context and examines the 19th-century experience of African Americans, especially in Virginia. Subscribe to “Following Harriet” wherever you get your podcasts.

For the movie trailer, filming locations, trip ideas, black history attractions and more, visit Virginia.org/Harriet.

Berkeley
Built in 1726, this Georgian mansion is one of the first plantations in America, and certainly the most historic on the James River. It was the birthplace of Benjamin Harrison V, signer of the Declaration of Independence and governor of Virginia, as well as the birthplace of William Henry Harrison, ninth U.S. president, and ancestral home of his grandson, Benjamin Harrison, the 33rd president. American whiskey was originally distilled here in 1620, and it is also where the Army bugle call “Taps” first played in July 1862. Currently owned by the Malcolm E. Jamieson family, the plantation is a Virginia and National Historic landmark. The exterior portion of the Berkeley Mansion is shown as the Auburn, New York home of Senator William Seward. The Hillman House is shown as the Brodess Plantation (including nearby reconstructed slave cabins), while the farmhouse next to the main building doubles as the home where Harriet retires during the final scene of the film.

Three Lakes
The Three Lakes Park and Nature Center boasts a 6,600-square-foot facility with hands-on exhibits and a 50,000-gallon aquarium, bringing together an, water and land for guests to explore. The 140-acre park includes three lakes, walking trails, bridges, playground and more. The woods were used for various scenes in “Harriet,” including escape scenes.

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Listen to the Music: 11 Historic Venues

WRITTEN BY ANDREW COTHERN

Virginia’s music venues are full of rich history. Places that now host live music once started out as old movie houses or stores or farmhouses and changed over time. Here are just a few of the most iconic spots; head to blog.virginia.org/music for more!

Tally Ho Theatre – Leesburg
Created in 1924 as a one room movie house, this historic downtown Leesburg theatre was restored in 2012 and hosts live bands in a wide range of genres.

The Floyd Country Store – Floyd
Originally opened in 1909 as a general store (complete with the old-fashioned candy and bluegrass accessories), the store now hosts the Floyd Country Store Jamboree, the weekly event that brings locals and visitors together to dance, enjoy and every age clogging and flat-footing.

Beacon Theatre – Hopewell
Constructed in 1928 as a silent movie and vaudeville show palace, this theatre has seen many incredible nights, including burlesque dancers and cowboy performers in the 1950s and ‘60s. A $4.1 million restoration, the Beacon Theatre has returned to its original splendor and regularly offers all kinds of restoration, the Beacon Theatre has returned to its

Carter Family Fold – Hitons
The original Carter Family – also known as the “First Family of Country Music” – lived on this hallowed ground at the foot of Clinch Mountain. The 1,000-seat music center, which recently celebrated its 40th anniversary, hosts old-time, bluegrass and country music every Saturday night, and there’s a dance floor that’s usually packed with people of every age clogging and flat-footing.

The Jefferson Theater – Charlottesville
Located on Charlottesville’s historic Downtown Mall, the Jefferson Theater is a historic venue that hosts a variety of music shows. Established in 1912 as a live performance theater that played host to silent movies, vaudeville acts and a historic list of musicians, it reopened in 2009 after significant restoration efforts.

Garth Newel Music Center – Hot Springs
Garth Newel Music Center Foundation, and it grew from a season of a half-dozen concerts in the mid-70s to more than 50 today.

The National – Richmond
Built in 1932 as a one room movie house, this theatre has seen many incredible nights, including burlesque dancers and cowboy performers in the 1950s and ‘60s. A $4.1 million restoration, the Beacon Theatre has returned to its original splendor and regularly offers all kinds of restoration, the Beacon Theatre has returned to its

Harrison Opera House – Norfolk
Once a theater in the 1940s, the Harrison Opera House hosted entertainment for USO troops during World War II. Now the official home of the Virginia Opera, the house has over 1,600 seats and retains an intimate ambience adorned with glittering chandeliers and sweeping staircases reminiscent of the old time glamour.

Ashland Theatre – Ashland
This theatre originally opened its doors in 1948, operating until the 1960s. After reparation efforts, the owners’ donation to the Town of Ashland and a renovation, it officially re-opened in December 2018 with both movies and live music for attendees.

Rex Theater – Galax
Listeners from all over the world can tune in to old-time and bluegrass music with Blue Ridge Back Roads, a live, weekly show also enjoyed by attendees in the 479-seat space. A designated landmark on the Crooked Road, visitors can enjoy vintage movie nights, Saturday concerts, community plays and special events at this 70-year-old theater.