

ALL ROADS LEAD SOUTH



DISCOVERING THE RICHES OF RICHMOND, VIRGINIA, AND OTHER DRIVABLE DESTINATIONS.

BY MARILYN ODESSER-TORPEY

American history buffs have long included Richmond, Virginia, on their short list of destinations worth exploring. But there's much more to this Southern city than its Civil War prominence as the capital of the Confederacy. Flowing through Richmond's downtown district, the James River makes for unique outdoor recreational experiences. A wealth of museums, performance

venues and art hubs provides visitors with a multifaceted cultural experience that continues to evolve. Ravaged by fire in the last year of the Civil War, Richmond has demonstrated an iron will to survive and thrive, growing into a modern urban center that takes heed of its past as it strives to become a true reflection of its diverse population. And it's all less than four hours by car from the Main Line region.





LINDEN ROW INN



MAYMONT

STAY HERE ...

A young Edgar Allan Poe played in the gardens at the **Linden Row Inn**, and local lore has it that one was the enchanted place he refers to in the famous poem “To Helen.” Composed of seven 18th-century rowhouses, this charming inn has preserved its original architecture, and most of the rooms are decorated with antique and period furnishings. Its location in the heart of downtown Richmond makes getting around easy on foot or by public transportation. The inn also provides a complimentary in-town shuttle service for destinations within two miles. *100 E. Franklin St., (804) 783-7000, lindenrowinn.com.*

DO THIS ...

A novel way to get acquainted with the city is with the self-guided **Discover Richmond Tours Scavenger Hunt** in either the downtown, museum area or Church Hill (Richmond’s oldest neighborhood). At each destination, trivia questions lead you to well-known and interesting off-the-beaten-path sites. If you like to nosh while you explore, Discover Richmond also offers several neighborhood food tours. *(804) 213-2330, discoverrichmondtraveltours.com.*

The arts scene is alive and vibrant in Richmond, encompassing numerous galleries and over 100 murals on buildings throughout the city *(mendingwallsrvac.com).*



SHOP HERE ...

Richmond’s Carytown neighborhood is filled with small, locally owned one-of-a-kind shops. **AlterNatives Boutique** showcases jewelry, hand-woven textiles and personal and home accessories made by indigenous and woman-owned local and international artisans. *3320 West Cary St., (804) 342-5886, alternativesboutique.com.* **Beasties** features adorable animal-themed clothing, toys and housewares. *3218 W. Cary St., (804) 466-3600, richmondbeasties.com.*



BIKING ON THE CAPITAL TRAIL.

JEFF SAXMAN

The city’s crown jewel is the **Virginia Museum of Fine Arts**, one of the largest museums in North America, featuring modern and contemporary works from around the globe. Check out its expansive East Asian collection and take a stroll through the contemporary sculpture garden. Wednesday evenings, the museum hosts live performances by the area’s top jazz musicians. *200 N. Arthur Ashe Blvd., (804) 340-1400, vmfa.museum.*



AMERICAN CIVIL WAR MUSEUM

EXPLORE THE CIVIL WAR

Start your historic journey with an overview of the Civil War, Reconstruction and their aftermath at the **American Civil War Museum at Historic Tredegar**. Spanning two floors in a former cannon factory, this major repository boasts hundreds of artifacts, plus audio-visual experiences and images tracing the periods from military and civilian perspectives. *480 Tredegar St., (804) 649-1861, acwm.org.*

A mansion built in 1818, the **White House of the Confederacy** was the workplace and home of Confederate President Jefferson Davis throughout the war. Guided tours cover both the public rooms and private living quarters of Jefferson and his family. *1201 Clay St., (804) 649-1861, acwm.org.*

More than 75,000 Confederate soldiers were treated at Chimborazo Hospital, the world's largest such military facility during the war years of 1861-1865. Located on the former site of the hospital, **Chimborazo Medical Museum** details the medical and surgical practices through film, a scale model of the facility, and exhibits featuring medical instruments and personal artifacts. *3215 E. Broad St., (804) 226-1981, nps.gov.*

To get a glimpse of what life was like for Richmond residents of various social levels in the Gilded Age of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, pay a visit to **Maymont**, a Victorian mansion turned museum on a 100-acre estate. Twelve rooms have been restored and furnished in the lavish European style of the period. For an insider's perspective, check out the newly updated *Domestic Service* exhibit, which delves into the everyday lives of the staff who kept the house running. *1000 Westover Road, (804) 358-7166, maymont.org.*

Richmond is the country's only urban area where you can ride Class IV rapids right through downtown. With **Riverside Outfitters**, you can opt for either a laid-back upper James River experience or an exhilarating adventure on the lower section. Day or evening whitewater excursions are available. *6836 Old Westham Road, (804) 560-0068, riversideoutfitters.com.*

Rent a bike from **Riverside Cycling** and follow the 52-mile Virginia Capital Trail along the James. *6836 Old Westham Road, (804) 496-0226,*

WORTH THE DRIVE

Nine more great spring getaways.

By Marilyn Odesser-Torpey and Hobart Rowland

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND: An ornate arch flanked by two 18th-century cannons recovered from Baltimore's Inner Harbor make for a grand entrance to the **Sagamore Pendry Baltimore**. Located on historic Recreation Pier in Fell's Point, the renovated 1914 building boasts spacious rooms that combine mahogany and brass accents for a nautical feel, accented with paintings and sculptures by local artists. *April-May rates from \$532. 1715 Thames St., (443) 552-1400, pendry.com.*

CAMBRIDGE, MARYLAND: At the **Cambridge House Bed & Breakfast**, innkeepers Jim and Marianne Benson will give you the warmest of welcomes. It's an easy walk to quaint, historic downtown Cambridge from their six-guestroom 1847 sea captain's manor. *April-May rates from \$175. 112 High St., (410) 221-7700, cambridgehousebandb.com*

WASHINGTON, D.C.: Soak up the views of the D.C. skyline and the diverse architecture of the surrounding international embassy mansions from the rooftop pool and bar at **The Ven at Embassy Row**. The hotel's convenient location in the heart of Dupont Circle is just steps from the Metro's Red Line, so you can leave your car (and the attendant traffic and parking hassles) behind as you explore the capital's wealth of sights. *April-May rates from \$316. 2015 Massachusetts Ave. NW, (202) 265-1600, marriott.com.*

A city landmark since 1928, the Italian Renaissance-style **Hays-Adams Hotel** has preserved many of its original architectural details even as it's undergone renovations. One of the most conveniently located accommodations in D.C., it's hosted numerous American luminaries, including Ethel Barrymore, Amelia Earhart, Sinclair Lewis and Charles Lindbergh. Many rooms offer views of the White House, the National Mall and other iconic sites. *April-May rates from \$369. 800 16th St. NW, (202) 638-6600, hayadams.com.*

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riversidecyclingva.com. Or take a guided sunset tour of downtown Richmond and the Capital Trail on a classic or electric bike with **Basket & Bike**. The company also offers a six-mile ride that concludes with a toast at a local winery. *1301 Cary St., (804) 564-2568, basketandbike.com*.

Immerse yourself in the sights and fragrances of the season amid the more than 50 acres of beautiful blooms at **Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden**, which offers more than a dozen themed gardens for strolling. Beginning in April, you can walk among hundreds of fluttering creatures in the *Butterflies LIVE* exhibit. *1800 Lakeside Ave., (804) 262-9887, lewisginter.org*.

Richmond was typically the first place kidnapped Africans came ashore into enslavement. Their epic story—from those early years through emancipation, Jim Crow, desegregation, massive resistance and the civil rights era—is told at the city's **Black History Museum and Cultural Center**. *122 W. Lehigh St., (804) 780-9093, blackhistorymuseum.org*.

There are museums dedicated to Edgar Allan Poe in various cities throughout the United States, but Richmond is where he spent his childhood. At the city's **Edgar Allan Poe Museum**, you can take a guided



or audio tour to see numerous artifacts, including a collection of manuscripts and first editions of some of his most famous works. *1914 E. Main St., (804) 648-5523, poemuseum.org*.

Quench your thirst at the almost 40 craft breweries along the **Richmond Beer Trail**. Ten of them are clustered in the Scott's Addition neighborhood. Don't miss **The Veil Brewing Co.**, known for its hoppy IPAs and fruited sour beers (*1301 Roseneath Road, theveilbrewing.com*), and the beer garden at **Ardent Craft Ales** (*3200 W. Leigh St., 804-359-1605, ardentcraftales.com*).

Scott's Addition is also home to cideries, distilleries and even a meadery.

How did a 16th-century Tudor estate built in Lancashire, England, wind up in Richmond? **Agecroft Hall** was brought to the banks of the James River in pieces by its owner in the late 1920s. Its furnishings, art and gardens reflect the period. *4305 Sulgrave Road, (804) 353-4241, agecrofthall.org*.

On weekdays, the 13-hole mini-golf course at the chic **Hotel Greene** is available to adults only. *508 E. Franklin St., hotelgreene.com*.

MONUMENTAL CHANGES

Lined with extravagant Gilded Age mansions, Richmond's Monument Avenue is the site of major city events like an annual 10K race and a colorful Easter parade. At one time, it also displayed massive bronze statues commemorating major Confederate figures. But that changed following a series of protests and rallies sparked by the death of George Floyd in the summer of 2020.

Statues depicting Jefferson Davis, Gen. Robert E. Lee, generals J.E.B. Stuart and Stonewall Jackson, and naval commander Matthew Fontaine Maury are now gone. Ownership of the four Confederate figures was transferred to Richmond's Black History Museum and Cultural Center. Additional monuments in parks and other city-owned land have also been removed, in compliance with an edict issued by the city's mayor, Levar Stoney. The list includes figures of Confederate generals and leaders and the cannons marking Richmond's Civil War defenses. The last of about a dozen statues, a memorial to former Confederate Gen. A.P. Hill, was taken down this past December.

"Richmond does indeed have a complicated, and sometimes controversial history," says Carla Murray, director of marketing and communications at Richmond Region Tourism.

"In recent years, there have been more concentrated efforts to expand the historic narrative in our region."

Murray says the city has launched numerous initiatives to "promote all the best that is Richmond with honesty, respect and pride, amplify the diverse voices that are essential parts of our narrative and tell the whole story of who we are—the good, the bad, the enlightening and the controversial."

Richmond Region Tourism has created **BLK RVA** (*visitblk RVA.com*), a campaign to highlight and celebrate the Black cultural experience and history in the area. It's a community-driven initiative led by local business owners and other leaders and trailblazers. In 2016, the Black History Museum and Cultural Center moved into a restored late-19th-century armory for Black soldiers.

The **Maggie L. Walker Memorial Plaza** (*nps.gov*) honors the life and legacy of a Black city native who was the first woman to own a bank in the United States. And not far from the city's former slave market in the Shockoe Bottom neighborhood, the **Richmond Slavery Reconciliation Statue** (*virginia.org*) was erected in 2007. The memorial completes the triangle between Richmond, the city of Liverpool, England, and the Republic of Benin, each of which played a prominent role in the slave trade. "The identical statues symbolize a commitment to new relationships based on honesty and forgiveness," says Murray.

EAT HERE ...

Eritrean-spiced brisket over matzah polenta? You'll only find this unexpected combination of African and Jewish cuisines at **JewFro** in Richmond's Shockoe Bottom neighborhood. By day, it's a deli—think bagel, lox and cream cheese soup (a play on salmon bisque) and potato kugel croquettes. By night, the meals are more elaborate and surprising. 1721 E. Franklin St., (804) 269-0742, jewfrorestaurant.com.

If the lines outside don't convince you that **ZZQ Texas Craft Barbeque** is the best BBQ around, the aroma from the five enormous smokers will. Highlights include brisket, pulled pork shoulder and huge beef ribs. On Fridays, house-made pastrami is offered by the pound or by the sandwich. 3201 West Moore St., (804) 528-5648, zzqrva.com.

Have your upscale dinner of steak, prime rib or signature lump crab cakes in the dining room at **The Tobacco Company Restaurant**, then head downstairs to one of the city's most popular nightclubs. 1201 E. Cary St., (804) 782-9555, thetobaccocompany.com.

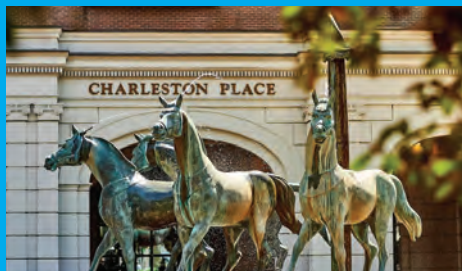
Brunch comes with a French accent at **Can Can Brasserie**. The hash is beef bourguignon or duck, or choose from a croque monsieur or madame. The French toast is brioche, and there's a Benedict Lyonnaise—a smoked salmon and mushroom tartlet with Hollandaise. 3120 W. Cary St., (804) 358-7274, cancanrva.com.



VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA: The first property on the Chesapeake Bay to have its own private beach, **Delta Hotels Virginia Beach Bayfront Suites** was designed to be a serene oasis in an otherwise bustling summer destination. The airy and spacious 11 suites are furnished in contemporary style with maximum comfort in mind. Some have bay-view balconies, and all have sofa beds to accommodate families. The property also has an outdoor pool, and the on-site eatery offers fresh coastal cuisine. April-May rates from \$171. 2800 Shore Drive, (757) 481-9000, marriott.com.

ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA: The utmost in boutique-style luxury and intelligent design, **The Restoration Asheville** is a brand-new downtown hotel that reflects the arty, edgy, culturally vibrant energy of a city on the rise. It features 60 rooms and suites, spacious living areas, on-site dining, a cultural library, and a rooftop bar and terrace. April-May rates from \$295. 68 Patton Ave., (828) 220-0368, therestorationhotel.com.

The charming **Princess Anne Hotel** puts visitors just five minutes away (by car) from downtown Asheville. Built in 1924, it offers all the amenities of B&B, including breakfast. April-May rates from \$228. 301 E. Chestnut St., (828) 258-0986, princessannehotel.com.



CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA: Located in Charleston's historic district, the **Charleston Place Historic Downtown** offers the perfect mix of Old World charm and sleek sophistication. There's a pool with a retractable glass roof, a cutting-edge spa, a private club level with many boutique-style amenities, the award-winning Charleston Grill, and a selection of high-end shops. April-May rates from \$692. 205 Meeting St., (843) 722-4900, charlestonplace.com.

Asheville, North Carolina's more established sister property, **The Restoration Charleston** is comprised of five buildings, all modernized with a dual nod to the Holy City's rich history and the offbeat effervescence of the New South. Staying in one of its eight suites is like renting an apartment from a youngish Charleston native with impeccable taste. April-May from \$479. 75 Wentworth St., (877) 221-7202, therestorationhotel.com.

COURTESY OF CHARLESTON PLACE