FINAL

Chesapeake Bay Road Trip

Katie and Gene Hamilton

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Contents

Foreword 5
Introduction.....6
Good to Know Before You Go.....8
Logistics and Driving Options 8
Do It Your Way 9
More About the Bridge Connectors.....10
Traveling Information.....11
Melting Pot of Culture and Industry.....12
Effects of Sea Rise on Chesapeake Bay 14
Chesapeake Bay Watershed NPS.....15
Chesapeake Bay Lingo.....15
Chapter 1: Baltimore MD 19
Getting Around Charm City By Bus And Boat ...21
Chapter 2: Harve de Grace MD 25
Chapter 3: North East MD 28
Chapter 4: Chesapeake City MD 31
Chapter 5: Chestertown MD 33
Chapter 6: Rock Hall MD 36
Chapter 7: Kent Island MD 39
Chapter 8: St. Michaels MD.....42
Chapter 9: Tilghman Island.....45
Chapter 10: Oxford, MD.....47
Chapter 11: Cambridge MD.....51
Chapter 12: Salisbury MD.....56
Chapter 13: Crisfield MD 59
Boat Tour to Smith Island 61
Chapter 14: Onancock VA 62
Chapter 15: Cape Charles VA 64
Chapter 16: Virginia Beach VA 67
Chapter 17: Norfolk VA.....70

Chapter 18: Portsmouth VA 72
Chapter 19: Hampton VA 75
Chapter 20: Newport News VA 77
Chapter 21: Yorktown VA 80
America's Historic Triangle 81
Middle Peninsula 83
Chapter 22: Urbanna VA 84
Chapter 23: Deltaville VA 87
Chapter 24: White Stone VA 90
Chapter 25: Irvington VA 92
Chapter 26: Kilmarnock VA 94
Chapter 27: Reedville VA 97
Boat Tour to Tangier Island 99
Chapter 28: Colonial Beach VA 100
Chapter 29: St. Mary's City MD 102
Southern Maryland African American Heritage 105
Chapter 30: Solomons MD 106
Chapter 31: Annapolis MD 111
Annapolis to Baltimore 115
Distance Chart 116
Puzzles 117
Book Resources 120

Foreword

"The Bay means different things to the various people who use it. It is a pathway for our vessels, connecting us together. It also divides and isolates us, leading to the creation of distinct cultures, most particularly on some of the Bay's inhabited islands. The Chesapeake has been a provider of a great bounty of fish, shellfish, and waterfowl for Native Americans and European settlers, as well as today's populations both near and far. The Bay has also become a place of recreation, especially as leisure time expanded for the American middle class in the mid-20th century, and we increasingly enjoy these waters for cruising, fishing, racing, swimming, paddling, and more. And the Bay inspires us in many ways, visible in our art, poetry, music, and stories created in reaction and appreciation."

Pete Lesher, Chief Historian at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, gives us this inciteful summary of the Bay in the museum's book *A Broad Reach: 50 Years of Collecting*.

Introduction

"*All who enter this river find joy,"* is how the Susquehannock Indian describes steering toward a river in James A. Michener's book *Chesapeake.* And we couldn't agree more because we've found joy and delight on all the Bay rivers we've visited in the past 35 years. On our road trip around Chesapeake Bay we logged 1,136 miles beginning in Baltimore and ending in Annapolis. It was an exhilarating experience and we want to share that with the world.

Join us on a road trip that circumnavigates the eastern and western shores of Maryland and Virginia on the Chesapeake Bay. We're not Bay experts or historians, but we've enjoyed harbor hopping the shores on boats, bikes, and in cars and RVs for many years.

By water, the Chesapeake Bay has more than 11,000 miles of shoreline, making it the largest estuary in the U.S. Its 64,000-square-mile watershed encompasses parts of six states – Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia and the entire District of Columbia. More than 18 million people live in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

The drive from Baltimore MD around the top of the Chesapeake Bay to Cape Charles VA on the southern tip of the Eastern shore is approximately 400 miles. From Cape Charles VA across the Bay Tunnel Bridge and north to Annapolis MD on the Western shore is approximately 450 miles. We include the distance from each of our destination stops so you know the total mileage since so many harbor towns are off the direct route and connected by local roads.

The coolest thing about this book is the Distance Chart. The Distance Chart will tell you the exact miles between destinations. It gives you all the information you need at a glance and shows how far away the next destination is. This is a perfect companion if you are on a road trip around the Bay.

Since early travel on the Bay was by boat, the peninsulas jutting out into the Bay on both shores created many natural protected harbors. Some harbor towns like Annapolis and Rock Hall sit directly on the Bay. Other towns are located up the river, like Chestertown, some 20 miles up the Chester River, and Yorktown beyond the York River entrance.

If you are wondering what you can do here, then you're in for a treat. Visitors flock to remote shorelines where they can paddle a kayak, canoe, or

standup paddleboard. Water sports of all kinds are associated with Chesapeake Bay. Its wealth of fish and seafood makes it a favorite of anglers of all stripes. Water skiing, sailing, and cruising to a snug anchorage draw boats of size.

Good to Know Before You Go

Here are some things to consider before you start your trip around the Chesapeake Bay. In this section, we lay out the trip and recommend you do the same to get the most out of your journey.

Logistics and Driving Options

As a starting and stopping point, we begin in Baltimore, MD, on the western shore because of the proximity to BWI, the Baltimore Washington International Airport. From Baltimore, we go northeast up and around the top of the Bay, connecting to the Eastern Shore. We head to the south end of the Bay to Cape Charles, VA, and then across the Bay-Tunnel Bridge to begin our trek north from Tidewater, Virginia, on the western shore to complete the loop in Annapolis, MD.

Whether you're traveling on a motorcycle, a car, or in a motorhome, you can choose whichever route you want to travel on, or you can combine them to get the most out of your trip. Below are some route options for road trippers. However you go, use the handy Distance Chart to plan your route. Here are some possible options for you.

- Circumnavigate around the Bay in one trip.
- Take one shore at a time, traveling the length of the eastern or western shore.
- Divide the Bay in half. Instead of taking a linear route, you can rotate the Bay in northern and southern sections using the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. The northern section connects Annapolis to Kent Island, and the Chesapeake Bay Tunnel Bridge connects Cape Charles with Virginia Beach.
- If you live in the area, take Day Trips to destinations.

Do It Your Way

The route you choose depends on where you're coming from because whichever route you take, you

can jump off along the way. A lot depends on how much time and money you can budget and how much you want to see. Use our links to websites with visitor information about destinations on the route throughout the eBook to tell you more.

The route on the eastern shore heading south from Chesapeake City, MD, in the north, goes south to Cape Charles, VA, on Hwy 213 to Hwy 50 to Hwy 13.

On the western shore heading north, it's a more circuitous route following Hwy 17 and 3 to Hwy 50 from Norfolk and Tidewater VA to the Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck to Annapolis.

More About the Bridge Connectors

The Bay has two major bridges connecting the eastern and western shores. Both are toll bridges, and some restrictions apply during high winds.

The five-mile Bay Bridge is in the middle of the Bay, connecting Annapolis to Kent Island in Maryland. It's quite a view with freighter traffic often anchored off Annapolis waiting to approach Baltimore, tugs pushing barges, sailboats, and power boats going on their way.

At the southern tip of the Bay, the 18-mile-long Chesapeake Bay-Tunnel Bridge connects Cape Charles with Norfolk, both in Virginia. The bridge-tunnel is an exciting drive going over and under the Chesapeake Bay which takes you on a 17-mile crossing. The west end of the bridge lands you in Virginia Beach, VA, next to Norfolk.

Traveling Information

- Kids find most of these places to be a wonderful experience, so bring them along. There are plenty of places to visit and stay that welcome your pets.
- If you have a GPS, use it. It's a tool to help you plan and make adjustments to your itinerary, find fuel and food stops, and find a place to stay.
- That said, bring along a PAPER state map or road atlas. You can get an overview of where you are going and get a sense of adventure as you find your way. Some paper maps might have some unique information that is not found on most GPS maps, as well. For electric car owners, we found EV charging stations along the way. You can also use an app like Charge Hub so you can plan ahead.

- RV trippers and campers will find many places to stop and stay. When we travel by motorhome, we use RVparky to find a place to hook up.
- If you like word puzzles, we posted **Chesapeake Bay Crossword Puzzle** on our website. You can also find links to various individual puzzles at the end of this book in the "Puzzles" Section.

Melting Pot of Culture and Industry

The influence of the maritime and seafood industry on the Bay is seen in many museums dedicated to their influence which was the foundation of the waterfront harbor towns. Both shores of the Chesapeake are prime crabbing and oyster grounds.

Agriculture has also long been the mainstay economy of both the eastern and western shores. Today, we see a growing influence in aquaculture or fish farming, such as developing oyster reefs in rivers to improve the watershed and filter pollution.

Over the years, we have seen small harbor town retailers reinvent themselves to attract tourists, changing from t-shirt shops to art galleries along with wineries, craft breweries, and restaurants following

the farm-to-table and sea-to-table movement and the issue of sustainability. Inns and resorts that cater to business conferences now market themselves as wedding destinations. Along those main streets, there's always a nod to the past with antique shops for visitors in search of model boats, oyster cans, plates, and vintage decoys.

We also found a strong military presence in Chesapeake Bay, especially on the western shore at Naval Air Station Patuxent River and the Navy and Marines in Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Newport News.

The interest in Black American history goes back centuries. On the eastern shore with Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass and on the western shore in southern Maryland, Calvert, St Mary's, and Charles Counties all are proud of their African American History.

We felt the strong influence and heritage of Indigenous people, who have been part of the fabric of the area for centuries in the area as well. The names of rivers and towns like Choptank, Susquehannock, Pocomoke City, and Nanticoke are just a few examples.

Effects of Sea Rise on Chesapeake Bay

The threat of rising sea levels and storm surges is very real on both the eastern and western shores of Chesapeake Bay. The land underneath the Bay is sinking, and erosion is eating away at the shoreline that once protected it. Much of the land surrounding the Bay is lowlands and part of an ecosystem where fresh river water mixes with seawater. A June 2024 report on PBS Newshour featured farmers on the Eastern shore and the Delmarva Peninsula, showing how sections of their once productive farm fields had turned into a marshland inundated by salt water. Freshwater bogs have been taken over by salt marsh, creating ghost forests. Scientists have been predicting the surge in storms and sea level rise for years, but today, the threat has never been more real on the Bay.

When we drive by the scenic green farm fields on both shores, it's difficult to imagine what we can't see - marshlands in the middle of fields created by the change. In October 2012, we were on a boat in Norfolk, VA, when Superstorm Sandy devastated the East Coast and Tidewater, VA. For days, wind, rain, and rising sea water rose above seawalls, making many roads impassable until the tide went out. Over the years, Annapolis and other low-lying harbor

towns have taken a hit from the rising waters of the storms and surges.

Chesapeake Bay Watershed NPS

The Chesapeake Bay Watershed is part of the National Park System funded by Chesapeake Gateways grants, making the entire area more visible and visited. The designation and grants are awarded to "bring out familiar, untold, under-appreciated, or yet to be uncovered narratives and to promote resilient communities & landscapes through tourism, sustainability, conservation & local economies throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed" according to the official website of the NPS.

Chesapeake Bay Lingo

We moved to the Bay area 35 years ago and had to learn some of the language spoken here. These are words and terms you may hear along the way.

Arster, the pronunciation of an oyster by a native

Bay Hundred, a segment of land that produced 100 fighting men. It's an old English term frequently used by longtime residents describing the area between St Michaels and Tilghman Island.

Brackish, somewhat salty, like the mixture of river and seawater in estuaries

Come-here, someone who moves to the area who is not a native or **From-here**

Jimmy and Sook, a Jimmy is a mature male blue crab, and Sook is a mature female Maryland blue crab

Neck, refers to the shape of the peninsula, a narrow stretch of land like the Northern Neck on the Western Shore

Narrows, a waterway or cut-through land such as Kent Narrows on the Eastern Shore

Roads, as in Hampton Roads in Tidewater, Virginia, is a sheltered place where a ship can ride at anchor safely without strong currents

Section One: Baltimore to Kent Island

If you fly over the Chesapeake Bay, you'll see the amazing panorama of the diversity of land and water. Lines of lush trees and foliage divide rolling streams and bays with rocky shores. Near big city centers, commercial buildings and housing are spread out along the shore, with farmlands and orchards. Small harbor towns hug the shoreline, separated by serene coastal bays and rivers flowing into the Bay, the largest estuary in the United States. It's a fantastic confluence of land and sea.

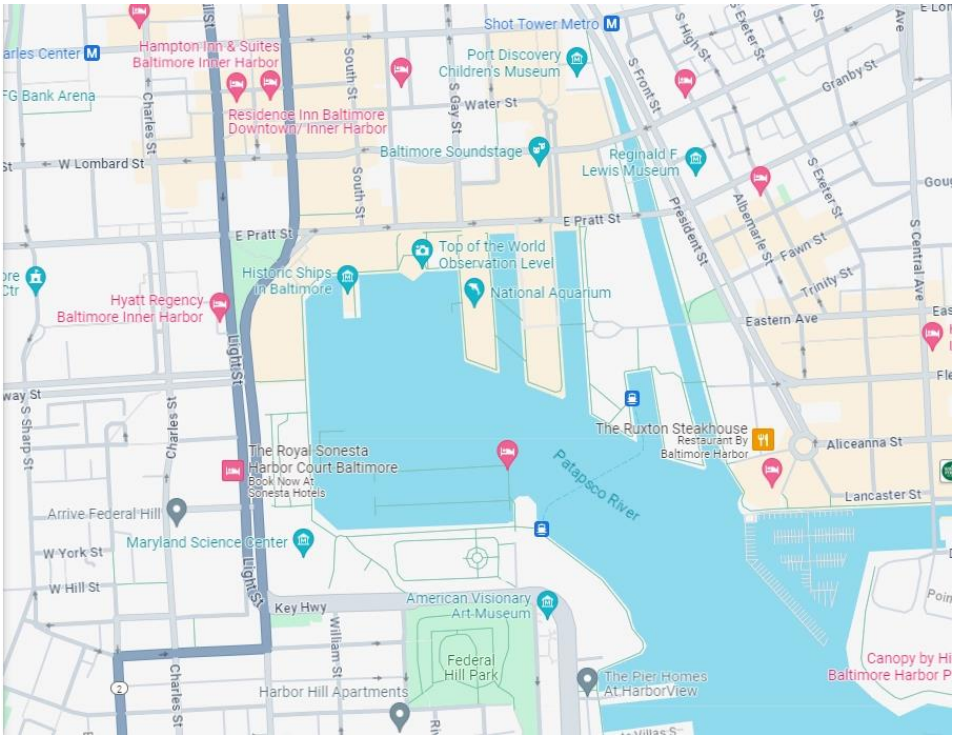
Visitors flock to remote shorelines where they can paddle a kayak, canoe, or standup paddleboard, ride a bike on the backroads, or walk a nature trail to catch a glimpse of birds and waterfowl. Others look to soak up history, book a boat cruise, fishing charter, or tee time. Many, though, are content to do nothing

and quietly enjoy the undeniable laid-back atmosphere.

We've lived in Chesapeake Bay country for more than 35 years, cruising boats on Bay waters and road-tripping in an RV and car. It has been such a wonderful experience for us, and we'd like to share our favorite destinations with you here in the *Chesapeake Bay Road Trip* so you can share in the joys that we had.

Chapter 1: Baltimore MD

A string of highways leads to Charm City, the moniker for Baltimore and all it offers. It's reason enough to begin our road trip there. Visitors arriving by airplane or train can rent a car for the trip. Car, RV, and motorcycle riders find a network of roads with clear signage for all the city has to offer. Visitors can choose from a budget-friendly motel outside the city or go for a stay at a pricier place in the Inner Harbor, where the action takes place.



The Inner Harbor of B'more, another moniker, is well known for its attractions as the home of sports teams like the Baltimore Ravens (M&T Bank stadium) and the Baltimore Orioles (Camden Yards), both with prominent parks you'll pass by entering the city. This is a city surrounded by an Inner Harbor, a popular shopping, eating, and entertainment center; it's also a delightful place to walk along the harbor and take in the sights.

At the time of writing, it is unfortunate that Baltimore has been in the news because of the tragic collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge in late March 2024. The ill-fated *Dali* cargo vessel destroyed the bridge

after losing power and veering off course, destroying the bridge and killing six construction workers.

Getting Around Charm City By Bus And Boat

Figure 1. The Charm City Bus takes people around Baltimore.

The best way to get around Baltimore is using their circulator bus called the Charm City Circulator. Get on and off at will and avoid traffic and parking. To get an overview of the city and harbor, take a ride out to Fort McHenry, known for the battle defending



Baltimore Harbor against the British Navy in the War of 1812.

Figure 2. The Water taxi is a great way to get around on water.

The harbor water taxi is another way to get around. Enjoy being on the water, and avoid traffic. You'll find information about the routes and everything you need to visit at Baltimore Water Taxi.

If you're on the water or near the harbor, look for Mr. Trash Wheel – Part Time Celebrity, Full Time Trash Interceptor (mrtrashwheel.com), a big water wheel that floats in the harbor and removes debris and garbage from the water.

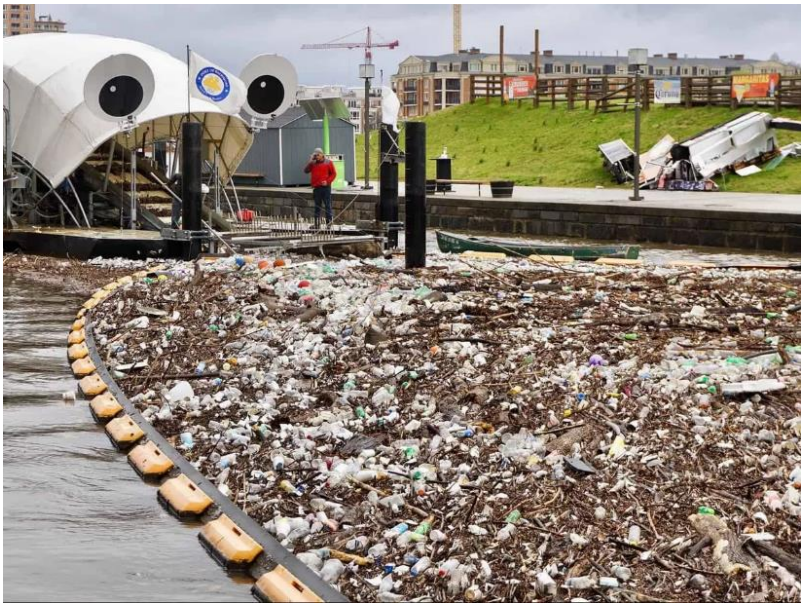


Figure 3. Mr. Trash Wheel keeps the waters clean.

The Baltimore Visitor Center in the heart of the Inner Harbor is a good place to learn about all that

Baltimore offers. Peruse the displays and find brochures to pique your interest.

Two of our favorites are nearby: the American Visionary Art Museum, where visionary artists, many of whom are self-taught, display their one-of-a-kind sculptures and unique pieces of art. You could spend the day at The Maryland Science Center and learn about everything that strikes your fancy, from the mysteries of dinosaurs to math and science to even life beyond earth.

Nearby is Orioles Park at Camden Yards, a favorite for baseball fans because of its retro design reminiscent of the traditional Wrigley Field in Chicago. Many feel it began a new era in ballpark design, making watching a game more enjoyable with its nostalgic atmosphere.

A prominent feature of the Inner Harbor is the National Aquarium, a striking building with an angled glass roofline that has an amazing array of exhibits like a rain forest, coral reef, sharks, and dolphins. The aquarium is surrounded by a nod to the city's seafaring heritage, as well as a maritime museum, WWII submarine, and lightship.

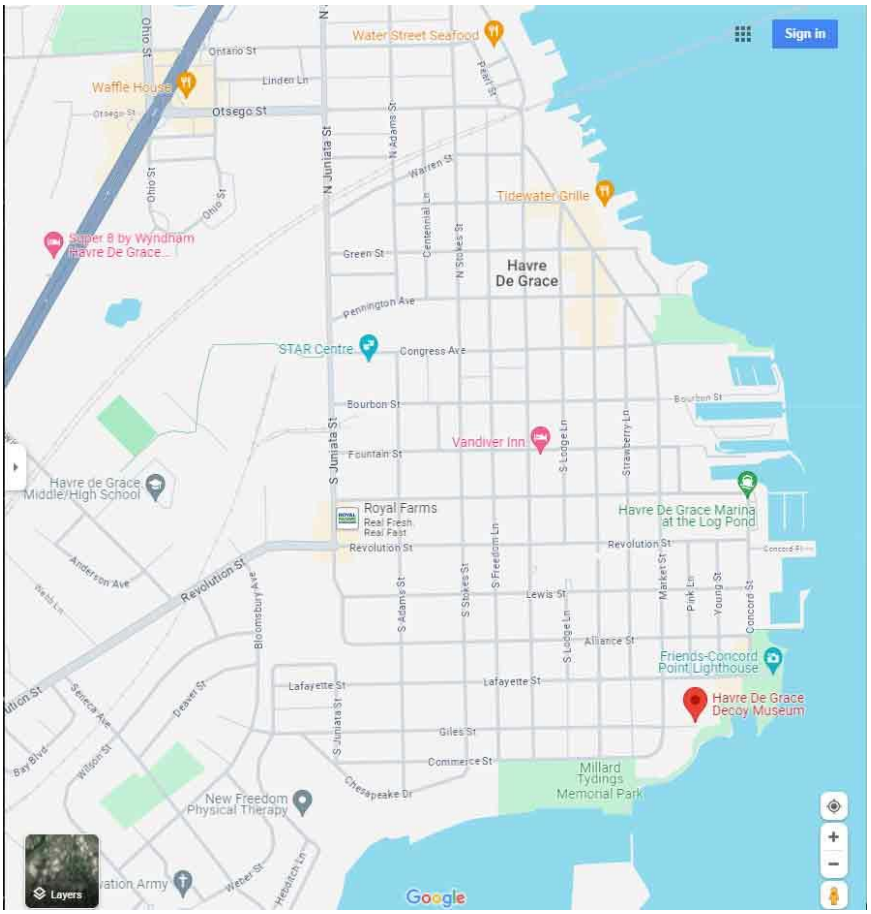


Figure 4. The B&O Railroad Museum is perfect for train enthusiasts

A short drive from the Inner Harbor is another of our favorites, the B&O Railroad Museum in Mount Clare, a nearby neighborhood. You can park your car and take a walk through an amazing collection of vintage steam engines and equipment and go aboard the Mile One Express for a ride.

We found an interesting set of self-guided tours at the B&O Museum, one entitled Rail Trails "From Slavery to Civil Rights." It explained the role of Pullman Company in providing meaningful jobs for porters and porterettes, while earlier, the American railroads, especially in the South, used enslaved people to build them.

Chapter 2: Harve de Grace MD



Havre de Grace, some 41 miles north of Baltimore, is in Harford County on the shores of the Susquehanna River, where the river meets the Bay. The charming historic town is on the far northwestern reaches of the Bay off Hwy 40. Legend says the Marquis de Lafayette gave the town its name when he was leading French Troops there and named the town after the French port city Le Harve. Today, the moniker is often shortened to HdG.



Figure 1 Harve de Grace Decoy Museum has many unique artifacts

Harve de Grace is known for its connection with Decoys created by local artists and carvers of ducks and waterfowl, many of whom are featured at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum.

Pick up a self-guided tour at the Visitors Center on Pennington Avenue and follow the numbered medallions embedded in the sidewalk. The Lafayette Trail is a 3-mile loop through the streets of HdG's National Register Historic District, a nice way to explore the architecture of the town. The city offers a trolley service, "The Tide," to get around or take a stroll on The Promenade, a boardwalk along the Susquehanna River passing museums and the Concord Point lighthouse.

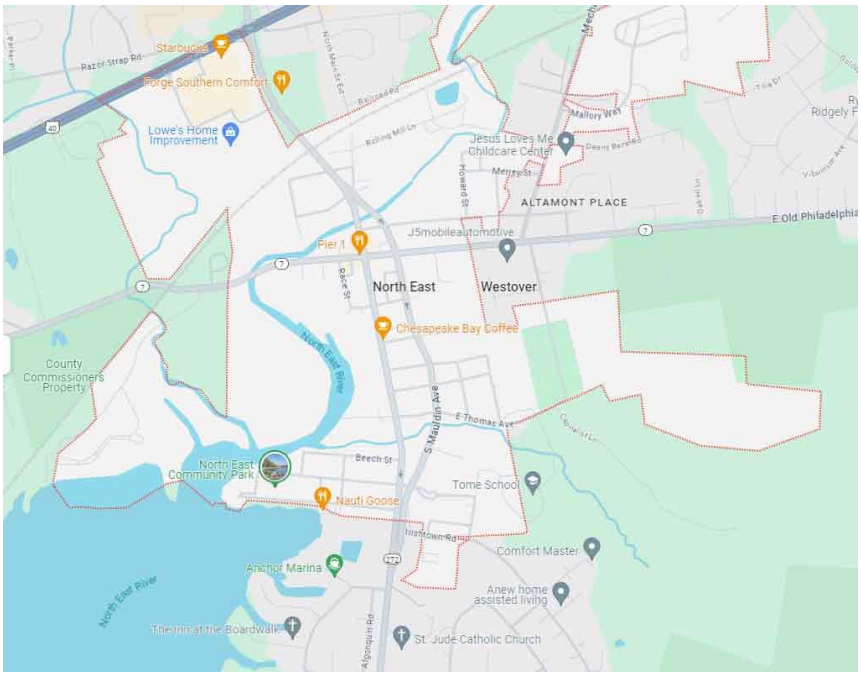
Explore Havre de Grace | Official Havre de Grace Tourism Website is a good source of visitor information.



Figure 6. The Conowingo Dam is quite a sight to see

The Conowingo Dam on the Susquehanna River is north of HdG and is noteworthy because it's a large hydroelectric dam, one of the largest non-federal hydroelectric dams in the U.S., and the largest dam in Maryland.

Chapter 3: North East MD



Heading northeast from Harve de Grace on Hwy 40, aka Pulaski Highway, you cross the Susquehanna River and parallel I-95, a major connector between Philadelphia and Baltimore.



Figure 7. the old Gilpin's Falls covered bridge is a historic landmark.

It's an easy 12-mile run. On Hwy 272, you'll pass the charming old Gilpin's Falls covered bridge near I-95, where it sits along the main roadway spanning Northeast Creek. The historic landmark is a 119-foot single-span burr truss bridge, the longest covered bridge in the state of Maryland. The bridge was originally built in the 1860s and, over the years, has been renovated and cared for by volunteers.



Figure 8. The town of North East has a host of shops full of quaint trinkets.

To reach the town of North East, turn off Hwy 40 on Mechanics Valley Road, which splits into a one-way Main Street leading into town. We found a walkable downtown with a nice smattering of antique and kitschy shops, restaurants, and churches, a popular day trip for weekenders.

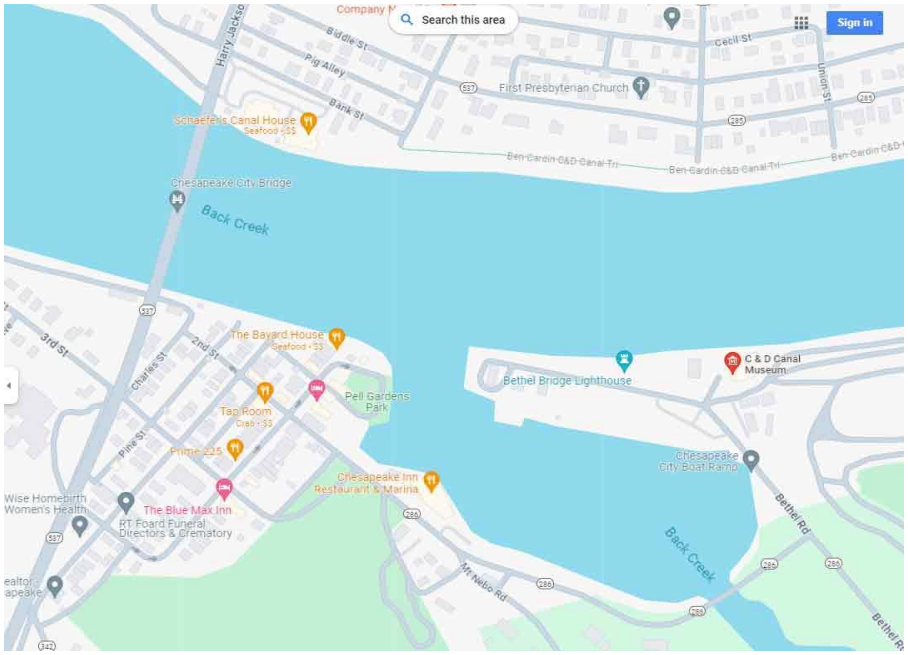
The community park has a waterfront with walking paths, playgrounds, and restrooms. The Upper Bay Museum is about preserving the lifestyle of the waterman and hunter of the Upper Chesapeake Bay. Beyond the town is Elk Neck State Park, with the Turkey Point Lighthouse and North East beach area for swimming access to the Susquehanna Flats of the Chesapeake Bay.



Figure 9. You'll find an assortment of antiques in North East MD

From the far north of the western shore of the Chesapeake, drive Hwy 40 across the top of the Bay for less than 30 miles, and then turn south to Chesapeake City on the eastern shore.

Chapter 4: Chesapeake City MD



Chesapeake City, just 12 miles from North East, is currently the only town in Maryland that is situated on a working commercial canal. Most of its interesting 19th-century architecture is still intact, and the area that encompasses it on the south bank has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. As early as the 17th century, local settlers recognized the possibility of connecting Chesapeake Bay with the Delaware River. They realized that making land

cut and building a canal would lower the distance substantially.



Figure 10. Chesapeake City combines old and new architecture.

We have anchored or tied up at the free dock in Chesapeake City at least five times when transiting the canal. We also enjoyed visiting by car to see more of the area.

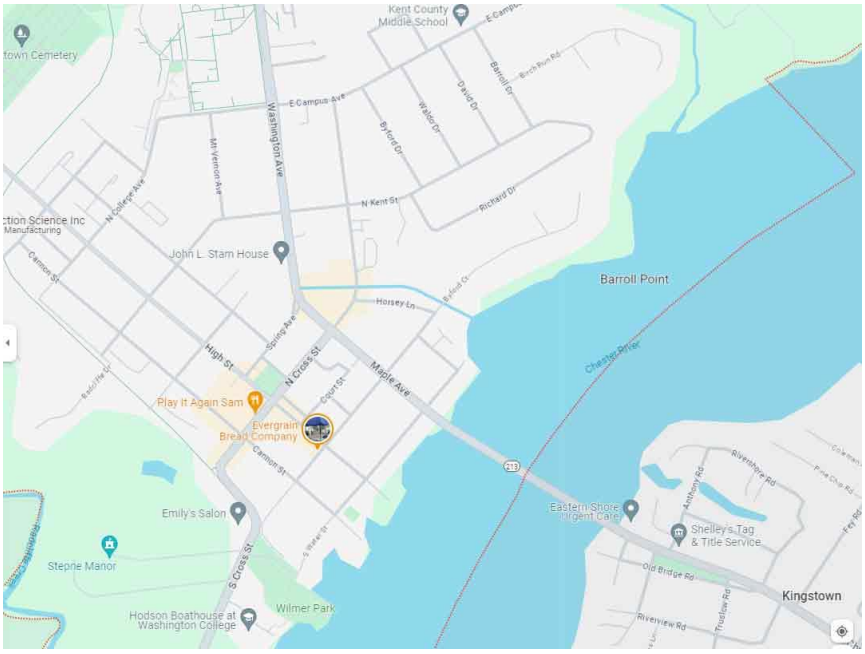


Figure 11. You will find a variety of stores, houses and people here.

Today, the town has the original brick streets and buildings converted into inns, B&Bs, restaurants, and retailers with a variety of goods. The canal city has been appreciated especially by weekenders since it's an easy getaway from Baltimore and Philadelphia and points east.

A marina sits on the shore across from north Chesapeake City, a short ferry ride away. You can sit anywhere along the shore and watch ocean freighter traffic and boaters steam down the canal. You can bike, hike, run, or walk on the 17-mile Ben Cardin C & D Canal Trail at the foot of North Chesapeake City's Lock Street, next to the town Ferry Dock.

Chapter 5: Chestertown MD



It's 31 miles from Chesapeake City to Chestertown, the home of Washington College. It's a hip, historic town just off Hwy 50 on the eastern shore not far from Philadelphia (a 2-hour drive) and points east. You will find specialty shopping opportunities and good restaurants in town and on the riverfront, all with a strong sense of its place in history in a budding United States.



Figure 12. The 1768 schooner Sultana is an impressive sight

The Cross Street Gallery in town features the work of Marc Castelli, a renowned artist for his portraits of watermen and other paintings. Working from photographs he takes on board, he paints exquisite portraits of today's watermen and their workboats.

The annual Sultana, a 1768 schooner down rigging festival, is a popular event that brings together the largest annual tall ship gatherings in North America.

Live bluegrass music, lectures, and regional food combine to put Chestertown on the map.



Figure 13. The reenactment of Chestertown protests is a festival people come to see from all over the States.

Another popular festival is the reenactment of Chestertown residents protesting the British Parliament's closing of the port of Boston. The residents resolved to forbid importing, selling, or consuming tea in Chestertown. According to local legend they raided the British ship anchored in the Chester River and tossed her cargo of tea overboard.



Figure 13. Visitors to Chestertown can bike their way across town.

Stop at the Visitor Center on the corner where Hwy 213 intersects with U.S. 50 entering the town, and learn about Chestertown and the surrounding areas at Visitors - Town of Chestertown.

Chapter 6: Rock Hall MD

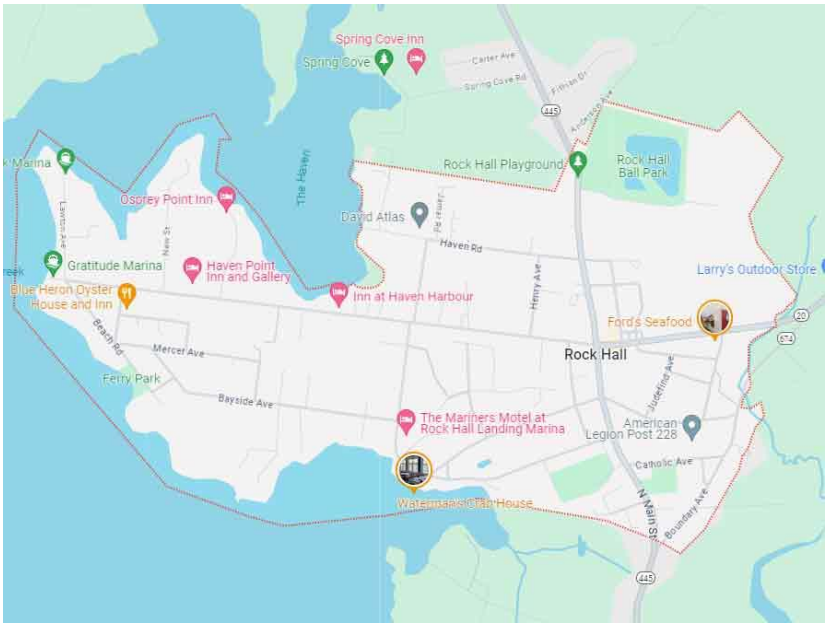




Figure 14. Rock Hall is a charming town where you can enjoy good food and accommodations.

Rock Hall, just 13 miles south of Chestertown on Hwy 20, is a charming waterman's town, long a boater's stopover, just across the Bay from Baltimore. Marinas, B&Bs, and restaurants line the harbor shoreline, meaning you have plenty of choices on where to stay, what to eat, and what sights to enjoy.

The town is small, with a nice local feeling of a fishing-minded community. We noticed a tailorable boat in many of the driveways and yards of homes. Just north of Rock Hall town harbor, you'll find expansive development with waterfront inns, properties with marinas, restaurants, rental homes, and cottages on the Bay. There's a little beach, too.



Figure 2. Monument on Rock Hall bulkhead to watermen

The town website has information on all that Rock Hall has to offer https://www.rockhallmd.com/ .

Chapter 7: Kent Island MD

The road to Kent Island starts south from Chestertown on Hwy 213 and passes through bucolic farmlands, busy subdivisions, and shopping centers, leading to the eastern end of the Bay Bridge at Kent Island. As traffic increases, you'll know you're nearing Kent Island.

The high Chesapeake Bay Bridge heading west to Annapolis spans Kent Narrows, a narrow waterway that separates the Chester River and Eastern Bay and is lined with condos, waterside restaurants, and marinas. It's an easy 65-mile drive from Chestertown to Kent Island Narrows. Find a spot to sit and savor steamed crabs or a fish sandwich and cold beer and enjoy watching a parade of boats of all shapes and sizes.

Once, when we were on our boat waiting at Kent Narrows for the bridge to open, we heard a boater asking the bridgetender if the span had been open during the earthquake earlier that morning. That told us we weren't crazy because we thought we had run aground but knew that was impossible because the depth sounder read 23 feet. It was a strange sensation feeling the boat being lifted and then

dropped. Apparently, we experienced our first earthquake afloat.



Figure 3 Kent Island visitor center is a great place to get all the information you need about this town.

A good stopover is the Chesapeake Heritage and Visitors Center on the west side of the Narrows, where you can get information or take the Cross Island Trail that parallels Route 301/50. Visit the Ferry Point Nature Park on the Chester River and drop a pole at the fishing pier or launch a boat or kayak.

At Kent Island, you can take the Chesapeake Bay Bridge to Annapolis and the Western shore or continue south on U.S. 50 on the Eastern shore.

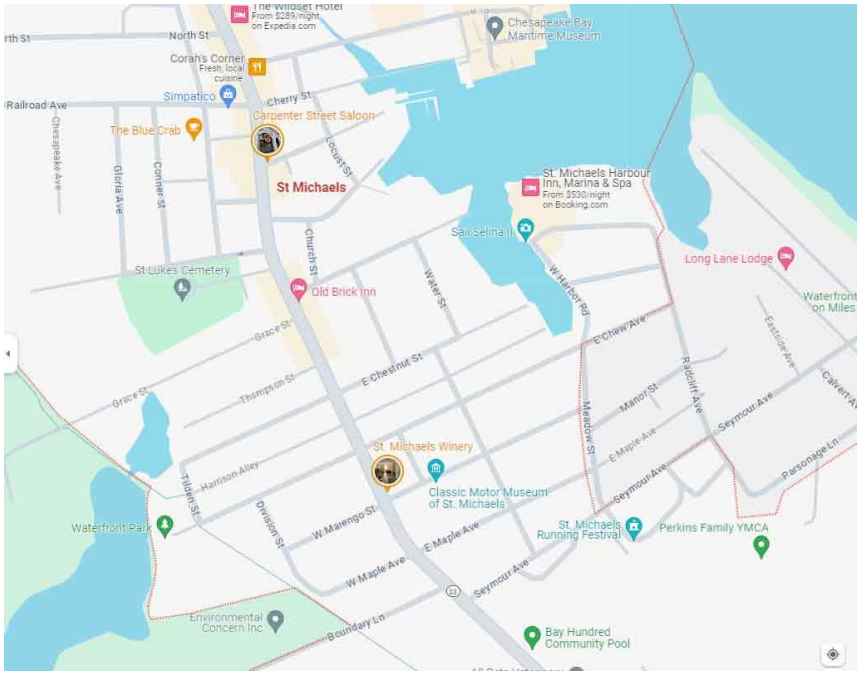
Section 2: Kent Island MD to Cape Charles VA

It's an easy 42-mile drive from Kent Island to St Michaels, following 301/50 toward Ocean City. You'll veer to the right and follow U.S. 50, which leads south on the eastern shore, passing by shopping centers, pastoral farmlands, and housing communities. Local and visiting golfers enjoy the Hog Neck Golf Course, a public course that you'll pass along U.S. 50.

For a birds-eye view of the area, consider taking a ride in a 1942 Stearman biplane flying out of Easton Airport. You'll see it as you approach Easton, a charming old historic town. The aerial view gives you an amazing view of the intricate landscape.

Take the route 322 bypass to route 33 down the peninsula to St. Michaels.

Chapter 8: St. Michaels MD, Talbot County



We've lived in St Michaels for more than 35 years and watched it evolve from a sleepy waterman's town to a popular second home destination for people who live in Washington D.C., Baltimore, and Philadelphia. Now it's gentrified with an active population of retirees, and there's a nice mix of locals, come-heres, and visitors who like to fish, go boating, biking, birding, and golfing, as well as eat fresh crabs and seafood.



Figure 17. The St. Michaels Harbor is always full of fishermen.

Driving Hwy 33, you see a road marker: "This road is dedicated to Frederick Douglass." It's a sign of Black history awareness in the area. Born a former slave turned editor and author, Douglass was born in Talbot County. He became an eloquent spokesperson and famous orator. As a child sent to Baltimore as a house slave, he learned to read the Bible and the Columbian Orator, a series of political essays from his owner's wife. He lived through brutal beatings as a young man, worked at Fells Point, and later escaped to Philadelphia. He became an abolitionist, and author of the book *The North Star*, an early perspective of life from a Black man. He said, "My degree is written on my back," referring to the scars from many beatings and how he had no

formal education despite being such an influential figure.

The charming small harbor town, some 42 miles from Kent Narrows, is home to the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum and the Motor Museum as well as a choice of art galleries, B&Bs, casual and fine dining, and shopping opportunities. The fishing, oysters, and crabs are top of mind for locals, and visitors, too. Our favorite places for seafood and crabcakes are Carpenter's Street Saloon in town and Chesapeake Landing, just north of town.

The Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum first put St Michaels on the map as it expanded its collections of decoys, waterfowl, maritime tools and materials, and regional folk art. Most prominent are the examples of vessels developed in the Chesapeake Bay, like the log canoe, bugeye, skipjack, and crab dredger.

The Classic Motor Museum, also in town, is another popular stop for all things with an engine. You'll find examples of pre and post-WWII classic automobiles, vintage trucks, and motorcycles in the Exhibit Barn. A large colorful map of town is displayed at the post office and further on at the Visitor Center to give you a sense of what you'll find. Just follow the Parking signs, leave your car, and walk or ride your bike around town.

An enjoyable way to see the Miles River is on the tour boat *Patriot* berthed at the maritime marina. Or sail on *Seline II,* a restored 1926 private yacht.

More information about St Michaels can be found at https://www.stmichaelsmd.com/.

Chapter 9: Tilghman Island, Talbot County



Figure 4. Holiday Crab Basket Tree from the Talbot County Watermen Association

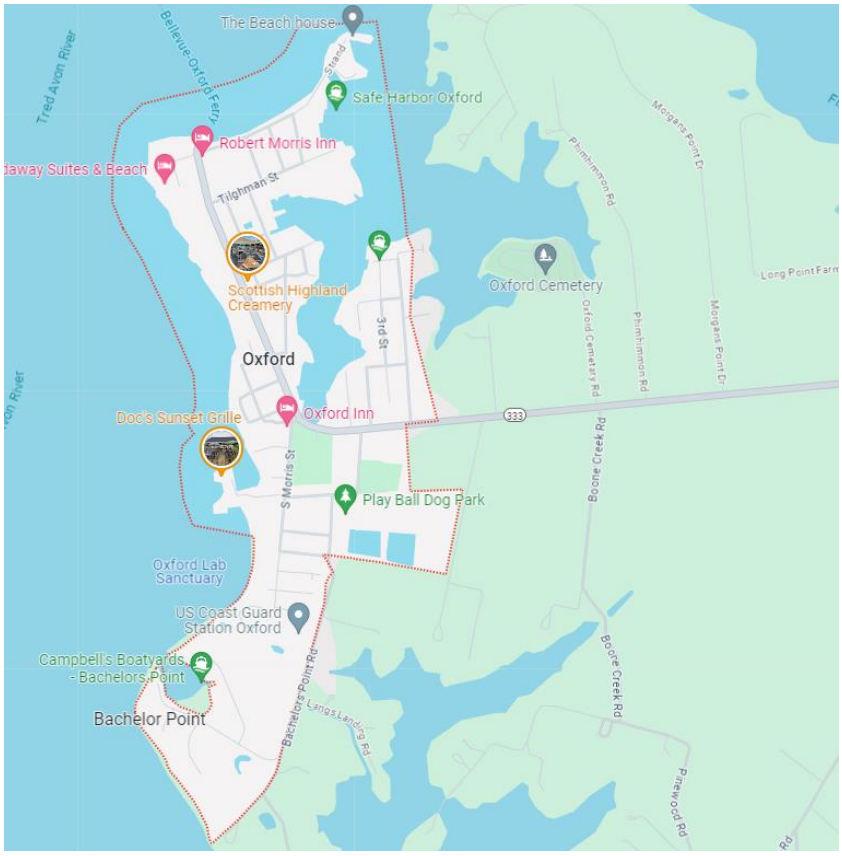
Just 14 miles north of St. Michaels on Hwy 33, you'll find Tilghman Island, another retiree enclave with a working waterman's village. The Tilghman Island bridge at Knapps Narrows connects the Chesapeake Bay with access to the Tred Avon River leading to Oxford and to the Choptank River and Cambridge, both popular boating and fishing grounds. With its opening bridge at The Narrows, the waterway is a busy thoroughfare of boaters, watermen, and ski-doers, so restaurants there provide a popular viewing spot, not to mention local seafood and a cold brew or chilled wine. We like the Country Store for its charm and homemade takeout sandwiches. The island has a nice blend of local watermen families who have lived there for generations. The Tilghman Watermen's Museum has a nice collection of boat models made by their captains and a growing number of artifacts and island life unique to Tilghman Island.

Tilghman Island is also the port of call for a popular boat tour to Poplar Island. The number to call at Maryland Environmental Service is 770-6503. Call them up and ask for the tour desk for reservations. The reclaimed island was sinking into the sea at an alarming rate until it was filled with dredging material

from Baltimore Harbor to create an extensive wildlife habitat.

You'll notice a large new building on the Bay side of the road, a sign of the growing aquaculture business where oysters are grown for harvesting.

Chapter 10: Oxford, MD, Talbot County



The drive from Tilghman Island to Oxford is 30 miles. However, we like to take the Oxford-Bellevue Ferry,

a car ferry from Bellevue near St. Michaels to visit Oxford, which is another popular boater's destination. The ferry takes passengers on a short trip across the Tred Avon River to Oxford, a quiet sister to the livelier St. Michaels.



Figure 5. The Robert Morris Inn is a good place to stay.

Oxford, a very walkable village, is as popular with boaters as it is with bicycle riders. As you get off the ferry, you'll find shops, seafood dining, ice cream, B&Bs, and the historic Robert Morris Inn.



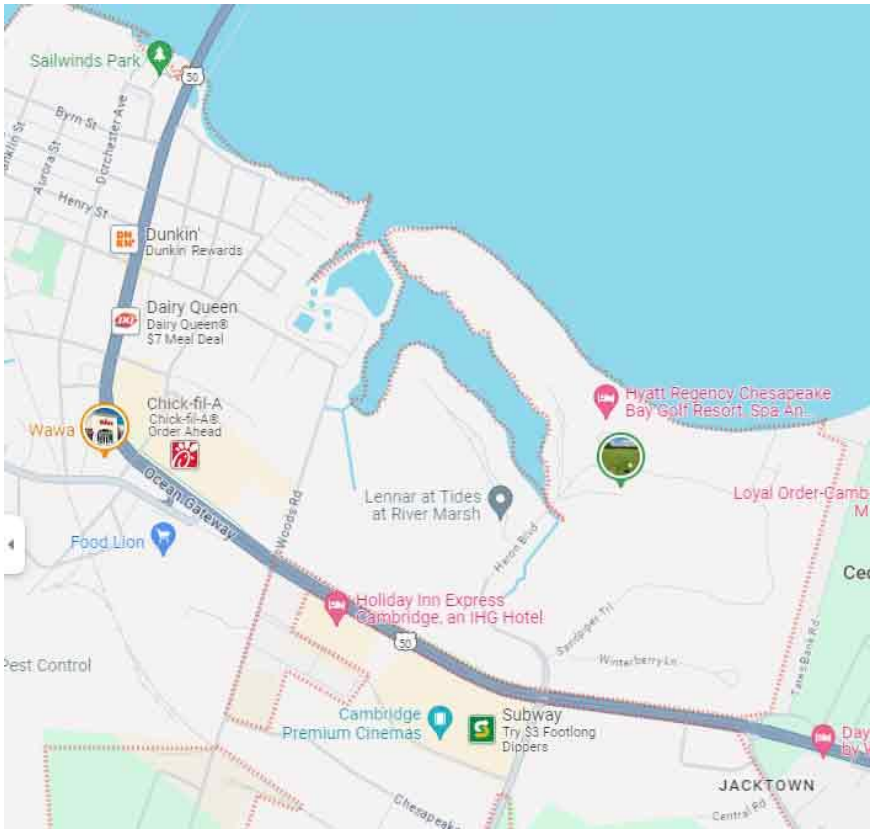
Figure 6. Oxford MD town clock

You can stroll the narrow tree-lined streets in town and walk to the water's edge from Oxford Wharf at the ferry dock. Walk farther down The Strand to the small beach for a nice view of the river. Sail and power boaters come up the Tred Avon River to Oxford for its marinas and services, along with its quiet, laid-back ambiance. Those who come by boat

later stay and retire to this charming town. We like to get an ice cream cone at the Oxford Market & Deli on Morris Street across from the Treasure Chest gift shop. You can sit in the park and take in another nice view of the Choptank River. The quiet streets and long country roads bring bikers to town. If you like to bike, here's a link to a bike trail between St. Michaels and Oxford and other bike trails in Talbot County.

For more information on visiting Oxford, go to Port of Oxford.

Chapter 11: Cambridge MD, Dorchester County



From Oxford to Cambridge, it's a 17-mile run. You'll pass over the Choptank River, which divides Talbot and Dorchester counties. The bridge has a popular fishing pier, that brings anglers to cast their lines from all over.

If you're interested in aquaculture, make a stop at the University of Maryland's Horn Point Laboratory, which is not far from Cambridge off Hwy 50. The Horn Point Laboratory Coastal and Estuarine Sciences (UMCES) provides advice to states and

national leaders on how to manage the environment and educates the next generation of environmental scientists on how to meet the challenges of the future.



Figure 7. Cambridge MD waterside park and visitor center

Their oyster hatchery is known for supplying two billion oysters to help the recovery of Chesapeake Bay. Here's a link to learn more about the lab and a talking tour of the campus to help you learn more about this amazing place.

From the bridge, you'll see the large white Hyatt Resort upriver; the town and its busy harbor are just off Hwy 50 on your right. The town is just a few blocks from Route 50, where you'll find a nice selection of eateries and interesting shops with expansive murals on building walls.

Harriet Tubman

The town is very proud of Harriet Tubman, a local enslaved woman who went on to become prominent in the legacy of slavery in the area. The Harriet Tubman Museum and Education Center pays tribute to this amazing woman who was born into slavery in Dorchester County in 1822.



Figure 8. The Harriet Tubman mural in Cambridge MD represents the history of this area.

In a country store nearby, Tubman sustained a brain concussion from a fractured skull, causing seizures and severe headaches. She lived with that disability her entire life, unfortunately, but that didn't stop her from learning and persevering. She worked on the docks and learned from watermen how to read the water, and sailors taught her how to read the stars in

the sky and navigate. Her father, who worked in the timber fields, taught her to read the forest and trees and used those skills to lead family and friends to freedom in the 1850s. She led them from Maryland and Delaware to Philadelphia to begin a new life. Today, we're reminded of those dangerous journeys in religious spirituals like "Let My People Go…" and "Wade in the Water." Tubman became known as a conductor of the Underground Railroad, now coined "UGR," as her path created an infrastructure where slaves were often given food, clothing, and shelter from local free slaves, white farmers, and Quakers. Her extensive knowledge of the terrain made her sought by Union officers; she became a valuable intelligence asset with knowledge of the location of Confederate troops.

Throughout the area, signs lead to the Underground Railroad Byway. This driving tour takes you on country roads from Cambridge to Goldsboro on a network of trails, waterways, and safe houses used by escaping slaves as they fled to northern states.

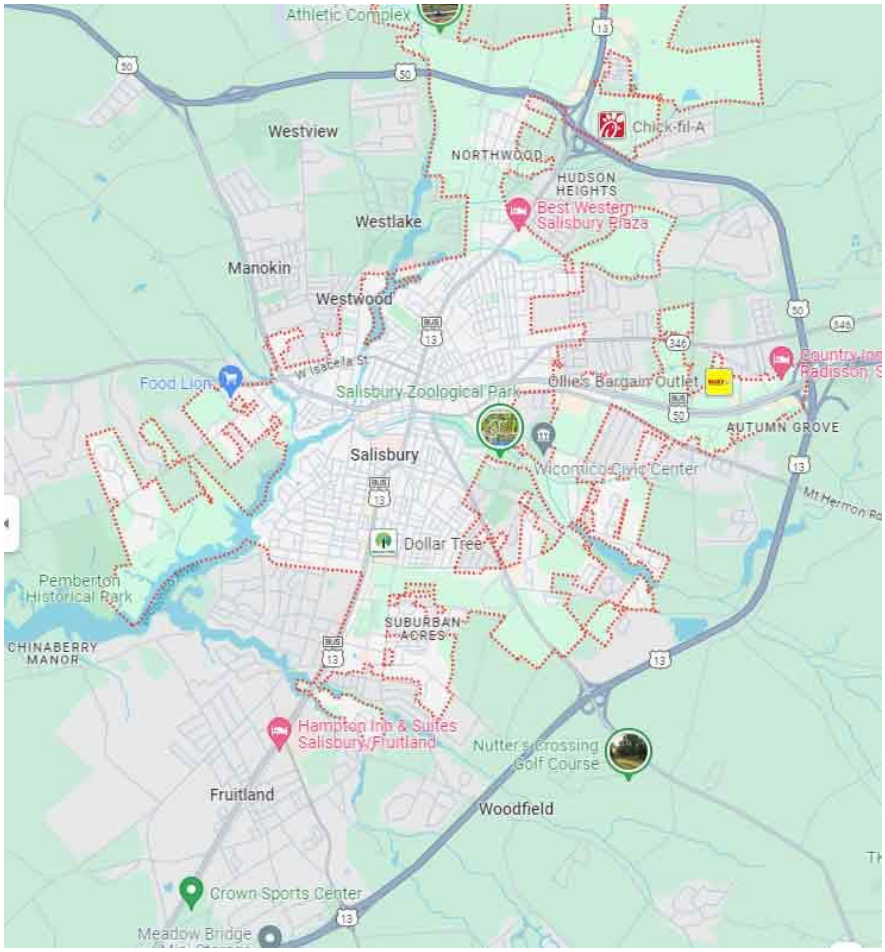
Cambridge continues its heritage of watermen, supplying the area with oysters and crabs. It is also a popular weekend getaway and charter fishing spot. The town is known for its murals and beautiful paintings splashed across buildings throughout

downtown, peppered with specialty retailers, micro-breweries, wineries, and B&Bs. Foodies find a nice selection of local eateries, seafood spots, and fine dining restaurants. On the river in town, you'll see the long history of its maritime heritage at the Richardson Maritime complex and Ruark Boat works and its history of the fishing industry at J.M. Clayton Seafood Company. To learn more about visiting this ever-evolving city, go to this link.

Nearby is Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge known for its waterfowl and trail system designed to help you see its ecological and diverse natural landscape. Kayakers and canoers particularly enjoy paddling the quiet waters of the wildlife refuge.

As you drive south toward Salisbury, you'll go over a high bridge spanning the Nanticoke River at Vienna. The area is rich in Native American history on Delmarva—Chicone Village at Handsell, which celebrates three cultures – Native Americans, African Americans, and colonial settlers. We visited an event combining these cultures and how they lived and thrived on the land between the shores of the Nanticoke and Choptank rivers. For information, go to this link.

Chapter 12: Salisbury MD, Wicomico County



From Cambridge south on Hwy 50, the road takes you some 32 miles through a mix of farm fields, large farm stands, industrial sites, and commercial buildings. You'll follow a bypass around Salisbury, known for Salisbury University.

There's a lot to see and do here, especially if you love sports. Baseball fans enjoy the Delmarva

Shorebirds, a Minor League Baseball team based in Salisbury, where their home games are played at the Arthur W. Perdue



Figure 9. Delmarva Shorebirds at Perdue Stadium

Stadium. They are members of the Carolina League and the Single-A affiliate of the Baltimore Orioles.

A nice stop along the way is the Salisbury Zoo, a free, small, family-friendly zoo housing everything from alpacas to white-tailed deer, birds to amphibians, and even a wide variety of reptiles.

In Salisbury, route 50 splits at Route 13, with Route 50 going east to the popular Ocean City MD resort town while Route 13 continues south as it winds its way through farmlands and passes Princess Anne, home of the University of Maryland Eastern Shore.

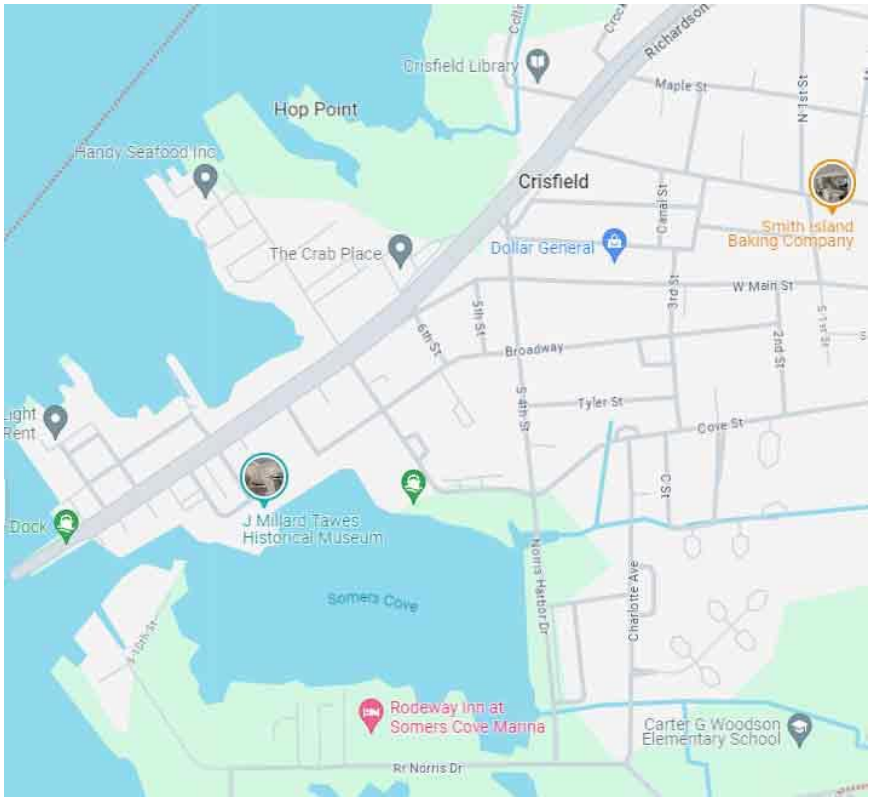


Figure 10. American Cruise Line shipbuilding center in Salisbury MD

What you can't see from the road is the American Cruise Line shipbuilding center on the Wicomico River in Salisbury. They design and build commercial ships as long as 450 feet, including coastal cats, cruise ships, and riverboats.

Heading south down the Delmarva Peninsula, billboards broadcast a religious tone like "Losing Faith in God? CALL (an 800#)" and "Beyond reasonable doubt Jesus is alive." These kinds of messages let you know how deeply religious the people here are. Indeed, you'll find many believers here who would be happy to talk about their faiths. Stretches of the roadway are lush corridors of trees divided by the highway; it's a diverse landscape peppered by chicken farms, a correctional institution, farm silos, and haystacks in the field.

Chapter 13: Crisfield MD, Somerset County



Take route Hwy 13 to 413, about 32 miles, to find Crisfield, a waterside community on the Bay in Somerset County, MD. Crisfield is the southernmost town in Maryland and is widely known across the East Coast for its seafood and access to Smith Island. It's a collection of marsh islands with rising sea levels, which threaten the fishing way of life there. This has caused some tensions in recent years, but the destination is as picturesque as ever and well worth a visit if you like good seafood. As you drive down the peninsula, you see a wind vane,

which we assume produces electricity for the working waterfront town based on the seafood industry and tourism.

The railroad tracks laid in the late 1880s gave Crisfield watermen's catch access to east coast cities, expanding its seafood business and making it known as the Crab Capital. We noticed the old tracks were a nice walking and biking trail.

While walking through town, I dropped a pile of brochures in front of "The Weathered Porch," a charming shop. The shopkeeper was quick to help, offering me a bag. That's the kind of friendly small-town atmosphere we found in Crisfield. A stop at the visitor center has all the information you need to get to know the town. So does their website.

The Janes Island State Park at Crisfield is definitely worth a visit for its tranquil setting on the water, which is ideal for flat water kayaking and canoeing along the miles of isolated shoreline and marshland. The biking and walking trails, tent, and RV sites make it popular for overnighters.

Janes Island is a favorite campsite of ours and we've spent Thanksgiving with friends here in the past. We jokingly refer to the day as the site of the" flaming turkey" incident. We met friends in their RV with plans

to have our Thanksgiving meal together. We would prepare the turkey and eat aboard their larger rig.

The excitement started when flames shot out of our small propane oven as I opened the door to baste the turkey breast. There was no damage to the turkey or anyone but an embarrassing moment. When Gene later investigated, he learned the burner shook loose, so the raw flame shot out into the oven.

Boat Tour to Smith Island

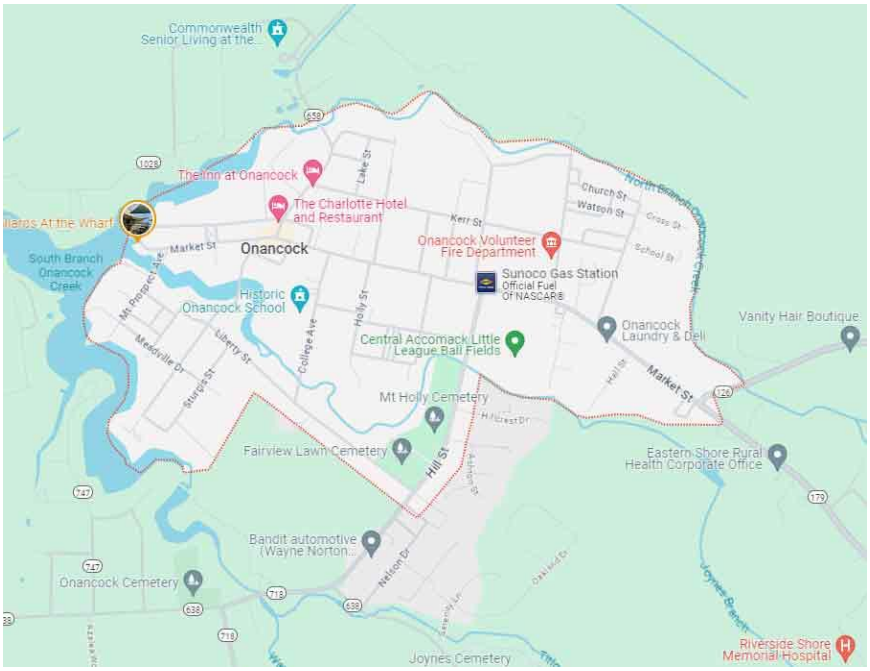


Figure 11. Tour boat to Smith Island from Onancock VA

Day cruises from the dock in Crisfield leave on a tour boat to Smith Island, where you can visit the Cultural Center, rent a bike or golf cart, and enjoy the quiet existence of families of watermen crabbing and oystering. Food lovers can't pass up the famous

Smith Island crabs and their 7 to 15 thin-layer cakes. Here's more information about the cruises. We definitely recommend taking one to the blue sea beyond.

Chapter 14: Onancock VA, Accomack County



The landscape of Virginia is much like Maryland, with more farmlands and sparsely populated areas. From Crisfield to Onancock, it's 53 miles. We always like to stop at Onancock VA, just off Hwy 13, about 98 miles south of Cambridge. To reach the town, turn east to Hwy 179, which becomes Market Street, the main artery of town. It's a small waterfront town on the

shores of Onancock Creek off the Bay and a popular getaway where you can stroll the tree-lined streets or sit on a bench by the water and watch the day go by.

The North Street Market has an impressive selection of gourmet specialties near the Charlotte Hotel & Restaurant, offering very fine dining. Nearby, you'll find art galleries and more specialty shops.

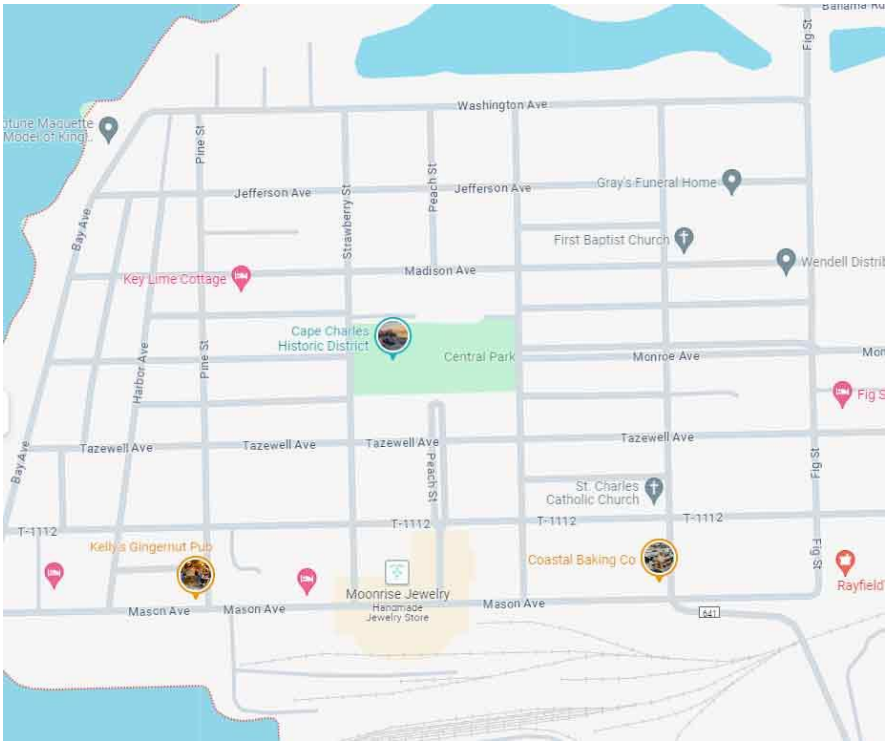


Figure 12. Onancock VA on MD Eastern shore

The Onancock Wharf is at the end of Market Street, where you can walk along the dock or enjoy a meal at the Mallard restaurant on the water. Nearby, you can rent kayaks and paddle boards or charter a sailing adventure. You can even take a boat trip from

Onancock to nearby Tangiers Island. This website has all the information you might need about Onancock.

Chapter 15: Cape Charles VA, Northampton County



Going 38 miles south of Onancock on Hwy 13, you'll find Cape Charles at the tip of the narrow peninsula known as ESVA or Eastern Shore of Virginia. A look at a map illustrates this narrow peninsula and the town of Cape Charles, where the Chesapeake Bay flows into the Atlantic Ocean. The signs should direct

you a short distance to Historic Cape Charles, a beach town with visitors in mind. Follow the sign on Hwy 13 and turn east on Hwy 184 west to find the town center. You'll see a water tower disguised as a lighthouse next to the Visitors Center, where you can pick up brochures and information or visit the website. It has all you need to enjoy your stay at Cape Charles.

The north side of Cape Charles Harbor is a destination catering to visiting boaters. If you want to go boating, fishing, or just enjoy the sights, this is where you should go. On the south side, it's a busy working harbor with a large concrete construction business that manufactures concrete structures.

Traffic can be brisk on summer weekends. You can rent bicycles and golf carts, paddle boards, and kayaks. The main shopping artery in town is Mason Street, where back-in diagonal car parking lines the street. Here, you will find all kinds of things, including specialty consignments and artisan boutiques, candy confections, gourmet foods, art galleries, and, of course, ice cream and pizza. From Mason Street, it's an easy walk to the town beach in a neighborhood with more retailers, B&Bs, and private homes.



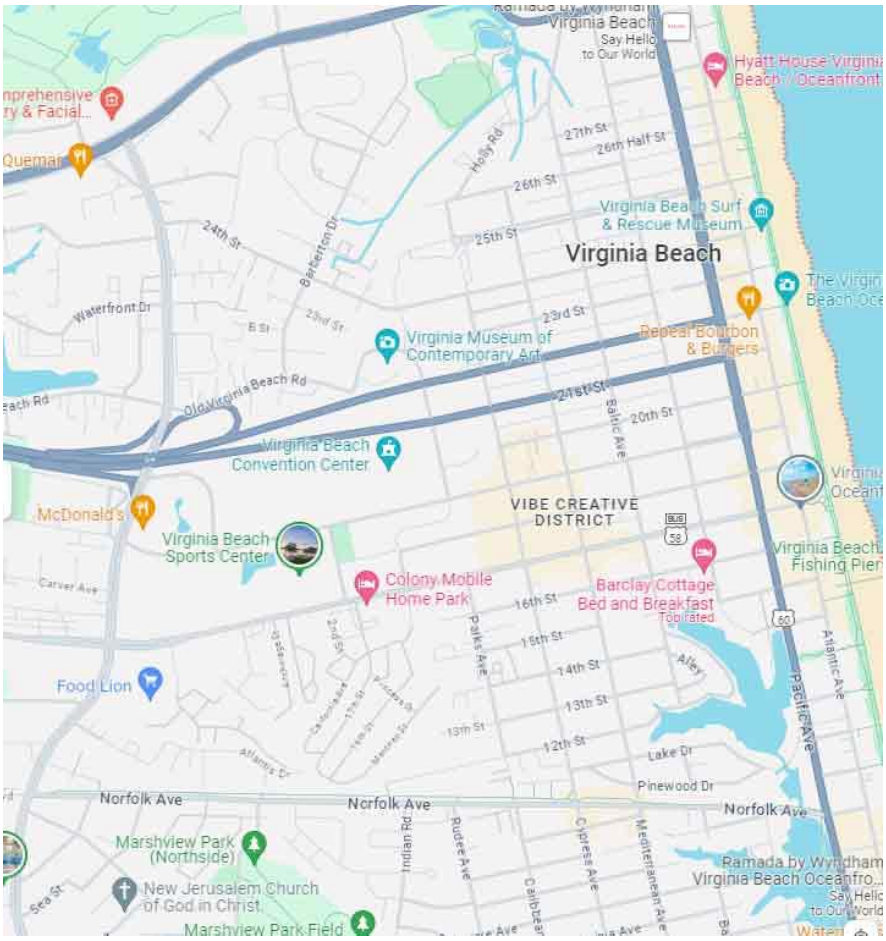
Figure 13. The Cape Charles Beach is a must-go place.

When you stand at the harbor and look across the Bay, you understand why passenger steamers and freight barges made the 36-mile crossing to connect Cape Charles with Norfolk.

Nature lovers will enjoy the National Wildlife Refuge at the base of the eastern shore terminus for the Chesapeake Bay -Tunnel Bridge. The bridge tunnel is an exciting drive going over and under the Chesapeake Bay, which takes you on a 17-mile crossing. The west end of the bridge lands you in Virginia Beach VA, next to Norfolk and the Tidewater Va area.

Section 3 Cape Charles VA to Annapolis MD

Chapter 16: Virginia Beach VA, Virginia Beach County



The distance from Cape Charles VA, to Virginia Beach is 45 miles, with 17 of those miles crossing the mouth of the Bay on the Chesapeake Bay-Tunnel Bridge. The view of the Bay from the bridge can be breathtaking, but arriving on the western shore is a

quick reminder that this southern coastal area of Tidewater, Virginia, is very different from the state's quiet side on the east. You're in a busy, thriving commercial complex with much of it based on the U.S. Navy and related businesses and the large amount of housing that goes with it.

Virginia Beach is rich in naval history and home to all things NAVY. It is poised on the lower western shore of Chesapeake Bay, and the waterfront areas are popular for their beach and condo rentals. These include the likes of Sandbridge and the Oceanfront with Rudee Inlet, the Fishing Pier and beachfront bars and eateries, and the Bay District's Chic's Beach and Cape Henry Lighthouse. Golfers can choose from five public courses and a Topgolf, and art lovers enjoy the Vibe creative district.

The beach in Virginia Beach is a popular vacation destination with all its related activities and a good place to base out off. Beach lovers flock to the oceanfront for its 3-mile-long beach, and retail therapy thrives in their town center. Water sports and charter fishing line the docks at Rudee Inlet. Wherever you find yourself in Virginia Beach, enjoy seafood eating at its best in this oceanfront and Bayside area.

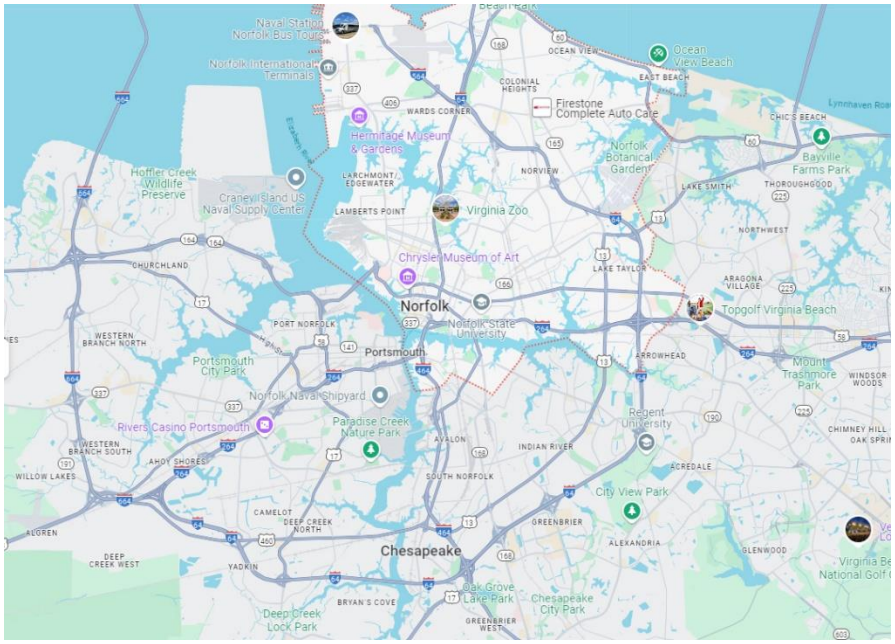
We found the Military Aviation Museum a fascinating collection of World War I and World War II aircraft. The exhibits between Army and Navy planes are in separate buildings, and you can decide what you would like to see first. Military plane buffs will enjoy the exhibits.



Figure 14. Military Aviation Museum in Virginia Beach VA

If you're traveling with kids, look for a sign, "Jurassic Park," displaying large sculptures of dinosaurs. The small park is at the entrance and has a unique collection of creatures, especially dinosaurs, that kids love, making it a nice spot to unwind and have a picnic.

Chapter 17: Norfolk VA, Norfolk County



From Virginia Beach to Norfolk waterfront, it's 19 miles in city traffic. As the largest Navy base in the U.S., Norfolk is known for its extensive complement of Naval ships, aircraft carriers, and submarines with an impressive armada of boats protecting the fleet. For visitors, Norfolk's Waterside district looms large in the downtown area with shopping, entertainment, restaurants, and a maritime center and marina.

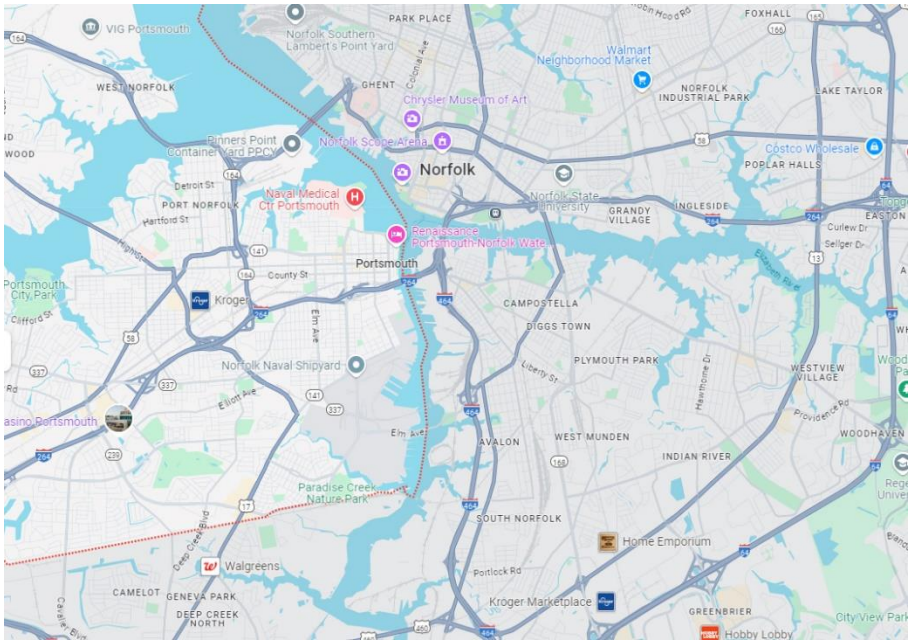


Figure 15. Battleship Wisconsin at Nauticus in Norfolk VA

On the waterfront, the massive Nauticus is a maritime-themed science center next to Battleship Wisconsin, a WWII ship that served during the Korean War and Gulf War. You can take a Naval base cruise from Nauticus and see the impressive fleet. Visit this link for some additional visitor information.

Just outside of town, the Virginia Zoo is a wonderful stop designed for kids of all ages. Have fun and observe the animals from all over the planet.

Chapter 18: Portsmouth VA, Portsmouth City County



Just three miles away from Norfolk is Portsmouth, where we experienced Hurricane Sandy, a category 3 storm, pummeling the eastern seaboard in 2012. We were heading south on the Intracoastal Waterway on *Early Bird*, our 32-foot lobster boat, when all boat traffic stopped. We battened down the hatches, removed all the canvas, and holed up until the superstorm subsided. It was not pretty, as high tides covered the Portsmouth waterfront. From our marina, we saw a U.S. Navy carrier head upriver, which confirmed this was a whopper of a storm.



Figure 16. Ferry crossing river between Portsmouth and Norfolk VA

Across the Elizabeth River from Portsmouth, a quick water taxi takes tourists and workers to Norfolk, its sister city.

At the Commodore Theater, a dinner theater in downtown Portsmouth, you can watch a popular movie at a dining table with a telephone for ordering. A nice touch for electric car owners is the chance to charge your car while you dine and watch the movie.

You may also enjoy a stop at the Portsmouth Colored Community Library Museum on Elm Avenue, a nationally registered historic site that celebrates the city's African American history, and the Children's Museum and Lightship Portsmouth, a National

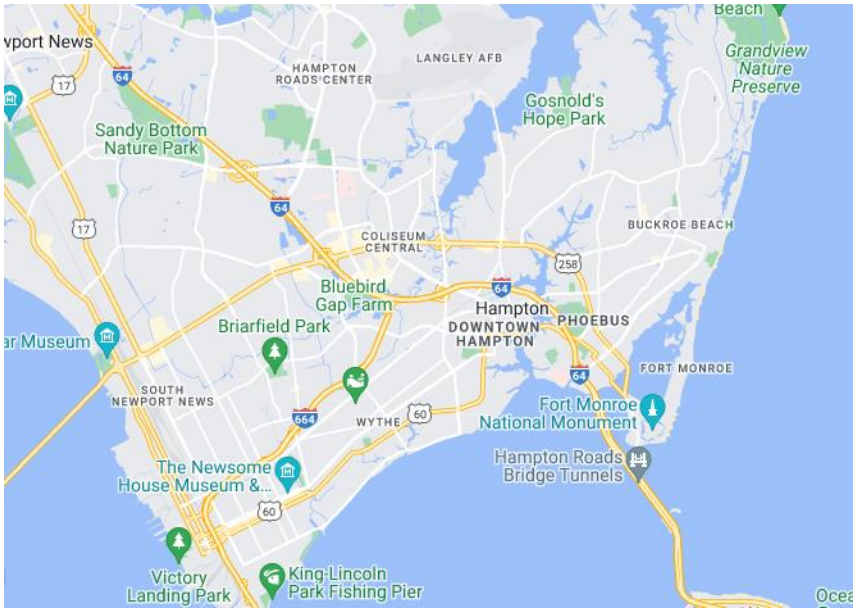
Historic Landmark. Go to this website for information on Portsmouth.



Figure 17. Commodore Theater

For a walking tour of historic homes, go to the Olde Towne area, where you'll find a large variety of period homes like Gothic and Green Revival mansions and Victorian townhomes. This area is perfect if you enjoy historic architecture and are interested in American history. You'll also find lush gardens surrounding the homes, waterfront parks, and a nice variety of bars and restaurants.

Chapter 19: Hampton VA, Independent City



Plan on 26 miles of traffic and a tunnel bridge to get from Norfolk to Hampton at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay on I-64. Hampton is the birthplace of America's space program and home to the Virginia Air & Space Science Center. At this NASA Langley Research Center, you'll enjoy an array of interactive aviation exhibits spanning 100 years of flight. If that's not enough for you, nearby is the Hampton University Museum, which houses a collection of artworks and artifacts of African, Native American, Oceanic, and Asian peoples.

If you're looking for some beach time, Buckroe Beach is a favorite for strolling and picking up some sea

breezes. Bring a picnic lunch and enjoy a sheltered spot to enjoy the sand and sea.

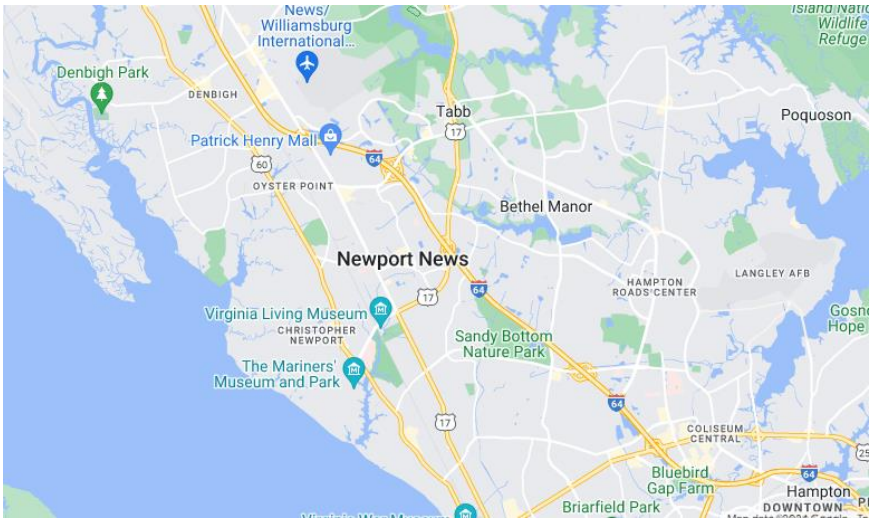


Figure 18. Point Comfort Lighthouse

We enjoyed a stop at Fort Monroe, where Hampton Roads Harbor meets the Chesapeake Bay. With beaches and boardwalks, it's a lovely place to live

and play. The fort was built to protect the entrance to the Chesapeake Bay and the Old Point Comfort Lighthouse lights the way. As a military installation, the fort housed Army nurses during World War II. Today, the 565-acre complex has a Visitor & Education Center and the Casement Museum, which have exhibits that explain its military history and freedom seekers during the Civil War.

Chapter 20: Newport News VA, Independent City



Just west of Hampton is Newport News on the waters of Hampton Roads, a large natural channel linking the James, Elizabeth, and Nansemond Rivers to the Chesapeake Bay, where it flows into the Atlantic Ocean. You'll see shipbuilding on a major scale as

you drive over the bridge connecting Norfolk on Interstate 664. There are massive fleets of commercial fishing vessels and Ford Class aircraft carriers, and U.S. Navy submarines are serviced there as well.



Figure 19. The Mariners Museum and Park

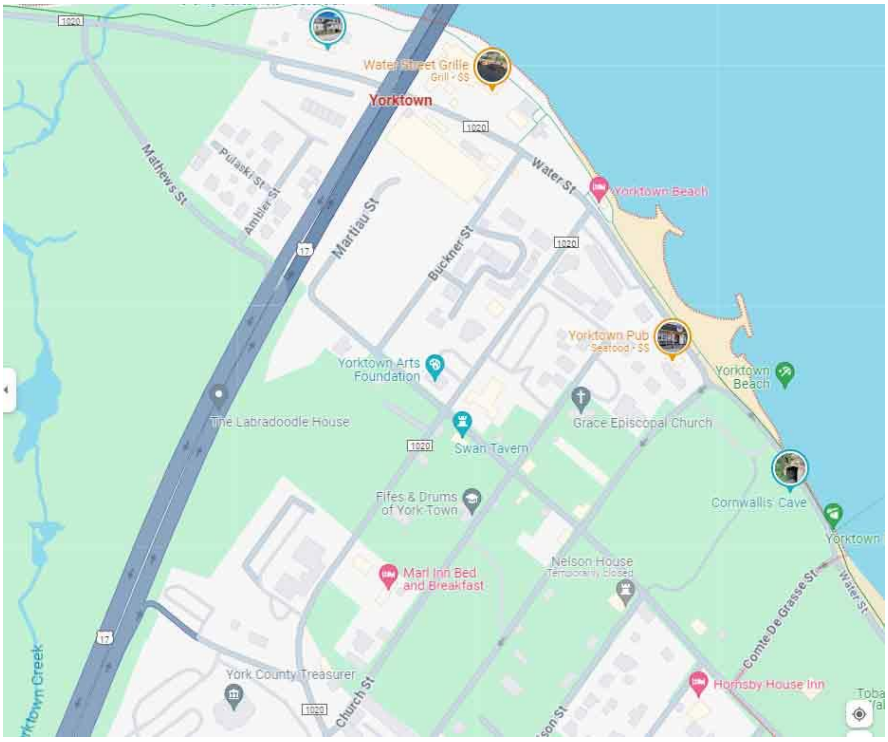
Newport News is another tidewater area with a strong military history. The area was established as a shipping port for animals and heavy ordnance and supplies during World War II. The protected deep-water harbor and rail connections on the Eastern Seaboard made it an ideal location during the war years. The area housed army posts and depots, the Army Balloon School, and Curtiss Flying School.

It's an easy 10-mile drive from Hampton to Newport News, where you'll find a tree-lined parkway leading to the Avenue of the Arts. Keep following the road,

and you'll see the Mariners' Museum and Park complex in Newport News. You'll also find the Mariners' Museum Library, which holds a massive maritime history collection here, which makes this location a prime choice for anyone interested in American military history. If you would like something different, then there is the VA Living Museum for nature lovers with exhibits of native VA wildlife and plants.

Newport News is proud of its African American Heritage and has created AACE (African American Cultural Experiences) to create an inclusive destination to celebrate diversity. It offers a space for people of African descent to share their experiences, discuss stories, and understand their impact on American culture.

Chapter 21: Yorktown VA, York County



On the road from Newport News, Hwy 17 runs north through a thriving suburban area to Yorktown on the York River. It is a scenic 16-mile drive to the river town that sits high on a bluff, touting its significant location during our country's early struggles for independence. As you walk down to the riverfront from the two-level parking area, you'll see the long dock surrounded by a walkway and parkland overlooking the York River. The best way to see the sights is to ride the free trolley from the riverfront and visit the Battlefield Visitor Center, the American Revolution Museum, and other sights of interest.

More information about Yorktown is available on this website.

Our first boat visit to Yorktown, VA, was on *Early Bird,* our 28-foot cruiser. We moored at Riverwalk Landing Marina in the heart of Historic Yorktown and saw the beauty of the town before us. The marina sits squarely at the foot of town, so it was ideally located near the shops, restaurants, and a lovely brick walkway that runs along the riverfront. We took the free trolley and stopped at the Battlefield Visitors Center and learned that the success of our forefathers against the English forces in the Revolutionary War was largely because of the French guarding the entrance to the Bay to support General Washington's patriots.

We visited a friend in nearby Colonial Williamsburg, VA, and had lunch at a tavern. Here, we learned about the role of Rockefeller, who provided the funding to buy the property, restore the city to its original design, and rebuild the stores and buildings.

America's Historic Triangle

Yorktown is part of America's Historic Triangle, a roadway connecting Yorktown with Jamestown and Historic Williamsburg. This triangle is frequented by

visitors all over the states, so the trolley makes for less stress and more enjoyment during peak tourist season. You could easily spend days exploring this area inland of the Bay, which is immensely rich in our country's history.

Colonial Williamsburg is a living history museum that recreates a century colonial American town, where you can participate in hands-on activities like cracking the secret messages of Revolutionary War codes or decorating a grapevine wreath with natural materials. You can also take a guided tour of the grounds or visit the Folk Art Museum. If all that history is making you hungry, then enjoy a meal at a historic tavern. We saw some kids were decked out in period costumes: boys in tricornered hats and girls in bonnets and long dresses. We watched woodworkers and carvers create chairs and cabinets and heard brickmakers explain the long process of combining water, clay, straw, and sand to create bricks.

After visiting Yorktown by boat, we left and chugged down the York River to the Bay when we noticed blue lights of patrol boats coming up. We were surprised to see they were protecting a submarine heading toward the Navy Weapons and Munitions Station, just two miles northwest of Yorktown. Behind us

came the Navy's *Warship 55,* announcing they were approaching the bridge and going out to sea. A lot was going on.

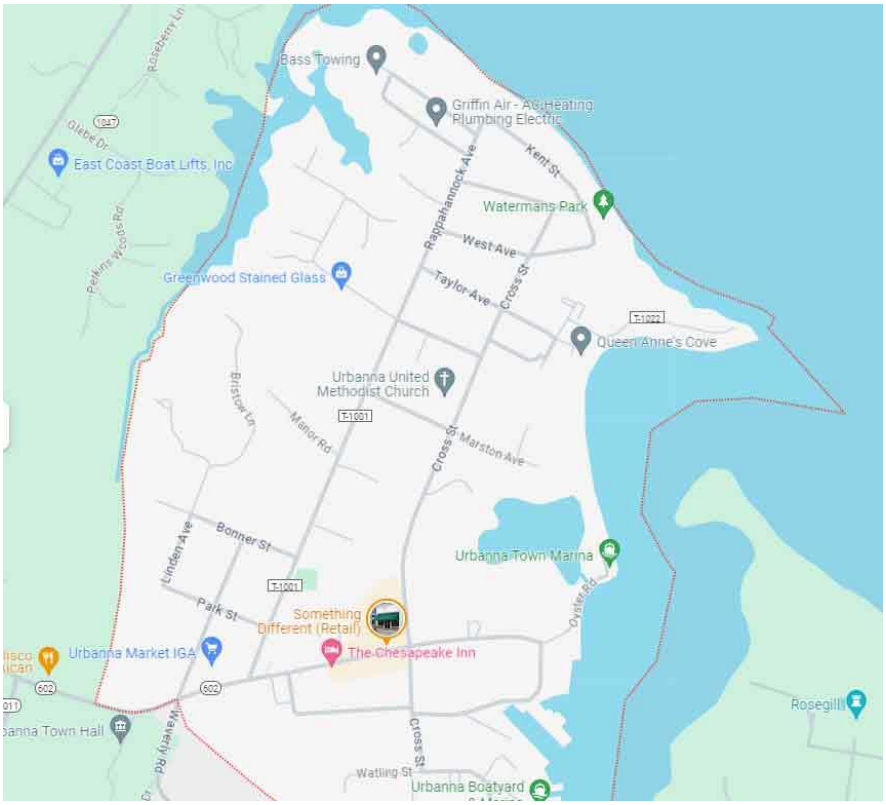
Our recent arrival and departure by car were far less impressive.

Middle Peninsula

Follow Hwy 3 across the York River to Hwy 17 as it winds its way north across the Middle Peninsula. From the Tidewater area of VA heading north up the Bay, there's a stretch of shoreline with a mix of wide-open water on Mobjack Bay to long rivers like the York, Rappahannock, and Potomac. Bridges connect the land known as Virginia's Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck.

You're entering "Rivah," a country loosely described as the expanse of land and water in the Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck. It's a mix of river harbor towns off the Bay, rolling farm fields, and rural communities and forests. The area is a mecca for boating and fishing weekenders and full-time retirees. When you visit, pick up a free copy of The Rivah Visitor's Guide and find a variety of places to eat, sleep, and enjoy the area.

Chapter 22: Urbanna VA, Middlesex County



From Yorktown, it's an easy 34-mile drive north on Hwy 17, also dubbed the Tidewater Trail, on a circuitous route to Urbanna. It is a popular stop for road trippers and is famous for its iconic Oyster Fall Festival in November. Urbanna is all things oysters.



Figure 20. Oyster catch

The small town draws thousands of visitors. The town has evolved as a charming weekend stay with a laidback atmosphere on the shores of the Rappahannock River.

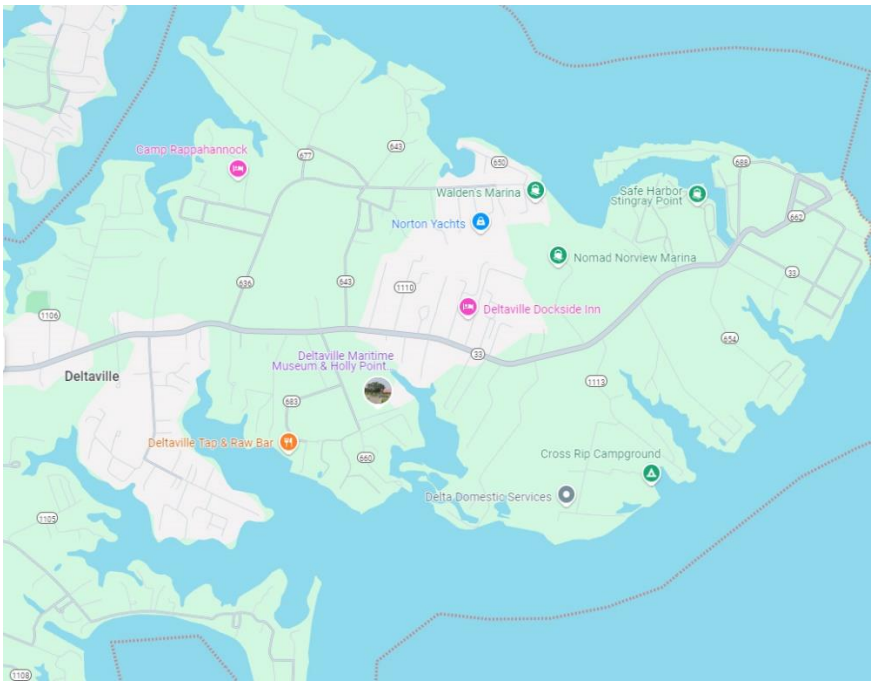


Figure 21. Iconic white rubber waterman's boots, a tribute to their work

We liked the well-preserved charming old homes on winding local streets and the iconic white rubber watermen's boots at the town marina paying tribute to the area's long fishing heritage. For a nice tour, here's a good resource.

Section 4: Northern Neck

Chapter 23: Deltaville VA, Middlesex County



Before heading across the Rappahannock River to the Northern Neck, a nice side trip is to Deltaville, about 18 miles down Hwy 33 from Urbanna. Marinas line the shores of the peninsula that juts out into the Chesapeake Bay and the surrounding Rappahannock River and Pakatan River. The legacy of boat building is strong here with its own Maritime Museum. So is an old-fashioned baseball stadium, with its vintage ballpark built in 1948. Take a walk at

the Holly Point Nature Park and beach, or just sit on a bench and admire the waters.

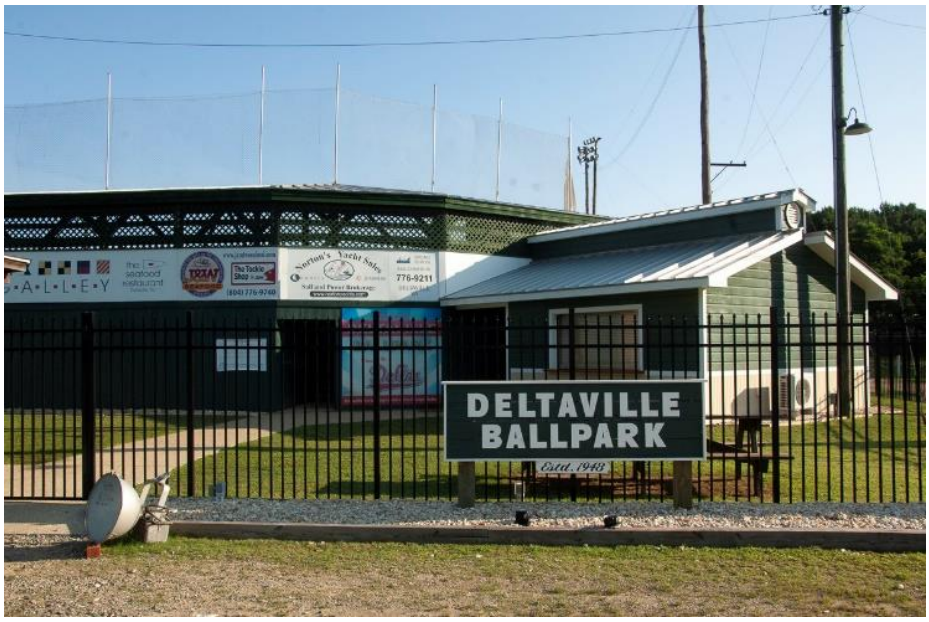


Figure 22. Historic Deltaville baseball field

This was our first time visiting by car, not a boat. Previously, we had sailed into town and anchored in Jackson Creek; on another cruise, we stopped at a marina on the other side of the town on the Rappahannock. We were there for a couple of days to weather a storm that kept all boaters snugly tied to a dock. We borrowed a loaner car at the marina and set out to explore the Maritime Museum, a small, modest place but one brimming with history.

Fast forward to our recent car trip to the museum when we saw its expanded grounds showcasing a 62-foot buyboat and workboats. Now, you can launch a kayak and canoe and follow the trail of water routes

of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail displayed in their Trail Gateway Kiosk. The inside exhibit is the Skipjack Virginia rigged and ready to sail the Bay.

The strong marine presence makes you wonder if there are indeed more boats than people in Deltaville. To find out more about this historic seafaring town, you can visit the Deltaville museum, filled with all sorts of artifacts and oddities to delight and surprise you.

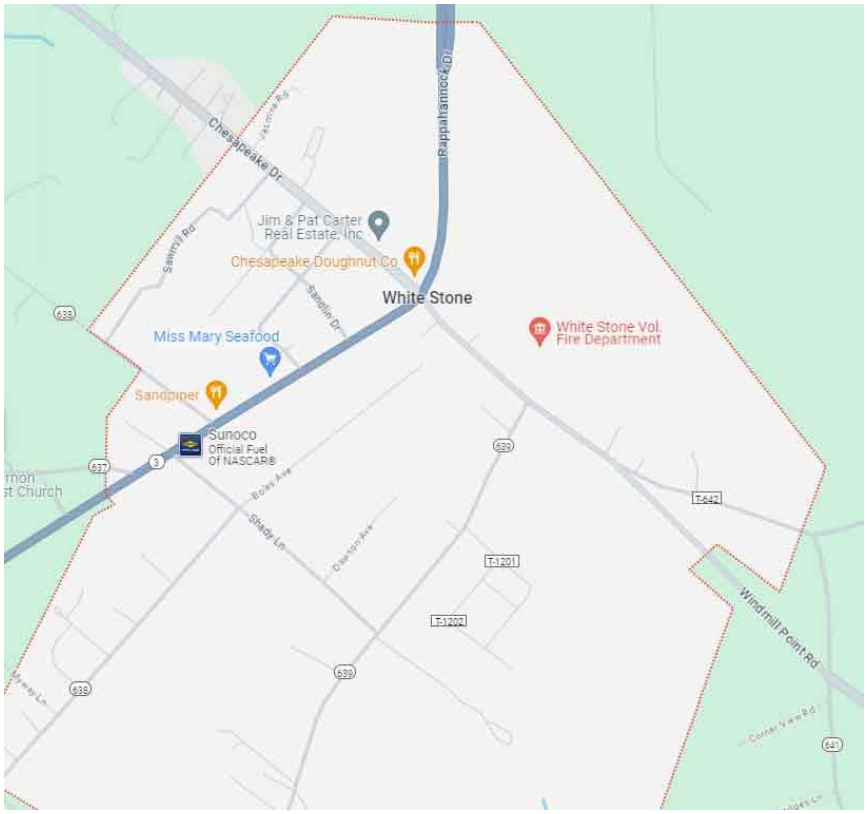
We noticed a sign to "Ballpark" and followed it to see their restored all-wood vintage ballpark hosting small-town baseball since 1948. We couldn't see inside the park, but their website featured a nice image with information.

Back in Urbanna, when you cross the Norris Bridge on Hwy 3 across the Rappahannock River, you're on the Northern Neck, which has more small harbors and laid-back towns to explore. Whitestone is the first stop.

To get an aerial view of this beautiful area, you can take a ride on vintage WWII airplanes from Bay Aviation in Topping, VA. If you are an airplane enthusiast and have wondered what it would be like to fly around in WWII-era planes during the forties

and fifties, do reach out to them. Their website has all the details.

Chapter 24: White Stone VA, Lancaster County

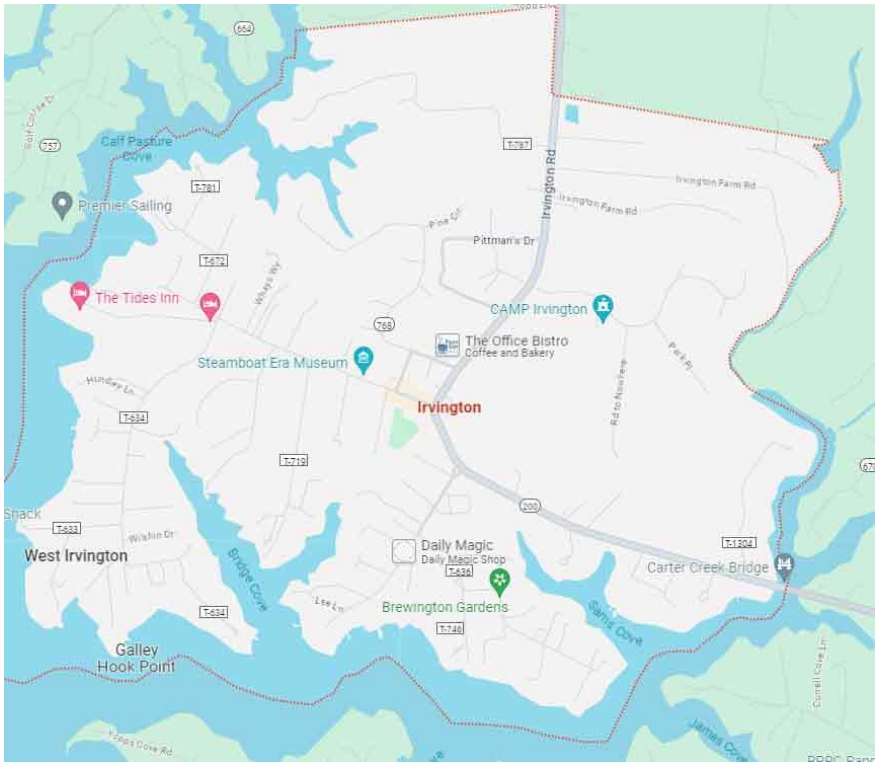


History says the town of White Stone is named after the white ballast tones found in local creeks dumped by British trading ships. It's a charming hamlet at the mouth of the Rappahannock River, known as the southern gateway to the Northern Neck, just 15 miles

from Deltaville near Norris Bridge (Hwy 3) that crosses the river.

Lovely murals adorn the buildings in town as part of a state grant to revitalize the town and upgrade some apartments. While seafood is an important part of the economy, the town's quaint and quiet atmosphere makes it a popular area for second homes and weekend getaways. Foodies find local specialties in this charmer of a town with a row of specialty stores like Objects and colorful umbrellas at the restaurants that line the road.

Chapter 25: Irvington VA, Lancaster County



Just two miles away from Whitestone is another historic town, Irvington, the home of the Steamboat Era Museum. Its restored pilothouse of the *Potomac*, a 176-foot steamboat that carried freight and passengers for 42 years between Baltimore and Norfolk, is a centerpiece of the town. You'll find resorts, B&Bs, and other accommodations. Likewise, the seafood restaurants and specialty shops make it another popular getaway for those who want to do some retail therapy and enjoy tasty food. The lovely settings in Irvington are only 120 miles from

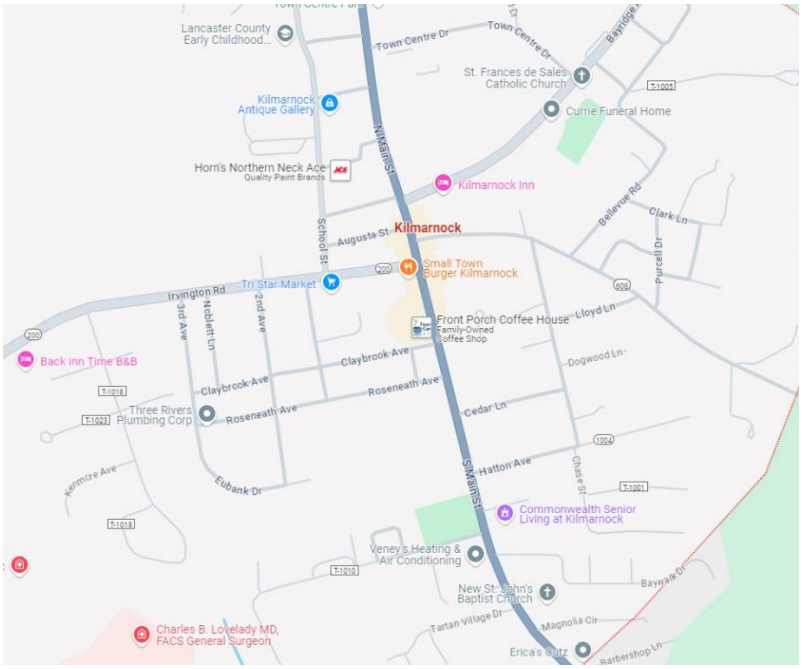
Alexandria, so it's a natural destination for both small and large gatherings and celebrations. The town offers everything from a popular farmer's market to fine arts. To see the area by airplane, visit Bay Aviation and catch a ride on a restored Warbird in Topping, VA.



Figure 23. Yard ornament of vineyard in Irvington VA

As you head north on Irvington Road, leaving town, you can't miss a giant corkscrew on the grounds of the Dog & Oyster Vineyard. To know what that's all about and what it means, visit this website.

Chapter 26: Kilmarnock VA, Northumberland and Lancaster Counties



Going north just 5 miles as you approach Kilmarnock, you drive through scenic farm fields and lovely country homes that change into signs of commerce with garden centers and hardware stores.



Figure 24. Kilmarnock VA

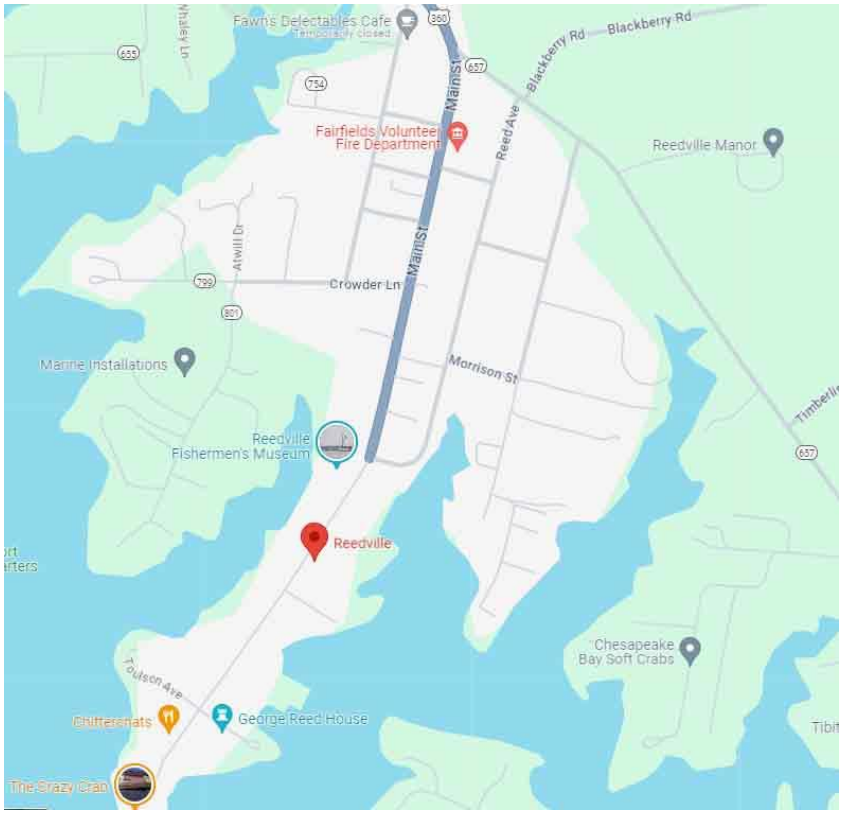
Kilmarnock is the largest incorporated town on the lower Northern Neck peninsula. The town encompasses a hospital, community college, and town center park just outside. The park complex includes a kid's playground, an outdoor amphitheater, and a dog park. A nice selection of stores and restaurants line the downtown business area known as the Steptoe's District. If you are planning to visit this town, check this website. It will tell you all you need to know about visiting.



Figure 25. street scene Kilmarnock VA

From Kilmarnock, you can take a side trip to Reedville or head northeast on route 2 to Colonial Beach on the shores of the Potomac River.

Chapter 27: Reedville VA, Northumberland County



Reedville is home to the Menhaden commercial fishing industry and 19 miles northeast of Kilmarnock on route 360 between the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers. Reedville Menhaden is a fish processed into fish oil and fish meal that is used as food ingredients, animal feed, and dietary supplements. That fishing industry made it one of the wealthiest towns in the United States from the 1890s to 1900s which you'll see in a stroll down Main Street's Millionaire's Row of houses.

In 2024 Reedville is celebrating its 150-year birthday. It's a popular fisherman's destination offering charter boats and an annual Fishing Derby.



Figure 26. Reedville Fishermen's Museum

The expansive grounds of the Fishermen's Museum in Reedville preserve the maritime heritage of the lower Chesapeake Bay, its watermen, and the local menhaden, oyster, and crab fisheries. One building houses galleries with artifacts and ship models. Another building has an active workshop with a large railroad layout. Outside is a skipjack and deadrise buy boat that offers boating excursions.

Just south of Reedville is Fleeton, a small town where we adopted our first cats, Puss' n Boots. We were sailing the Bay en route to the Bahamas and stopped at a fledging marina there. The owner's wife

said her husband would drown these two little black kittens if we didn't take them. Our little stowaways were ideal cruising companions on our first sailing (and cat-owning) adventure.

Boat Tour to Tangier Island

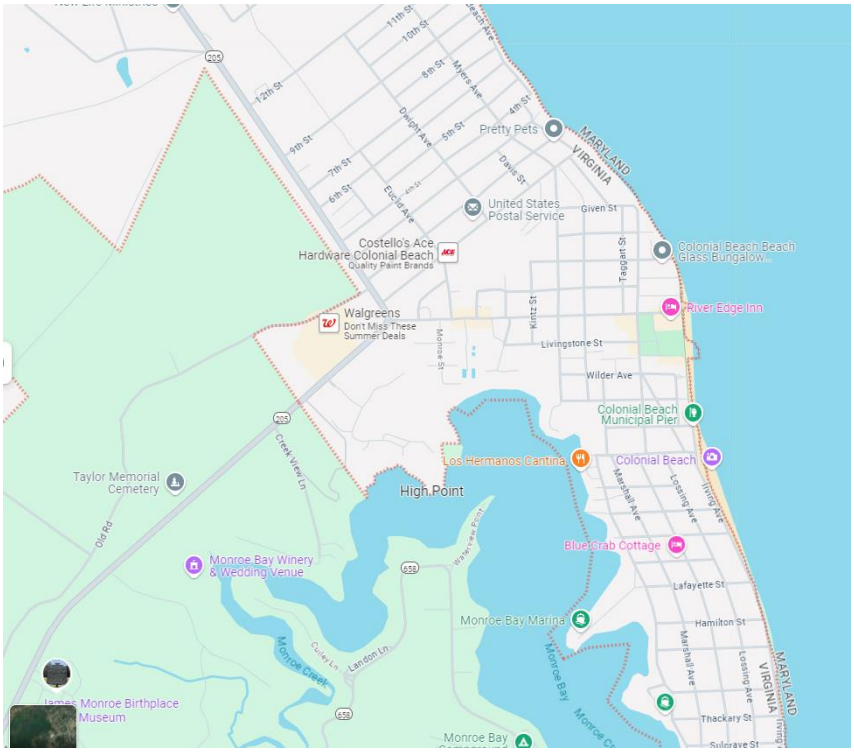


Figure 27. Ferry to Tangier Island from Reedville VA

Reedville is a departure point for tour boats going for day trips to Tangier Island. We talked about it before and how it is also accessible from Onancock, VA, on the eastern shore.

Throughout this area, you'll find oyster roasts and crab feasts in restaurants, and church dinners often feature the area's seafood bounty.

Chapter 28: Colonial Beach VA, Westmoreland County



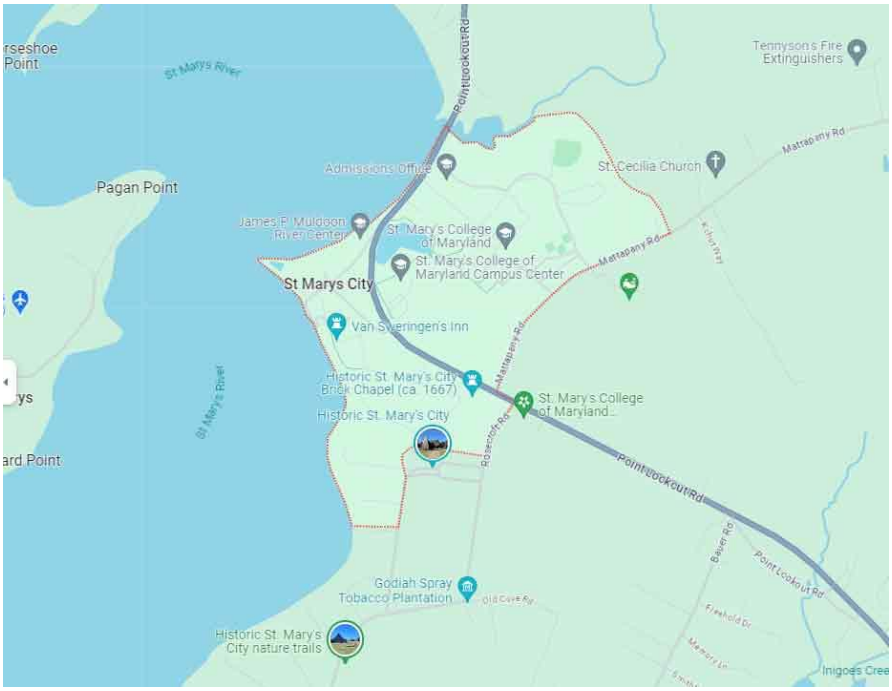
The Potomac River separates the states of Virginia and Maryland. You're still in Virginia, going north toward Route 202 from Reedville for 62 miles when you reach Colonial Beach on the western shore of the river. It's a popular beach town with boats, shops, restaurants and golf carts – and a free trolley to get around.



Figure 28. Popular beach town, Colonial Beach VA

Bay history buffs know Colonial Beach from the two decades-long oyster wars between rivaling Virginia and Maryland watermen, both competing for the rights to the oysters in the Potomac. There were oyster pirates and oyster police trying to enforce laws about who owned the waterway and the rights of dredging and harvesting oyster beds. Today, it's a peaceful and popular destination for beach lovers, anglers, and quieter times. Go to the Colonial Beach Visitor's Center for information on the Beach's history and what you can expect around here.

Chapter 29: St. Mary's City MD, Charles County



It's 59 miles from Colonial Beach to St. Mary's City. To get there, head north on Hwy 218 to Hwy 301 and the bridge across the Potomac River into Maryland. St. Mary's City is an archeological museum with reproduced buildings, exhibits of tobacco plantations, and a Native American hamlet.



Figure 29. Finding your way at St Mary's City, MD

A popular attraction is the Maryland *Dove.* The ship design is based on the original *Dove,* a 17th-century trading ship that sailed to the Maryland colony with *Ark* in 1634. *The Dove* was a small ship used in shallow waterways along the coast while the first colony and capital were being set up.



Figure 30. Historic buildings at St Mary's City MD

Construction on the *Dove* began on June 1, 2019, and launched in August 2022. Today, the ship sits at the St. Mary's City waterfront, where visitors can climb onboard and chat with the ship's crew. The historic city is a National Historic Landmark with evolving and enlightening walks through the lives and homes of early Americans. You could spend days just taking in all that the historic town has to offer.

The Potomac River has always been one of our favorites on the Bay. As we crossed the river going from Colonial Beach to St Mary's City, we remembered a cruise and saw the bright yellow buoy of the National Water Trail bouncing in the water. The string of "talking" buoys from NOAA on the Bay function as guideposts for boaters to learn about the diverse heritage and ecosystems of the Bay.

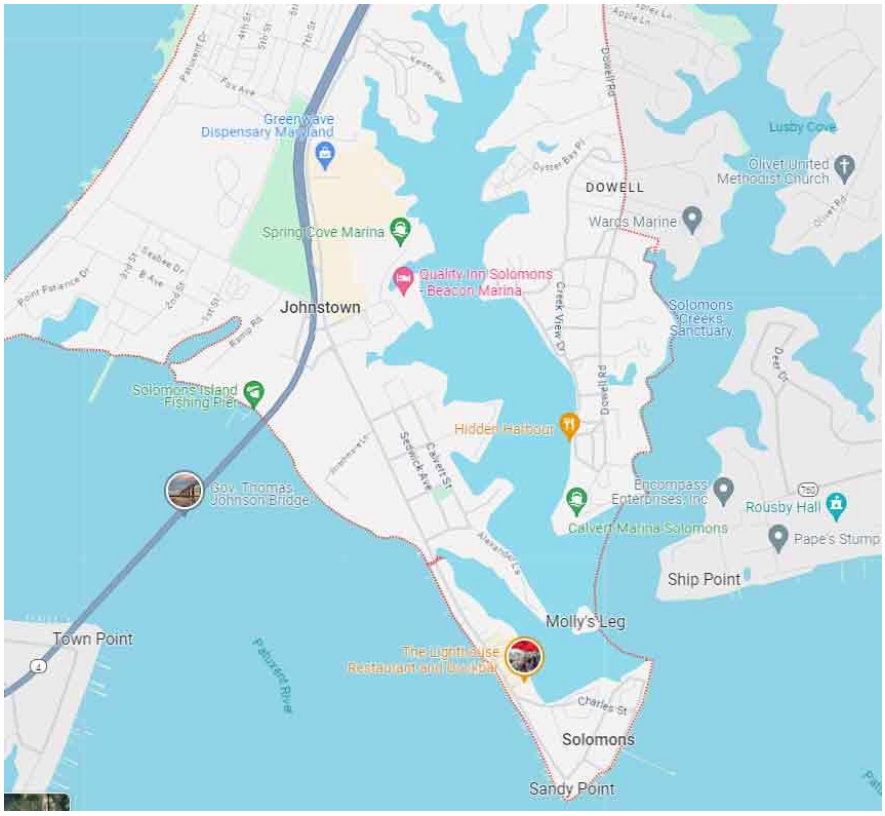
There it was, bobbing in the water at the coordinates we found on their website. We called the 800 number posted on the buoy. We followed a string of prompts to learn about the history of Captain John Smith's voyage in 1607-09 while he explored the Bay, making the first maps for future settlers to use. The buoy also gave us sea conditions and other data and observations. What an innovative way to get information.

Southern Maryland African American Heritage

Before visiting this area, you can read the brochure Southern Maryland African American Heritage Guide online and learn about the rich heritage of the African-American community in this area. The guide promotes points of interest, contributing history and African American historical figures from Maryland's founding through the modern day. The stories emphasize the bravery and resilience of these early Americans and coincide with the bravery and courage of the many African Americans on the eastern shore of the Bay.

An interesting side trip going north on Hwy 4 to Solomons is Historic Sotterley off Hwy 245 in Hollywood, MD. Today, the historic plantation, built in the early 1700s, provides a living link to America's complex history and legacy of slavery. The expansive farm offers programs about early Tidewater plantation life for kids and organic farming today. The food grown goes to address food insecurity in the community. n interactive tool to learn about

Chapter 30: Solomons MD, Calvert County



By land, it's an easy 18-mile drive to Solomons. It is a favorite boating destination for us because of its easy access to the Bay and snug anchorages. On one cruise, when we were coming in at dusk, we thought we spotted our former boat, *Gusto*, a 41-foot sloop. When we left the next morning, we passed by, and sure enough, it was her. We hailed a guy on board and said, "Hello, great to see the boat. We used to own it." And he responded, "Then you must be the Hamiltons!" We were thrilled to visit and meet

them and learn that after retiring, they sailed *Gusto* around the world!



Figure 31. Calvert Maritime Museum, Solomons MD

Solomons has a connection to D-Day that most people don't know about. The area played a unique part in World War II as the Navy's Amphibious Training Base beginning in 1942. During the next three years, 70,000 officers and enlisted men were trained there.

Solomons has a popular museum called the Calvert Maritime Museum that takes a deep dive into the history of the maritime heritage. It is on the western shore and sits at the mouth of the Patuxent River. You'll reach there by heading northeast toward the Bay on Hwy 5 to Patuxent Beach Road and the

bridge crossing the river. The museum is on the shoreline, surrounded by marinas and marine services, which makes the area a sailor's haven. In fact, sailboaters routinely debate which is the biggest Bay sailing center: Solomons or Annapolis.



Figure 32. Collections at Calvert Maritime Museum

A special feature of the museum is the regional paleontology and estuarine life of the Patuxent River and Chesapeake Bay. Its paleontology exhibits make it unique among other maritime museums because it takes you back millions of years to when the nearby Calvert Cliffs were home to all sorts of animals and plants. The scientists study these clues to our prehistoric past. The collections of fossils, casts, bones, and shells make it a one-of-a-kind educational experience. To see its maritime heritage,

you can step aboard historic Chesapeake work boats, a bugeye, and a skipjack, or you can visit Drum Point Lighthouse.



Figure 33. Waterman with oyster rake at Calvert Maritime Museum

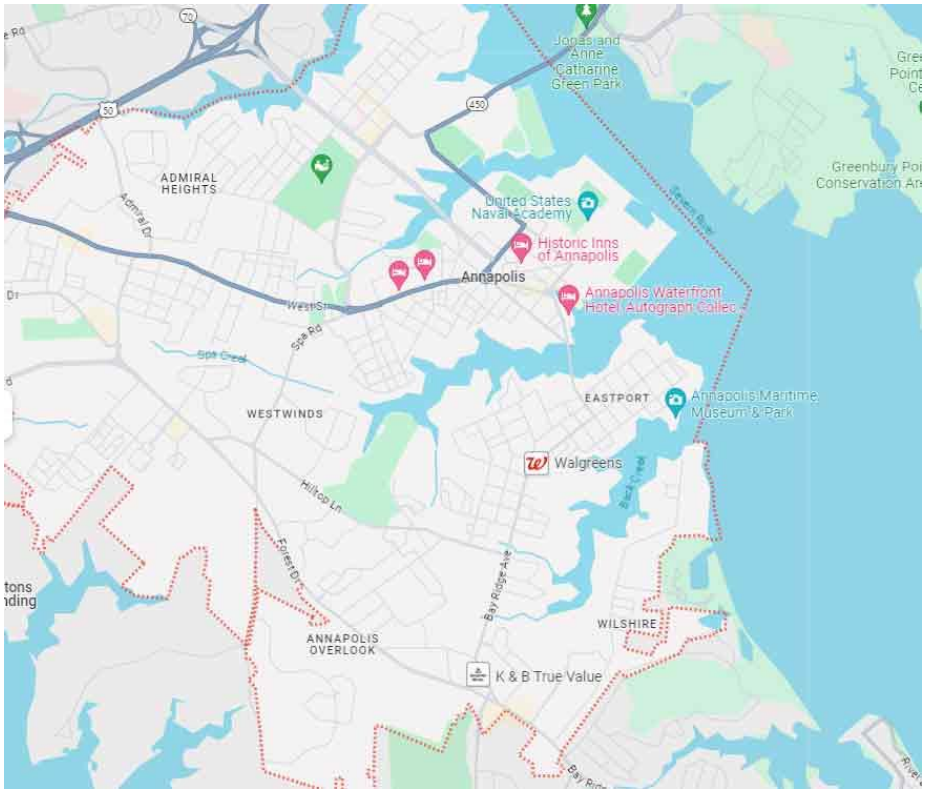
Visit the Patuxent River Naval Air Museum (Pax River) in nearby Lexington Park and learn about its significance as a center for testing pilots and weapons systems. Dozens of planes are on display.

For a different take on the Solomons, stop at the Annmarie Sculpture Garden and Art Center just north of Solomon on Dowell Road. It's a lovely retreat where you can stroll or sit for a while and enjoy the quiet peace and artwork.

Going north from Solomons on Hwy 2, it's an almost straight-line 56-mile drive until you reach the southern stretch of Annapolis.

If you're looking for a nature break, stop at the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, where you'll find 2,800 acres of forest, pastures, cropland, wetlands, and tidal marshes. It's just 10 miles from Annapolis in Edgewater on the shores of Rhodes River. Outdoor enthusiasts can download trail maps of the Contee Farm for walking, hiking, and biking. Birders love them, too. A canoe/kayak trail guide is also available.

Chapter 31: Annapolis MD, Ann Arundel County



The charming, walkable waterfront town of Annapolis sits on the shores of the Severn River just south of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. To most visitors, the Maryland capital city is known as the home of the U.S. Naval Academy.



Figure 34. Ego Alley in Annapolis Harbor

But for the past 50 years, boaters of all stripes have known Annapolis as the host of the October Powerboat and Sailboat Shows in the harbor.



Figure 35. "Roots" sculpture in Annapolis Harbor

The century-old brick sidewalks line the streets with eclectic (read pricey) retail shops, restaurants, and lodging. A sculpture of Alex Haley's "*Roots"* is found on the roundabout at the harbor. Showoff boats cruise up and down Ego Alley along with a collection of tour boats.

The Banneker-Douglass Museum on Franklin Street pays tribute to Black Heritage with an impressive collection showcasing cultural diversity in and around Annapolis.



Figure 36. Chick 'n Ruth's diner

Our favorite restaurant is Chick' n Ruth's, a diner with a décor unchanged since the 1950s. Black and white photos of old politicians line the yellow and orange walls where at 8:30 a.m. (weekdays) and 9:30 a.m. (weekends), everyone from dishwashers to diners stands and says the Pledge of Allegiance.

Just across the Spa Creek bridge, Eastport is a small community of sailors and marine services, with more good eating options. A relatively new arrival is Forward, a craft brewery favored by many. Every year, residents from Annapolis and the Maritime Republic of Eastport have a just-for-fun Tug of War across the bridge to decide their independence. It's a feisty little community with a character all its own.

For visitor information, go to this website here. https://www.visitannapolis.org/.

Annapolis to Baltimore

It's about a 30-mile drive from Annapolis to Baltimore, following I-97 north to 295 N into the city, where our road trip began.

Distance Chart

	Annapolis MD	Baltimore MD	Cambridge MD	Cape Charles VA	Cheseapeake City MD	Chestertown MD	Colonial Beach	Crisfield MD	Deltaville VA	Hampton VA	Harve de Grace MD	Irvington VA	Kent Narrows MD	Kilmarnock VA	Newport News VA	Norfolk VA	North East MD	Onancock VA	Oxford MD	Portsmouth VA	Reedville VA	Rock Hall MD	Salisbury MD	St Mary's City MD	St Michaels MD	Solomons MD	Tilghman Island MD	Urbanna VA	Virginia Beach VA	White Stone VA	Yorktown VA
Anapolis MD	0	33	58	187	73	50	80	126	161	213	65	140	20	136	205	222	75	153	52	227	143	62	88	71	51	66	65	145	236	150	167
Baltimore MD	35	0	87	216	63	78	95	155	171	220	41	156	95	157	220	253	52	182	81	255	151	91	117	95	80	89	94	155	253	157	182
Cambridge MD	58	87	0	131	78	52	134	70	208	178	98	194	39	190	185	170	90	98	17	172	190	65	32	127	26	113	40	192	170	194	200
Cape Charles VA	187	216	131	0	200	182	163	87	132	52	228	230	236	110	62	44	208	38	146	46	132	200	93	235	156	114	170	120	45	194	70
Cheseapeake City MD	73	58	78	198	0	31	155	138	224	245	22	133	65	206	275	237	13	164	72	239	205	43	109	143	71	136	85	170	237	214	268
Chestertown MD	50	78	53	182	31	0	124	120	200	257	51	163	30	180	246	221	42	148	47	278	179	13	83	117	46	103	60	182	222	184	243
Colonial Beach VA	80	96	134	164	153	130	0	202	80	112	132	66	95	62	104	128	142	200	128	133	62	136	164	59	126	56	140	63	142	184	92
Crisfield MD	126	155	70	83	133	120	202	0	188	137	164	194	107	197	146	128	143	53	85	130	216	133	32	195	95	181	108	190	125	195	156
Deltaville VA	150	171	208	105	223	208	79	193	0	53	130	124	130	27	46	70	215	142	229	79	38	210	198	133	201	20	214	18	88	15	33
Hampton VA	204	218	180	53	246	255	111	137	53	0	260	58	185	220	10	16	270	86	194	26	80	242	140	183	203	62	217	53	31	56	20
Harve de Grace MD	65	37	100	228	22	0	134	167	209	260	0	194	75	190	253	267	12	192	93	269	183	64	132	129	92	188	115	186	267	190	221
Irvington VA	140	156	237	112	214	182	240	200	17	60	193	0	275	5	52	75	203	144	253	81	24	252	200	40	120	116	275	17	90	2	40
Kent Narrows MD	20	47	50	178	65	40	97	117	170	222	82	156	0	152	214	238	76	144	156	243	159	52	80	90	42	75	56	154	217	156	183
Kilmarnock VA	136	157	190	114	62	150	180	195	20	62	191	5	151	0	53	83	200	150	185	86	19	192	202	42	115	112	200	20	92	5	42
Newport News VA	197	210	187	64	274	247	242	146	46	10	249	168	180	56	0	30	260	100	204	30	73	254	151	176	214	53	173	46	41	50	16
Norfolk VA	235	240	170	44	237	221	134	125	75	18	277	80	207	83	32	0	247	77	186	3	105	233	132	206	195	203	208	80	19	79	45
North East MD	75	60	89	218	12	42	88	153	212	270	11	198	65	195	264	257	0	184	83	260	194	54	119	82	82	125	96	200	257	209	257
Onancock VA	154	182	98	38	165	148	196	53	135	86	195	144	135	146	95	77	175	0	113	80	165	160	60	234	122	209	136	136	77	142	105
Oxford MD	52	81	17	146	72	47	128	85	203	194	93	189	34	185	204	185	84	113	0	187	184	60	48	122	20	107	35	186	186	190	213
Portsmouth VA	228	257	172	46	239	239	132	127	74	25	270	80	209	86	32	3	250	79	187	0	105	235	134	204	197	201	210	79	20	77	44
Reedville VA	135	152	190	132	204	189	82	213	38	80	112	105	152	19	24	106	200	165	183	102	0	192	220	114	182	111	196	38	110	32	84
Rock Hall MD	62	91	65	194	43	13	138	133	211	241	63	198	41	194	196	233	54	158	60	235	192	0	94	129	58	117	72	194	233	197	224
Salisbury MD	90	117	33	93	100	84	165	32	192	140	130	198	70	201	150	132	110	60	48	134	219	96	0	58	57	144	71	193	132	197	160
St Mary's City MD	72	95	126	236	141	130	60	194	133	179	128	119	86	115	158	201	142	221	120	206	114	128	156	0	118	18	132	117	209	130	146
St Michaels MD	51	80	26	156	70	45	127	95	201	202	91	187	32	138	212	195	82	122	20	197	183	58	57	120	0	106	14	185	195	188	222
Solomons MD	56	80	111	216	126	115	56	179	130	182	114	22	20	113	116	198	123	206	105	204	112	113	142	17	104	0	110	118	207	116	110
Tilghman Island MD	65	93	30	170	84	60	141	108	215	216	105	201	46	198	226	208	96	135	30	34	210	71	70	134	14	119	0	198	208	202	260
Urbanna VA	137	154	191	135	207	192	63	219	18	70	115	110	153	20	16	93	195	168	186	100	39	194	224	35	184	113	200	0	110	16	34
Virginia Beach VA	242	250	172	46	240	223	141	128	83	30	269	86	210	90	40	18	250	80	188	20	110	236	134	56	214	92	192	83	0	90	50
White Stone VA	150	157	194	194	214	184	184	195	15	56	190	2	156	5	50	79	209	142	190	77	32	197	197	130	188	116	202	16	90	0	37
Yorktown VA	166	184	203	76	239	220	91	157	33	25	145	38	150	182	38	15	250	109	218	42	60	223	164	145	224	42	142	34	64	37	0

Puzzles

North Shore of Chesapeake Bay



North Shore of Chesapeake Bay

Baltimore, Harve de Grace, North East, Chesapeake City, Chestertown, Rock Hall

MD Eastern Shore of Chesapeake Bay



MD Eastern Shore]

Kent Island, St Michaels, Tilghman Island, Poplar Island, Oxford, Cambridge, Salisbury, Crisfield, Smith Island, Onancock, Cape Charles

Tidewater Virginia of Chesapeake Bay



Tidewater VA of Chesapeake Bay]

Virginia Beach, Portsmouth, Norfolk, Hampton, Newport News

Virginia Western Shore of Chesapeake Bay



VA Western Shore of Chesapeake Bay

Yorktown, Urbanna, Deltaville, Whitestone, Irvington, Kilmarnock, Reedville, Tangier Island, Colonial Beach, Northern Neck

Maryland Western Shore of Chesapeake Bay



MD Western Shore of Chesapeake Bay

St Mary’s City, Solomons, Annapolis

Book Resources

A Broad Reach: 50 Years of Collecting by Pete Lecher, Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum

Chesapeake Exploring the Water Trail of Captain John Smith by John Page Williams, National Geographic

Chesapeake Reflections Stories of Virginia's Northern Neck by J.H.Hall, History Press

Off 13 The Eastern Shore of Virginia Guidebook by Kirk Mariner, Miona Publications

Tubman Travels by Jim Duffy, Secrets of the Eastern Shore