

Plan Your Maryland Vacation

Let's jump-start your vacation planning so you can make the most of your time off this year. We understand the value of vacation time for our relationships, personal well-being, professional success and overall happiness. So take time **NOW** to plan your Maryland vacation. Here are 28 ideas to inspire you to plan a Maryland vacation today.



Photo By: Clark Vandergrift

1 Explore Maryland's Crab & Oyster Trails

Crack. Shuck. Savor Maryland. Explore Maryland's Crab & Oyster Trails and enjoy steamed crabs, soft shell crabs and oysters fresh from the bay. Savor the fruits of the Chesapeake Bay on Maryland's Crab & Oyster Trails.

Explore restaurants, seafood markets, tours, events and more in our five deliciously fun regions.



Photo By: AP

2 Free Things to Do

You don't need a big budget to experience big fun in Maryland. Here are 25 top free (or nearly free) things to do—sure to keep you coming back again and again!

More information...



3 Scenic Byway Road Trip

Travel these off-the-highway Scenic Byways offering inviting views, magical main streets, enduring history and engaging places. Check out Old Main Streets where vibrant streets invite visitors to explore history, heritage and architecture while savoring the flavor of local shops, eateries and lodging. Immerse yourself in maritime history, fishing, and sweeping river views on the Lower Susquehanna. Take your time experiencing the special beauty of Chesapeake Country. Journey back in time and explore the secret network of trails, waterways, and safe houses of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad.

Or pick from one of the other of Maryland's eighteen Scenic Byways.



Photo By: Maryland Office of Tourism

4 Maryland's Beautiful Beaches

From the ocean to the mountains, Maryland's got a sandy beach for every taste. Is it really summer without a trip to Ocean City? A stroll on the boardwalk with a bucket of legendary Thrasher's French fries, a handful of quarters at Marty's Playland seaside arcade, and a spin on the classic carousel at Trimper's Rides are the stuff family memories are made of. And that's before you get to the white sandy beach and a dip in the crisp, clean waters of the Atlantic. Or pitch a surfside tent just a few minutes away at Assateague Island State Park—an idyllic beach retreat crisscrossed by wildlife trails and home to the famous wild horses that roam the shore. It's no wonder *National Geographic Traveler* named it one of the 10 best U.S. state parks.

More info..



Photo By: Go Ape Treetop Adventure

5 Adrenaline Rush!

Attention thrill seekers! Whether you prefer hurtling along the steel track of a roller-coaster with the velocity of a speeding bullet, winging through a forest dangling below a zip-line, testing your will against a raging river; Maryland is the place where your adrenaline dreams become reality.

More info...



Photo By: Port Discovery Children's Museum

6 Family-Friendly and Children's Museums

The Maryland Science Center in Baltimore offers a mind-blowing look through the eye of the Hubble Space Telescope and features massive dinosaur skeletons. There's even a dino-dig so you can feel what it's like to be a paleontologist. Also in Baltimore, Port Discovery Children's Museum is a world unto itself with a fabulous water room, KidWorks, an enormous four-story jungle gym, a toddler room for tykes age 2 and under, and even a kid-scale diner. Kid conductors and would-be firefighters will love the trains at the B&O Railroad Museum and the displays at The Fire Museum of Maryland.

More info...



Photo By: Clark Vandergrift

7 Get on Board with Boating and Watersports

Set on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean, crisscrossed by rivers and streams, and centered on the mighty Chesapeake Bay, Maryland offers tons of watersport adventures. Annapolis, Edgewater and Deale all have charter outfits that offer boat rentals (with or without a captain). Tilghman Island Marina on the Eastern Shore has a fleet of pontoon and sailboats at hand, along with personal watercraft. Out west, area businesses on Deep Creek Lake rent pontoon and ski boats, and in Southern Maryland, Solomon's Boat Rental can set you up with a powerboat.

More info...



Photo By: Clark Vandergrift

8 Zoos and Discovery Center

The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore is home to more than 2,000 animals in naturalistic exhibits such as the African penguin exhibit, where these best-dressed birds glide through currents and leap through waves. You can even whiz down a tree slide. At the Plumpton Park Zoo in Rising Sun you can hand feed Jimmie the Giraffe. The Salisbury Zoo makes for a perfect break on the way to the beach or an adventure all its own. And don't miss the Catoctin Wildlife Preserve and Zoo in Thurmont. Kiddie Cousteaus will love the Calvert Marine Museum with its giant megalodon shark skeleton and frolicsome river otters, Bubbles and Squeak. And don't miss Baltimore's National Aquarium: with sharks and an immersive coral reef, this stunning facility at the Inner Harbor welcomes visitors to a world of water.

More info...



Photo By: Clark Vandergrift

9 History & Herstory

St. Mary's City in Southern Maryland is where the state began, with the landing of the *Ark* and *Dove*, the ships that brought the first settlers to the colony that became Maryland. The African-American experience has been inextricably woven through the fabric of Maryland's rich history. A trip to Baltimore isn't complete without a visit to Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine. In Frederick, immerse yourself in the National Museum of Civil War Medicine

for a window into the harsh realities and pioneering work of Civil War doctors and nurses. Then follow the trail of the war through Monocacy National Battlefield and Antietam National Battlefield.

More info...



Photo By: Clark Vandergrift

10 Explore Parks and Nature

Get in touch with the lives of great Americans like Harriet Tubman, Clara Barton and Thomas Stone. See historic places like Antietam and Fort McHenry where the very course of history was changed. Lose yourself in one-of-a-kind landscapes like Assateague, Sandy Point and Blackwater. History, culture, and the remarkable beauty of nature are at your fingertips in Maryland's State and National Parks. If you're up for a twist on the traditional family vacation and looking for an opportunity to explore Maryland's great outdoors, consider the Maryland State Park Service's Park Quest adventure.

More info....



11 Majestic Hikes

In Maryland, you'll find a vast variety of scenery while hiking beautiful state parks and local paths. Take a leisurely walk along the Calvert Cliffs State Park Red Trail through forested wetland—perfect for all ages. Here you'll find access to a strip of beach on the Chesapeake Bay that offers views of the park's namesake cliffs, as well as an abundance of ancient sharks' teeth and other marine fossils that will make a collector out of anyone. Maryland's portion of the Appalachian Trail extends for nearly 40 miles along the South Mountain ridge through Washington and Frederick counties. The fairly challenging ascent rewards hikers with multiple vistas, including Civil War battle sites and a stunning panoramic overlook of the Potomac River. Take the Swallow Falls State Park Loop, a 1.5-mile hike, in summer months to enjoy the river and pools surrounding the beautiful falls, which are the highest in Maryland.

More info...



12 Biking

Whether your brand of pedaled pleasure is a quiet journey along a leafy bike path, an ambitious cross-country road trek, or a pulse-pounding plunge down a muddy mountain trail, Maryland has you covered. With hundreds of miles of mixed-use cycling trails, including numerous rails-to-trails conversions, you are never too far from biking bliss.

More info.. .



13 Camping

Looking to ease into the outdoors? Start with a weekend at Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park in Hagerstown. Cabins have screened porches and all the essentials of home, and the park's organized activities for the wee ones will let mom and dad get some down time. Looking to get a little closer to nature? Pitch a tent at Assateague State Park where the sounds of crashing waves and the whinnies of the island's famous wild beach horses will thrill

children of all ages.

More info...



Photo By: VisitAnnapolis.org

14 Paddle People

Kayaking is a great way to follow the numerous water trails of the Potomac and Patuxent rivers in St. Mary's County. In nearby Charles County, check out Mallow's Bay, the sunken home of nearly 230 World War I-era ships. The Choptank and Tuckahoe Rivers Trail on the Eastern Shore includes Frederick Douglass' birthplace. Tubing is available on Antietam Creek and the Gunpowder River. The Monocacy Scenic River Water Trail covers 41 miles through Civil War sites. Water trails also cover the Middle and Upper Potomac River and C&O Canal. Western Maryland's New Germany State Park offers kayaks, paddleboats and rowboats to explore the 13-acre lake's diverse wildlife habitat. The Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail traces his journey along the Chesapeake.

Stand up Paddlers head out to sea (or bay) on rented boards up and down the Coastal Highway in Ocean City. SUP Annapolis offers lessons and rentals on the Severn River. Boating in DC has paddleboards, kayaks and canoes for rent at National Harbor. Paddle or Pedal in North Beach and Chesapeake Beach covers all the bases with kayak, canoe, paddleboard and sailboat rentals. More info....



Photo By: River and Trail Outfitters

15 Whitewater Rafting

For rafters, the Youghiogheny River's Class IV and V rapids offer some of the best white water in the world. The Savage River in Garrett County has been home to white-water world championships and Olympic trials, and several times a year the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers schedules dam releases for white-water recreation. For white-water rafting - head to the thrilling Upper Youghiogheny, Savage, Potomac, Cheat and Big Sandy rivers. Garrett County is such a white water Mecca, the U.S. Olympic Team has trained here. For a unique adventure, try Adventure Sports Center International near Wisp Resort, it's the world's only mountaintop white-water course. This manmade marvel is the perfect place to learn canoeing and kayaking, but can also challenge the world's best, which is why it was chosen as the home for the 2014 Canoe Slalom World Championships. More information...



16 Go Fish

Cast your fly in a cascading mountain stream, drop a line in a pristine lake or swift running river, go for game fish out on the open Chesapeake, and hunt for the big billfish in the famed Atlantic canyons. With an unparalleled variety of species and habitats, there's something for every budding young angler in Maryland. More info....



17 Shopping

If your ideal weekend or vacation activity is shopping ('til you drop), you're in luck: Maryland has some of the best around, from cool specialty stores to entire shopping districts. Here are 25 of the best shopping destinations guaranteed to give your wallet a run for its money. More info...



Photo By: The Ivy

18 Spa & Yoga

There are so many spa and yoga options all over Maryland. For instance, you can take yoga with a cat friend, or hang upside down in an aerial yoga session. Perhaps a "diamond facial" at National Harbor or a trip to the Himalayan salt cave in Bethesda is more your cup of tea. Experiences await you throughout Maryland. More info....



Photo By: Helen Norman

19 Gardens

These green oases – with ornamental, heirloom or native plants, topiary, outdoor sculpture and historical roots – can easily be the colorful centerpiece for a Maryland getaway. Whether you are an avid gardener, birdwatcher, appreciator of art – or just looking to enjoy nature, stretch your legs – our gardens are wonderful way to enjoy the outdoors and celebrate the seasons.

More info....



Photo By: VisitMaryland.org

20 A Hunting We Will Go

From the rugged Allegheny Mountains to the shores of the Chesapeake Bay to the mid-Atlantic canyons, the Old Line State has a huge variety of game and perhaps the finest duck and goose hunting in the country. There's a lot of opportunity for turkey hunters in Savage River State Forest and elsewhere in Maryland. With dense woodlands, open fields and lush marshes, these eons-old hunting grounds were legendary among the local Piscataway Indian tribe. With a 3,000-year hunting tradition, St. Mary's River State Park remains one of the best game sites on the Eastern Seaboard and perfect terrain for white-tail deer. Western Maryland is home to a thriving black bear population and nearly all of the Dan's Mountain Wildlife Management Area's 9,700 acres of prime bear habitat are opened to hunting.

More info...



21 Grand Slam Golf Courses

Named for the first Thoroughbred horse brought to America, Bulle Rock in Havre de Grace was designed by the legendary Pete Dye and has become one of the most popular in the Mid-Atlantic. If you prefer the mountains take a swing at Rocky Gap Lodge & Golf Resort, a lakeside course designed by Jack Nicklaus in the mountains of Western Maryland as part of the Rocky Gap casino resort. How about a course where each hole is a replica of a famous hole from a championship course around the world - this would be Renditions in Davidsonville. If the beach scene is in the plans, you may attempt the course at Eagle's Landing Golf Club. Whether you're looking to punch your shots over a marsh or rip drives through a dense woodland, Maryland has a golf course for you.

More information...



Photo By: Clark Vandergrift, OTD

22 Beer, Wine and Spirits Here

Between Maryland's burgeoning wine world, our killer craft breweries and emerging distilleries - we've got the goods to quench any thirst. Don't believe us? Check out our amazing lineup of beer and wine events across the state. Another tip for the craft beer lover, plan your trip during FeBREWary in Maryland. This special month celebrating Maryland's craft beer is the perfect time for a beer lover's getaway.

Check out Maryland's complete list of Breweries, Distilleries, and Wineries throughout the state.



23 Spectator Sports

If your passion for sports runs traditional or to the extreme, Maryland's sporting landscape runs the gamut. Here are just a few good reasons sports in Maryland are must-see events. Annapolis is the sailing capital of the world and Maryland is the home to the fastest growing sport, Lacrosse, and not to mention elite college basketball. Crowds gather for the chance to see the University of Maryland Terrapins men's and woman's basketball teams play at the Xfinity Center in Prince George's County. We're home to stars in many major sports with two NFL

teams, the Baltimore Ravens and the Washington Redskins, one MLB team, the Baltimore Orioles and another, Washington Nationals, just an easy ferry ride from the National Harbor, six minor league baseball teams and the second leg of the Triple Crown, the Preakness Stakes, one of horse racing's biggest events. Maryland is home to all of these and much, much more, making it a veritable heavyweight in the arena of sporting star power. More information on sporting events and experiences



Photo By: Mike Roemer/RoemerPhoto.com/Ocean Downs

24 High Rolling Fun at Maryland's Casinos

Maryland's casinos offer up non-stop entertainment and excitement. Whether you like to play the slots, spin the roulette wheel, consider yourself a card sharp or prefer to watch others play a little poker, Maryland's casinos have got your game! And if you're tired of the tables, Maryland's casinos bring in some of the best bands and comedians in their state-of-the-art performance venues-- even grab a bite prepared by a celebrity chef. Maryland casinos are always a big win!

Check out Maryland's six casinos, from the mountains of Western of Maryland to the sandy beaches of Ocean City.



Photo By: Visit Baltimore

25 Arts & Culture

Find African-American artifacts, symphony orchestras, woodcarvings, poetry slams, sculptures, Shakespeare, stoop storytelling and more in the diverse arts and culture scene of Maryland. Visit The Maryland Theatre to enjoy the big and bold sounds of this orchestra that regularly draws audiences from surrounding states. If modern and contemporary art is your passion, don't miss the exhibitions and collections at the Baltimore Museum of Art, home to the world's largest collection of Matisse works, plus 90,000 other works of art. There's always an outstanding line-up of musicians at DeIFest in Allegany County Fairgrounds centered around one of America's most iconic musical genres — bluegrass. Dive right in to maritime history at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, which in addition to traditional indoor exhibits gives you the opportunity to immerse yourself in nautical life. The oldest multi-cultural traditional arts celebration in the country is headed to Salisbury in September 2018 as well. Known as the National Folk Festival this 3-day outdoor event is free. There is so much more in Maryland so check out the top 25 Arts & Culture things to do in Maryland for your getaway.



26 Luxury Experiences

These super-luxe adventures and experiences are totally worth the splurge! The Ivy Hotel (pictured) - is a boutique hotel offering unparalleled service, amenities, and ambiance. With just 18 rooms, each with its own fireplace, The Ivy is an intimate setting, providing a sumptuous experience. The fine-dining bistro, Magdalena, is available to the public, but the spa and outdoor garden are exclusively for guests.

Want to really go all out? Luxury yacht charters on the Chesapeake Bay, like the ones planned by cruising and events company Yacht Charters on the Bay by Watermark, do all of the trip planning for you and come staffed with premiere chefs, housekeepers and a full boat crew. All you have to do is relax.

For a truly unique perspective, take to the sky and soar over the rolling hills of Western Maryland with its riot of fall colors; take in the length of the Chesapeake; or skirt the skyline of Baltimore at 1500 feet. Monumental Helicopters offers tours of the Baltimore and Annapolis region, or charter a flight and go your own way. Check out all the VIP and Luxury Experiences Maryland has to offer...



27 Horses and Equestrian

If you've never ridden a horse before, don't let that stop you! With thousands of acres dedicated to riding in Maryland, and dozens of certified barns and stables fully equipped to teach you to ride, it's time to get out and into the saddle. These ten Horse Discovery Centers, certified by the Maryland Horse Industry Board, make a great place to start!

Or if you would rather watch them race, horses like Secretariat, Seabiscuit, and War Admiral forged their legends on Maryland sod. Home to Pimlico and the Preakness Stakes, Laurel Park and the Maryland Million, and 267 years of horse racing tradition, Maryland's five tracks for Thoroughbreds and Standardbreds are the cradle of American racing.



Photo By: Visit Baltimore

28 Family Fun

Spend the day lounging on the beach or screaming your heads off on a roller coaster. Get back to nature on a drive-through safari or gaze at distant worlds through the Hubble Space Telescope. In Maryland, the opportunities for family fun are limitless.

More information...