Ground yourself in the Chesapeake “sense of place” at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian, then explore the authentic places and sacred sites where native peoples once lived and continue to thrive around the Bay. The Smithsonian exhibit Return to a Native Place: Algonquian Peoples of the Chesapeake introduces you to the Native peoples of the Chesapeake Bay region through photographs, maps, ceremonial and everyday objects. Then you can meet American Indians in person at sites on Maryland’s Chesapeake shores, where they have a continuous presence and living traditions.

Throughout Maryland and the Chesapeake region, place names echo the voices of their first inhabitants – the indigenous peoples who walked in these mountains, paddled these rivers, settled on these shores. They hunted and fished for food, planted gardens and lived here and the names they gave, such as Patapsco, Wicomico and Chesapeake still mark our modern landscape.

Artifacts they have left behind are clues that unlock the mystery of who they were, how they lived and worshiped, and the ways in which they were connected to the land. Come walk in the woodlands, feel the spirit of the land, and discover their world view and way of life in places like the Susquehanna River, the Chesapeake Bay, and the Appalachian Mountains.

These places focus on the history and events of the Nanticoke, Lumbee, Piscataway, Patuxent, Chicone and Pocomoke tribes.

Eastern Shore | Baltimore and Central Maryland | Southern Maryland

Image Credit: Courtesy of Vienna, MD

1 Imagine first contact between Nanticoke Indians and English Explorer Captain John Smith at the Nanticoke River Discovery Center

Eastern Shore

Begin your exploration at the Nanticoke River Discovery Center in Vienna. On the banks of the Nanticoke River, the historic Nanticoke Indians lived, hunted and gathered food and materials from nature’s bounty. Here you can imagine the alarm, intrigue and confusion the indians experienced when Englishman Captain John Smith sailed up the river in 1608 to explore and chart “new territory.” Exhibits inside the discovery center depict this first interaction between the Nanticoke and the European explorers … and the lasting impacts to come.
Explore a replica Chicone family homestead at a pre-historic Chicone village at Handsell National Register Historic Site

Travel upriver to Handsell National Register Historic Site in Vienna, a plantation house built on the site of a Chicone Indian town. Explore the replica single-family Chicone longhouse on site, authentically constructed using materials and techniques available to Native people prior to 1600. Tour the waddle-fenced native garden and work shelter. In 1665, Thomas Taylor originally established a trading post with the Chicone here. The land became part of an Indian reservation in 1704, which was taken back from the Indians in 1768. Outdoor exhibits tell the story of the native people who once lived here. The Annual Chicone Village Day honors the culture of the Eastern Woodland Native People when you can watch cultural demonstrations and presentations by the Pocomoke Indian Nation and sample native foods.
3 Paddle the Nanticoke River Water Trail and experience a pristine waterscape

The Nanticoke River meanders for 64 miles from southern Delaware to the Tangier Sound in the Chesapeake Bay. Over 25 public launches allow you to customize your trip length. These placid waters were once plied by Native American tribes who used them as a trade route and fishing ground and gave the river its name. Paddling the largely undeveloped river provides a rare glimpse into Chesapeake scenery that looks much like it did prior to English settlement. Along the way you’ll find one of the highest concentration of bald eagles in the northeastern United States, and tidal wetlands teeming with wild rice, cattail, waterfowl, and largemouth bass among many other species.
4 Interact with modern-day Nanticoke Indians at the Nause-Waiwash Band of Indians Longhouse

Descendants of two Nanticoke ancestral villages have formed the Nause-Waiwash Band of Indians. More than 250 individuals are rehabilitating a Longhouse to serve as a community center and meeting house. The longhouse is open by appointment for guests to tour.

More about Nause-Waiwash Band of Indians Longhouse

Type:
History & Heritage

Location:
Greenbrier and Maple Dam
Cambridge, MD 21613
410-228-0216

More Information View On Map

Learn More

Image Credit: Chris Cerino

5 Explore the Tockwogh tribe’s native roots at Sassafras Natural Resources Management Area

Located on the banks of the Sassafras River and Turner’s Creek, the Knock’s Folly Visitor Center at Sassafras Natural Resources Management Area houses exhibits that highlight the local Tockwogh tribe and their interactions with English Explorer Captain John Smith. Walk a trail to experience scenic Chesapeake vistas and a chance to view local wildlife.
More about Sassafras NRMA

**Type:**
Outdoor Recreation

**Location:**
13761 Turners Creek Road
Kennedyville, MD 21645
410-820-1668

More Information  View On Map  Learn More

Image Credit: Tony Williams/Baltimore American Indian Center

6 See American Indian artifacts at the Baltimore American Indian Heritage Museum

**Baltimore and Central Maryland**

Interactive exhibits and displays of unique artifacts and historic native attire shed light on the history, culture, identity and experiences of Indian peoples of North America, with a focus on indigenous Maryland tribes and the Lumbee who moved to this area from North Carolina. A gift shop offers authentic Native-made items from North America. The center also holds programs, events, and culture classes for indigenous people and guests.

More about Baltimore American Indian Center Heritage Museum

**Type:**
American Indian Heritage

**Location:**
113 South Broadway
Baltimore, MD 21231
410-675-3535

More Information  View On Map  Learn More
7 Discover the origins of America’s oldest sport at the National Lacrosse Hall of Fame and Museum

Lacrosse is the official state sport of Maryland, but did you know the game originated with Eastern Woodland Indians? The museum includes rare artwork and sculptures of Native people playing lacrosse, as well as vintage equipment and uniforms, trophies, memorabilia and artifacts related to the game’s accomplished athletes.

More about Lacrosse Museum and National Hall of Fame

Type:
Attraction

Location:
2 Loveton Cir
Sparks, MD 21152
410-235-6882

8 Touch a Replica Susquehannock Log Canoe at the Havre de Grace Maritime Museum

The Havre de Grace Maritime Museum explores the region’s history, including its earliest inhabitants. Thousand-year old Native American petroglyphs and stone and wooden tools provide glimpses of early civilizations in the Susquehanna River Valley. Stunning murals, a log canoe and other artifacts are touchstones to Susquehannock Indian life.
More about Havre de Grace Maritime Museum

**Type:**
History & Heritage

**Location:**
100 Lafayette St
Havre de Grace, MD 21078
410-939-4800

9 Explore native Piscataway grounds at Piscataway Park on the Potomac River

**Southern Maryland**

The Accokeek Creek Boardwalk Trail at Piscataway Park visits landscapes at the confluence of Piscataway Creek and the Potomac River where English explorer Captain John Smith found an extensive palisaded village at Mockley Point in 1608. The town was the capital of the Piscataway people. Archaeology has revealed small pre-historic horticultural hamlets and hunting sites nearby. Access to the site is also available from the Piscataway Creek for canoes and kayaks. Today, the area is highly significant to contemporary Piscataway peoples who use the Moyoane Sacred Site and burial ground for ceremonies.

More about National Colonial Farm at Piscataway Park

**Type:**
Attraction

**Location:**
3400 Bryan Point Rd
Accokeek, MD 20607
301-283-2113
10 Discover Piscataway lifeways and gardening techniques at the Accokeek Foundation at Piscataway Park

Visit the Accokeek Foundation at Piscataway Park to see the Piscataway Connections traveling exhibit based on oral histories with modern Piscataway Indians. Tour the Indian garden, which demonstrates the transition of native peoples of the Potomac from hunter-gatherers to farmers and seed-savers, once they were impacted by the introduction of corn to the region. Time your visit to take part in the Native Trails Native People Program.

11 Walk the Potomac River Trail at Chapman State Park

Take in the sweeping views of the Potomac River from Mt. Aventine at Chapman State Park and walk the Potomac River Trail down to the water, to see where two discreet Piscataway sites were located, including a short term encampment and a multiple activity base camp. Archaeological surveys have revealed over 80 locations with a continuum of use for 8000 years and a site with numerous aboriginal artifacts.

More about Chapman State Park

Type:
Attraction

Location:
3452 Ferry Pl
Indian Head, MD 20640
301-743-7613
12 Walk and fish the Port Tobacco River waterfront at Chapel Point State Park

At Chapel Point, the Piscataway accessed the Port Tobacco River for fishing, oyster processing and hunting. On the shores, they buried their deceased loved ones. Most of the burials were relocated inland in the 19th century. Today, the waterfront area is used by Piscataway People for ceremonial events. Fishing is a wildly popular activity among contemporary park visitors who also enjoy hunting, primitive camping and hiking at the park.

More about Chapel Point State Park

Type: Attraction

Location:
8950 Chapel Point Rd
Port Tobacco, MD 20677
301-743-7613

13 Visit St. Ignatius Church and grounds and reflect on sweeping views and Piscataway religious history

Many of the Piscataway converted to Catholicism after interacting with missionary Father Andrew White who founded this parish in 1662. A stained glass window memorializes the baptism of the first Piscataway by Fr. White in July of 1640. Contemporary Piscataway belong to St. Ignatius Church, and their ancestors are buried in the church cemetery. On site is a monument to St. Kateri Tekakwitha – an Algonquin Mohawk laywoman, recognized as the first American Indian Saint by the Catholic Church. The church is on a 120-foot bluff with
stunning panoramic views overlooking the mouth of the Port Tobacco River where it joins the Potomac.

More about St. Ignatius Catholic Church

Type:
History & Heritage

Location:
8855 Chapel Point Rd
Port Tobacco, MD 20677
301-934-8245

Image Credit: David Krankowski

14 See a replica Woodland Indian Village and artifacts at Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum

English explorer Captain John Smith landed here in St. Leonard on the banks of the Patuxent River in 1607 and was peacefully welcomed ashore by the Piscataway Indians. Walk through the replica Woodland Indian Village and explore longhouses like those where the Piscataway lived. Visit the park on American Indian Heritage Day to experience cultural demonstrations in the village. Inside the museum, local Indian artifacts are on display. The park offers a Native American Lifeways educational program and has an Indian Cultures of America Traveling Trunk for educators to borrow. This site is also the location of the Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory.

More about Jefferson Patterson Park & Museum

Type:
Visual Arts

Location:
10515 Mackall Rd
St. Leonard, MD 20685
410-586-8501
15 Explore American Indian watercraft and tools at Calvert Marine Museum

Calvert Marine Museum focuses on the maritime history of the Chesapeake Bay at the confluence of the Patuxent River and interprets the culture and natural history of Southern Maryland. An exhibit, People of the Patuxent, displays how tools were made and artifacts used in everyday life. Native watercraft are also on display. A guided museums tour, John Smith and the Native Peoples of the Patuxent, describes the first contact and interactions between English explorers and local American Indians. Programs are offered on how the native people used the land.

More about Calvert Marine Museum

Type:
General Attractions

Location:
14200 Solomons Island Rd
Solomons, MD 20688
410-326-2042

16 Take a ferry to St. Clement’s Island State Park

English ships the Ark and the Dove landed on St. Clement’s Island in the Potomac River on March 25, 1634 after a four month trans-Atlantic journey. Father Andrew White first held a Catholic Mass here in the New World. The island was a base of operations for the 150 settlers as they negotiated with the Yaocomico Indians
for a land for permanent settlement. But long before English occupation, the island was used for oystering and Native encampments. Three recorded archaeological sites date to 1000 B.C. A museum at the dock in Colton’s Point features the Indians of Southern Maryland, including artifacts such as arrow points.

More about St. Clement's Island State Park

**Type:**
Attraction

**Location:**
38370 Point Breeze Rd
Coltons Point, MD 20626
301-872-5688

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17 Tour the Woodland Indian Hamlet at Historic St. Mary’s City

Historic St. Mary’s City was Maryland’s first capital, and this 17th-century town was constructed in an area occupied by Yeocomico groups. The replica complex now includes a Woodland Indian hamlet, the town center, State House, Brick Chapel, a tall ship, and a tobacco plantation with heritage livestock. Visit during the annual Indian Discovery Day to see demonstrations of native culture and lifeways. Guided tours are available of the hamlet. Historic St. Mary’s City protects the archaeological and historical record of Maryland’s first colonial capital, and the museum includes archaeological collections from the site.

More about Historic St. Mary's City

**Type:**
Attraction
18 Canoe or kayak Mattaponi Creek at Merkle Wildlife Sanctuary

This sanctuary and wintering ground for Canada Geese was used continuously by Native people from at least 1000 B.C. into the 17th century (1600’s) as the location of the Indian Town of Mattapanient. The site also held small short term Indian camps and a base camp. You can see the site from the water, walk trails, or take part in an educational guided tour. A history section of the visitor center highlights Patuxent and local American Indian heritage.
19 Visit the American Indian Village and American Indian Festival at Patuxent River Park

Tour the replica of an Eastern Woodland Indian Village at Patuxent River Park, and see Indian projectile points, axe heads and artifacts that have been uncovered throughout the sanctuary at the park’s visitor center. Experience the diverse Native American cultures at the American Indian Festival in late October, which features live performances of traditional and contemporary music, dancing, drumming, singing and storytelling, as well as interactive cultural demonstrations and displays. Traditional native foods and artisan items are for sale. A scenic Chesapeake Critical Area Driving Tour through lush woodlands and wetlands begins at this park and meanders along the Patuxent River. The drive ends at Merkle Wildlife Sanctuary and immerses travelers in pristine environments where one can imagine Native American Indians living prior to European contact.

More about Patuxent River Park

Type: Outdoor Recreation

Location:
16000 Croom Airport Rd
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772
301-627-6074

More Information View On Map Learn More

20 Take a tour of the Mount Calvert Historical and Archaeological Park

The Mount Calvert Historical and Archaeological Park provides programs focused on the lifeways of American Indians, English Colonists and African-Americans at Mount Calvert. The museum includes an exhibit about the area’s first inhabitants and outdoor waysides about Woodland Indians. A beautiful Patuxent River overlook, interpretive trail and kayak access are highlights of the park.

More about Mount Calvert Historical & Archaeological Park
21 Attend a Native American Pow Wow or Festival

See the fiery flash of colorful feathers on Native ceremonial regalia, feel the reverberating beat of a drum and the rhythm of dancing feet, hear the chanting and songs from medicine men or tribal leaders, and taste savory Native foods. Native American pow wows and festivals are a treat for the senses. Maryland Indians and other tribes are proud to display their culture and heritage at numerous festivals that celebrate North America’s Native peoples. On the Eastern Shore, don’t miss the Assateague Peoples Drums on the Pocomoke, the Nanticoke River Jamboree, or the Nause-Waiwash Band of Indians Native American Festival. On the Chesapeake’s Western Shores, you’ll find the Cedarville Band of Piscataway Indians at the American Indian Heritage Day in Londontowne. Other festivals include the Baltimore American Indian Center Pow Wow, the Howard County Maryland Pow Wow and Show, and the Morning Star Pow Wow in Belair.