



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC PARTNERS
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PHOTOGRAPH: SELDEN GRANDY
SELFOR MEDIA

DESTINATIONS

RICHMOND TRAVEL GUIDE

WHY IT'S WORTH IT

Richmond has plenty of the laid-back charm and abundant history that travelers have come to expect from a trip below the Mason-Dixon; but, as the home to several art galleries and music venues, a nationally recognized food scene, and an emerging community of entrepreneurial start-ups, there is an equally palpable energy for the arts and innovation.

by SELDEN GRANDY



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EVERYTHING TO KNOW ABOUT RICHMOND

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Laid-back, open-minded, and entrepreneurially driven, a generational and cultural shift in Richmond is melding contemporary, creative attitudes with a city that relishes history.

WHEN TO GO

While seasonal extremes are typically mild, summers in Richmond can be hot and humid for those unaccustomed to the southeast. So, if you're going to be doing a lot of walking around in this walkable city, spring and fall are your best bets; however, if you do come in summer, it's wise to plan your days around air-conditioned museum jaunts, cold beers at a brewery or dips in the river.

CELEBRATE

In an amalgam of preservation and innovation that has become representative of Richmond culture, the RVA Street Art Festival brings both local and national street artists and muralists together for a three-day celebration of the arts. With family-friendly activities and real-time mural paintings, the festival strives to support community arts education and the revitalization of some of Richmond's neighborhoods.

WHAT TO EAT

Richmond's location in the Commonwealth (don't call it a state) affords it with fresh Chesapeake oysters, grass-fed beef, and farm-to-table veggies. This fueled the restaurant scene's explosion onto the national stage. The must-have dish, however, is a bit more old-school. The sailor sandwich, a uniquely Richmond creation, is a combination of pastrami, knackwurst, Swiss cheese, and hot mustard on rye. It's a solid base before the breweries or a hearty reboot for the day after.

SOUVENIR TO TAKE HOME

As the third most tattooed city in the country (behind Las Vegas and Miami), Richmond is home to a number of nationally recognized tattoo artists. Walk-ins are welcome at most establishments, but for this take-home piece, you may want to book in advance. If you're looking to take home something a little less permanent, a bag of fresh beans from one of the city's many coffee roasters makes a great gift.

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL TIP

With bike lanes being added throughout the city, the recently-installed RVA Bike Share is a great way to get around Richmond. For the less bike-friendly ventures, the GRTC Pulse (set to be completed in 2018) is a bus rapid transit system that runs through the city's main artery and connects with the local bus system. Some destinations are harder to access with public transit, but ridesharing services are available.

INSTAGRAM-WORTHY VIEW

The parks in Church Hill (Libby Hill, Jefferson, and Chimborazo Parks) offer some of the best overlooks of the city's vistas. Libby Hill Park has the view that gave Richmond its name, but to more closely appreciate how it came to be known as The River City, don't miss the sunset from the T. Tyler Potterfield Memorial Bridge. ■



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DISCOVER THE BEST OF RICHMOND

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Chock full of well-preserved history and newly-inducted art, Richmond is a city that is equal parts preservation and creative innovation.

WILDLIFE

A walk along Floodwall Park provides not only a spectacular view of Downtown Richmond, but also of its vast river wildlife. Rabbits, deer and groundhogs are commonplace along the river, and as home to blue herons, mallards, geese and osprey, the James River is a bird watching dream.

NATURAL WONDER

As the only place in the country in which Class III and IV rapids run through the city's downtown, the James River attracts paddling enthusiasts from across the nation. For those that prefer to stay on dry land, the hiking and biking trails that wind along the river offer an escape from urban life without leaving the city limits.

NATIONAL PARK

It's hard to experience Richmond without confronting its role in the Civil War. As such, Richmond's National Battlefield Parks at Chimborazo Hospital and Tredegar Iron Works offer a glimpse into its place in history as the Capital of the Confederacy.

CULTURAL SITE/EXPERIENCE

Few things are as ridiculous, immersive, and entertaining as historical reenactments, and the show inside St. John's Church is no exception. To witness Patrick Henry giving his famous "Liberty or Death" speech, reserve tickets in advance. Seats fill quickly on show days (Sundays during the summer months) in this small church at the heart of the Church Hill neighborhood.

BEST DAY TRIP

Visiting Williamsburg or Jamestown for shopping or bit of Virginia's colonial history is an easy drive from Richmond, but if you're feeling particularly ambitious, the Virginia Capital Trail is a 55-mile scenic bike ride that connects Richmond to these historic towns. This paved trail includes several landmarks, two wineries, snack stops, bike repair and restrooms.

OFF THE BEATEN PATH

Richmond is known for its dedication to historic preservation, so it's not hard for history buffs to get their fill in its museums and monuments. For a lesser-known and less structured experience, the Slave Trail is a comfortable three-mile trek with views of the river and a self-guided tour through the history of slavery in Richmond.

MOST ICONIC EXPERIENCE

A full day can be spent weaving through the various gardens on the 100-acre, Gilded Age estate known as Maymont. Featuring expansive Japanese and Italian gardens with koi and waterfalls, a wetland habitat, a farm, and a nature center, Maymont is a family-friendly public park best enjoyed on a warm, spring day.

LATE NIGHT

With more breweries per capita than any other east coast city, Richmond's beer scene has become an undeniable part of its culture. There are plenty of brewery tours to choose from, but visiting the warehouse district Scott's Addition puts you in a prime location to walk to several of the taprooms. You'll need a brewery map and a full stomach.

HISTORIC SITE

Carytown's Byrd Theatre is an architectural wonder built in 1928, and, thanks to the community's passion for preserving its unique beauty, the theatre has survived several close calls with a shuttered ticket booth. The days of \$.25 flicks have long passed, but \$1.99 buys you a ticket to a film in one of the country's few remaining movie palaces.

LOCAL QUIRK

Richmond is the boyhood home of Edgar Allan Poe, a city factoid that is now a point of pride; however, the establishment of the "Poe Shrine" as it was first conceived by enthusiasts in the early 1900's was not initially well-received. Later renamed the Poe Museum, it now hosts monthly "Unhappy Hours" in its garden, with live music and Poe-themed activities. ■