Washington, Virginia & North Carolina





Starting from **Washington**, a **route** off the beaten track, between ocean, mountains and History. After the **battlefields of Manassas**, set off along the **Skyline Drive** in the **Shenandoah** range, before the fabulous **Blue Ridge Parkway**, in the heart of the **Appalachians** of **Virginia**. Back to the coast, in the **Outer Banks** islands in **North Carolina**. After **Williamsburg**, the **plantations** of the **James River** and lovely **Richmond**, in southern **Virginia**, head for **Washington** via **Mt Vernon** and **Alexandria**. Arrival in '**DC**' for a discovery of the capital.



Day 1

Arrival at Washington DC airport around midday and transfer to your downtown hotel.

Discover the federal capital of the United States, a charming, human-scale city home to many museums, most of them free!

Overnight in Washington DC.



Day 2

Transfer to the car rental office, downtown or at the airport.

Head to Manassas National Battlefield Park, the site of fierce and bloody battles during the Civil War (Bull Run).

The route continues to Front Royal, gateway to the magnificent Skyline Drive, stretching 170 km along the ridges of Shenandoah National Park in the Appalachian Mountains.

Scenic viewpoints follow one another. In autumn, during the famous foliage season, trees display incredible colors! The park is a hiking paradise and home to around fifty mammal species, including black

bears, bobcats and deer.

Overnight inside or near the park (subject to availability).

Note: possibility to add a second night in Shenandoah National Park.



Day 3

Enjoy stunning overlooks and beautiful waterfalls along Skyline Drive as you head south, including Dark Hollow Falls.

Stop at the Harry F. Byrd Visitor Center for information about hiking trails and local wildlife.

Further south near Waynesboro, you join the Blue Ridge Parkway, another spectacular scenic road extending Skyline Drive all the way to Great Smoky Mountains National Park — with even more viewpoints, waterfalls and hikes.

Arrival in Lexington, a charming town west of the Blue Ridge, known for its beautiful red-brick homes.

Overnight in Lexington or nearby.



Day 4

Enjoy a relaxing day exploring the streets of Lexington.

Drive the Appalachian Waters Scenic Byway, a superb panoramic road heading north via Hogback Mountain and Jump Mountain, passing the charming wooden bridge at Rockbridge Baths.

Another option: head south to admire Natural Bridge, an impressive natural stone arch spanning the river. Once revered by the Monacan Indians, the site is easily accessible via a riverside path.

Overnight in Lexington or nearby.

Note: It is possible to replace the 2 nights in Lexington with 2 nights at Peaks of Otter Lodge on the Blue Ridge Parkway (subject to availability).



Day 5

Head east for a pleasant transition day. Visit the beautiful Poplar Forest plantation, once owned by Thomas Jefferson, 4th U.S. president and principal author of the 1776 Declaration of Independence.

Continue to Appomattox, the historic site marking the end of the Civil War. It was in the Appomattox Court House that General Lee signed the surrender.

Also worth visiting: Clover Hill, a reconstructed historic village, and the Red Hill – Patrick Henry National Memorial.

Arrival in Clarksville, on the shores of the Roanoke River. A lovely stop ideal for water sports.

Overnight in Clarksville.



Day 6

Drive towards the coast of North Carolina. First stop: Washington — NC, not DC — a pleasant town on the Pamlico River, which flows into Pamlico Bay.

Enjoy walks along Main Street and the Waterfront Docks, home to the North Carolina Estuarium, highlighting life in the Pamlico estuary.

Continue to Bath, a charming historic village with tree-lined streets and wooden houses with porches.

Founded in the 1690s, Bath became North Carolina’s first town in 1705.

Overnight in Bath (or Washington, subject to availability).



Day 7

Head to the small Swan Quarter ferry terminal, about 1 hour away. Cross Pamlico Bay by ferry (advance booking recommended) to Ocracoke, south of the famous Outer Banks. Go and see the lighthouse.

The Outer Banks, or OBX, form a string of barrier islands connected by a narrow coastal strip of beaches and dunes nearly 300 km long. They are crossed by one of the most beautiful drives in the eastern United States. Between Ocracoke and Hatteras, the road is replaced by a 1-hour ferry link (free).

There is often quite a bit of wind in the Outer Banks, making it a fragile environment—but also a paradise for surfing, kitesurfing and windsurfing!

For the record, this is where the famous pirate Blackbeard died in 1718. Don’t miss the visit to the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, with its giant lollipop look.

Overnight on Hatteras (or Ocracoke).



Day 8

Relax on the beach — hundreds of kilometers of protected dunes and coastline await. Activities abound in the OBX, especially surfing.

Discover the typical wooden houses built on stilts and visit one of the iconic lighthouses.

At sunrise you might spot wild horses — descendants of Spanish mustangs introduced over 500 years ago — especially near Corolla.

Fishing and local excursions are also possible.

Overnight on Hatteras (or Ocracoke).



Day 9

Drive north to Nags Head and Kill Devil Hills. Visit the Currituck Beach Lighthouse in Corolla, and if you have a suitable 4x4, you may even drive on the beach!

Continue to the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, home to numerous bird species, bobcats, foxes and black bears.

Return to Virginia, along the James River, dotted with historic plantations. Arrival in Williamsburg, home to a life-size reconstruction of Jamestown.

Overnight in Williamsburg or nearby.

Note: possibility to add a second night in Williamsburg.



Day 10

Follow the James River Plantations Route along the river’s north bank, passing plantations such as Sherwood Forest, Westover, Berkeley and Shirley.

Stop in Richmond, capital of Virginia, rich in history since 1607. Explore historic sites along the Liberty Trail.

Continue to charming Warrenton, one of our favorites.

Overnight in Warrenton or nearby.



Day 11

Drive along the Potomac on small bucolic roads, via Prince William Park. If you didn't stop at Manassas at the start, you can make the detour today.

Continue to Mt Vernon, George Washington's elegant riverside estate. It is the most visited historic home in the country!

This former plantation can be visited inside and out. Interactive and educational activities are offered.

Then drive to Alexandria, a small colonial port town whose historic district has kept an incredible charm, with its red-brick facades. The city is also accessible by metro from Washington.

Arrival in Washington, DC and return of your rental vehicle downtown. Transfer to your downtown hotel.

Overnight in Washington, DC.



Day 12

The history of Washington is rich. The historic and political heart of the country has been beating here since 1790, and the city's major monuments and landmarks are there to remind you of it.

You can opt for a guided double-decker bus tour (or hop-on hop-off), stopping at the capital's must-sees: the White House, the Supreme Court, the Capitol, the Martin Luther King Memorial… A cruise on the Potomac is also possible.

The city is home to some of the finest museums in the country. Many, clustered around the National Mall, belong to the renowned Smithsonian institution (and are free).

Among the highlights: the National Gallery, the Freer Gallery & the Arthur Sackler Gallery, the National Museum of African Art, and the National Air and Space Museum (part of whose rich collections are displayed near Dulles airport)…

Overnights in Washington, DC.

Day 13

Enjoy the morning to further explore the capital.



We recommend getting pleasantly lost in the streets of trendy (and university) Georgetown, a former 18th-century port town. You'll find plenty of shops, restaurants and bars among lovely rows of historic houses…

Across the river, beyond the Lincoln Memorial on the Virginia side, lies the famous Arlington National Cemetery, whose (respectful) visit is free.

More than 290,000 people rest here, including JFK. A small trolley loops around the site.

In the afternoon, transfer to Washington Dulles airport.

Return flight to Europe (arrival the next day).

Extension or itinerary change: contact us

Accommodation