

West Virginia

VACATION GUIDE



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JULIA-ANN SQUARE HISTORIC DISTRICT, PARKERSBURG



WEST VIRGINIA

Bucket List

Make the most of your time in the Mountain State by checking these must-try experiences off your to-do list. Find your next Almost Heaven adventure with this handy take-along guide.

Savor a Mountain Meal

Sit down for Appalachian-inspired food and drink at one of many renowned restaurants and eateries in Almost Heaven. See: *Taste of Appalachia*, page 38.

Catch a Show

Grab a seat at one of West Virginia's energetic live music, dance and theater performances in legendary venues. See: *Raise the Curtain*, page 90.

Find a Waterfall

Do go chasing waterfalls. Download West Virginia's digital waterfall passport and find your way to beautiful cascades across the state. See: *Finding the Falls*, page 66.

Snap a Photo

Pose for a picture at one of several scenic swings located around West Virginia. Use the map on the back of this page to find the nearest swing. See: *In Full Swing*, page 59.

Cruise Along Country Roads

The Mountain State is famous for its winding roads and country drives. Plan your own route around gorgeous vistas and must-see stops. See: *Heavenly Road Trips*, page 26.

Hit the Trail

Traverse miles of breathtaking trails by foot or by mountain bike, through picturesque parks and along historic paths. See: *The Wander List*, page 56.

Celebrate History

Pay homage to the Mountain State's storied past by visiting museums, Civil War battle sites and other historic locations. See: *Hands-On History*, page 22.

Go Stargazing

Take in the stunning night sky at star-filled spots around the state, including three official designated Dark Sky Parks. See: *Stargazing Sites*, page 76.

Score a Souvenir

Don't leave West Virginia without browsing local boutiques to find one-of-a-kind gifts for someone special—or for yourself. See: *Gift of Giving*, page 115.

WELCOME TO

almost heaven

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN ALMOST HEAVEN, WEST VIRGINIA. YOUR EXPLORATION OF OUR GREAT STATE BEGINS HERE.

Here, you'll find certified International Dark Sky Parks, such as Watoga State Park featured on the cover, along with world-class outdoor adventures, rushing waterfalls, charming mountain towns and welcoming locals. *TIME*, *USA Today*, *Lonely Planet*, *Condé Nast* and *Frommer's* have all named West Virginia a "must-visit" destination, and you'll understand why once you experience its magic for yourself.



It's my hope that this guide will serve as a helpful and inspirational resource for you as you plan your trip to the Mountain State this year. Keep it handy for future visits and be sure to share it with your friends and family.

We look forward to welcoming you to West Virginia soon!

Sincerely,

Jim Justice
Governor



on the cover

WATOGA STATE PARK
The cover photograph is from Beaver Creek Campground. The back cover was shot at Watoga Lake.

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WEST VIRGINIA

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WHERE WILL WV
TAKE YOU?

field guide

Where do you start with West Virginia?
In the mountain meadows of its southern reaches?
The depths of its ancient river valleys?
Once you decide where to explore first, make
sure to include stops along the way to toast to new
experiences in Almost Heaven.

Navigate your way through the Mountain
State's outdoor adventures, rich culture
and history, acres of parkland, and so much more
with a little help from your Field Guide.



Why We Love West Virginia

Rule number one of travel: Ask a local. Discover the Mountain State's can't-miss moments and experiences according to West Virginians.

WRITER *Prasana William*

A state of natural beauty, of long-standing tradition, of game changers and of history makers: West Virginia has a special place in the hearts of all who have the fortune to journey within its borders. No one explains the hold this mountain paradise can have better than the folks who live here. Meet West Virginia and learn why the locals love the home they call Almost Heaven.



REBEKAH
PERRY
FRANKS

FAMILY TIES

Rebekah Perry Franks

HERITAGE FARM
HUNTINGTON

Born and raised in Wayne County, Rebekah Perry Franks has been living at Heritage Farm her whole life. Rebekah is the granddaughter of the farm's founders and the third generation of the Perry family to make West Virginia's only Smithsonian-affiliated museum her life's work. She's putting her stamp on the open-air living-history museum as assistant manager and director of wildlife education, and using her degree in Zoo and Conservation Science to help the farm showcase the importance of wildlife and wild places, in addition to the people and artifacts. "I love our natural history," Rebekah says. Visitors can enjoy a living-history village, thrill-filled adventure park, critter encounters and more experiences that bring out the best of Appalachian life.



COMMUNITY EFFORT

Tres Ross

DISCOVERY WORLD
ON MARKET
PARKERSBURG

When kids clamber through The Ball Factory or learn about Ohio River ecology at Discovery World on Market, a children's museum opening this year in Parkersburg, they may not know that one local family played a pivotal role in its creation. For generations, the Ross family has been a philanthropic leader in the region, building on executive director Tres Ross's father's legacy of small-business investments and charitable giving. Today the foundation awards grants to local nonprofits. Why keep their influence close to home? "The Mid-Ohio Valley is known for its hospitality," says Tres, so nurturing family-friendly spaces feels natural. The museum was inspired by Tres's own children, two sets of twins, and reflects the foundation's mission to invest in STEAM learning (science, technology, engineering, art and math) and revitalize the downtown.



BOLD BREWS

Ron and Cindy Robeson

STUMPTOWN ALES & DAVIS

Ron and Cindy Robeson moved to West Virginia’s mountainous Potomac-Highlands region to follow her dream of running a bed-and-breakfast. “I had a blast for 12 years,” she says. But when Ron started home-brewing beers that won rave reviews from friends, Cindy was ready to trade her dream for his. “We decided to close the bed-and-breakfast and take a shot at the brewery,” she says. “We’re so glad we did.” They opened Stumptown Ales in Davis in 2015. (Legend says that you could once jump through the timber town on stumps.) Today, trees tower above, and their dream is flourishing, too. Stumptown offers hop-centric pours like the Sassy Moab. Cindy says the double IPA has “a little bit of a lot of different flavors”—just like the Potomac Highlands.

WARM WELCOME

Frank and Anthony Mosley

THE GREENBRIER & WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS

After more than 60 years as a doorman at The Greenbrier, welcoming all the resort’s guests—including presidents and Hollywood stars—Frank Mosley is a celebrity himself. Guests now wait to greet him, offer hugs and kisses, take pictures, and share memories. “The woman said it’s like going to see Santa Claus. Frank is The Greenbrier’s most

senior employee, by both age and tenure, having started in 1958 as a temporary custodian and moving through several positions over the years. Now, in his most notable role, Frank’s face has become synonymous with hospitality at the Greenbrier. And his legacy at the resort has become a family affair—his son, Anthony, has worked alongside Frank for the last 22 years. “It was nice to fall in behind my dad here,” Anthony says. “We show dedication to our profession, and getting it done right is important to us.”



FRANK AND ANTHONY MOSLEY

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT

**Jonathan and
Kristy Grant-Hart**

**CARNIFEX FERRY CABINS
SUMMERSVILLE**

A Brit and an American living in London travel to West Virginia for vacation, fall in love with the rugged landscape, and decide to buy the place where they're staying. That movie-ready tale actually happened to Jonathan (the Brit) and his wife, Kristy (the American). The couple visited the New River Gorge a few years ago for whitewater rafting and campfire s'mores at Carnifex Ferry Cabins in Summersville. When they mentioned they were interested in finding something similar of their own, the owner told them he was retiring and ready to sell—so Jonathan and Kristy bought the 11 cabins. Summersville is uniquely located to explore, Jonathan says. The tranquil hiking around Summersville Lake and in the Carnifex Ferry Battlefield State Park is complemented by a variety of adventure sports in the New River Gorge.



JOHN
GENNARO
DEVLIN



RHAPSODY IN WHEELING

**John Gennaro
Devlin**

**WHEELING SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA**

The Mountain State has a legendary history of bluegrass, folk and country music—and with John Gennaro Devlin at the helm, the Wheeling Symphony Orchestra is something to talk about, too. John is one of the youngest music directors in the nation to lead a professional orchestra, and he conducts with innovation. Under his guidance,

the Wheeling Symphony Orchestra puts on thought-provoking performances featuring surprising collaborations with up-and-coming artists and iconic performers like cellist Yo-Yo Ma. Our number one artistic priority is new American music by diverse voices, John says—and it's a philosophy that resonates with the community. Visitors can expect a program that pays tribute to the pillars of classical music blended with unexpected genres, including hip-hop and rap.



FAMILY FARMERS

Liz Riffe

RIFFLE FARMS
TERRA ALTA

Liz Riffe met her husband, Timmie, during their service in the military. Liz had always dreamed of a family farm, and Timmie knew just the place to make it happen—his home state of West Virginia. He wanted to raise his own kids near the rivers and mountains he was familiar with, Liz says, and the farm they found in Terra Alta checked all the boxes. Today the Riffes are raising their family and a herd of grass-fed bison on their farm, where they work to raise awareness about regenerative farming, host community events like farm-to-table dinners and even offer camping reservations.



**SUSAN
BENJAMIN**

SWEET SPOT

Susan Benjamin

TRUE TREATS
HISTORIC CANDY
HARPERS FERRY

Candy historian and author Susan Benjamin was living and working in Washington, D.C., when the nearby town of Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, captured her attention. She wanted a place that was beautiful where I could raise my son, Susan says. That was over 20 years ago, and I've never thought about leaving. The historical significance of the region—especially the ever-wonderful Harpers Ferry—appealed to Susan, a lifelong history buff and cultural researcher by trade. In fact, the area's rich cultural heritage inspired her to open the nation's only historic candy company, True Treats. The food on display and available for purchase includes nut mixes and tea blends inspired by ancient history as well as modern sweets. Visitors can get a taste of life (figuratively) throughout the ages and snack on regional treats like Appalachian Molasses Drops and Handmade Cherry Stain Glass Candy.



ADRENALINE RUSH

**Annie and
Bobby Kelly**

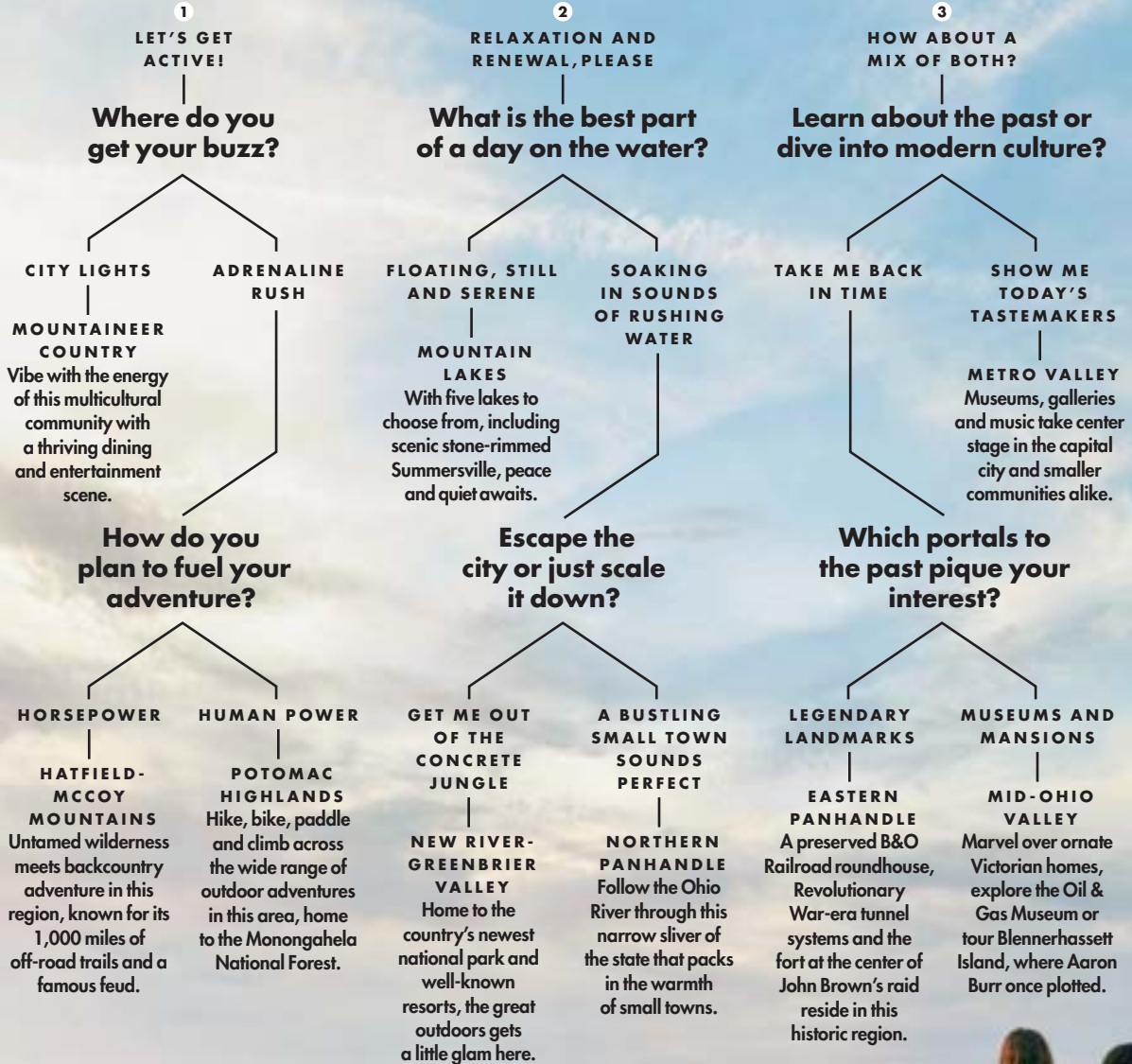
DEVIL ANSE ATV RESORT
DELBARTON

A winding path (like an ATV trail) led Annie and Bobby Kelly to southern West Virginia. On an RV trip, they discovered the world of ATVs. Curiosity grew into a passion. Annie began dreaming of a resort, but good spots proved elusive until she heard about the Hatfield-McCoy region. It was like pulling a needle out of a haystack, Annie says. The area had a newly finished, world-class trail system but lacked lodging for an influx of riders. A scenic piece of land on the Devil Anse Trail—used by the work crews who had completed the system—sealed the deal. Today the couple greets visitors to their slice of Almost Heaven with the same kindness that West Virginia has shown to them.

THE PLACE YOU BELONG

Find Your Corner of Almost Heaven

Heart-pumping adventure or serenity now? Choose your ideal getaway and discover there's a place in West Virginia for everyone.



Only in West Virginia

Mountain State museums and historic sites are packed with one-of-a-kind cultural treasures. Mine the past to uncover these gems and so much more.



The Largest Piece of Cut Lead Crystal

OGLEBAY INSTITUTE'S GLASS MUSEUM, WHEELING

The Sweeney Punch Bowl—a 5-foot-tall, 220-plus-pound crystal showpiece—was originally designed in 1844 by North Wheeling Flint Glass Works as a publicity stunt for the small firm. Today, the storied and intricate glass art stands on display as a reflective tribute to the region's sparkling industrial history.



A Railway to the Past

THURMOND DEPOT VISITOR CENTER, THURMOND

This restored train station is now staked as a park visitors center and a modern-day homage to the bygone era of bustling train depots and powerful steam engines.

Visitors can tour the station or trek to the Thurmond townsite to see more relics from the golden age of rail travel.

George Washington's Bathtub

BERKELEY SPRINGS STATE PARK, BERKELEY SPRINGS

This outdoor bathtub built around bubbling hot springs is something to write home about—just ask George Washington, who penned multiple letters detailing his visits to the site. Though the existing tub is only a re-creation, the healing spring waters remain the same.

A Little Village with Big Dreams

ARTHURDALE HERITAGE CENTER, PRESTON COUNTY

Arthurdale was the first community in FDR's New Deal and a pet project of first lady Eleanor Roosevelt, who visited so often she knew residents by name. Tour Eleanor's Little Village for a look at the 1930s homestead.



Andy Warhol's Reimagined Birth of Venus

CLAY CENTER JULIET ART MUSEUM, CHARLESTON

Pop art legend Andy Warhol's image of Sandro Botticelli's *Birth of Venus*, circa 1482, is a stunning, if somewhat subversive, take on the classic Renaissance painting of the Roman goddess of love and beauty. Warhol's screen print provides a colorful, iconoclastic close-up of Botticelli's detailed original work.



Cast a Line

Whether bait casting on moonlit nights or fly-fishing sunlit mountain streams, West Virginia is an angler's paradise.

FLY-FISHING

Wade, boat or cast off from the shore at one of these fly-fishing havens. Head to the **Dogway Fork of Cranberry River**, a fly rod-only tributary in the southern section of **Monongahela National Forest** to nab brook, rainbow and golden trout. Cast on **Middle Island Creek** in Tyler and Pleasants counties to coax muskie out from their hiding spots on this catch-and-release waterway. In the southwestern corner of the state, the **Bloody Mingo Tug Fork Water Trail** follows a 60-mile stretch of river where smallmouth bass make a great catch.

SHORELINE FISHING

The **Monongahela River** has plenty of spots to fish for bass, walleye and catfish, including the **Mon River Rail Trail**. Bait for bass, trout and catfish at **Kimsey Run Lake** in Hardy County, where a rock levee provides easy access to deeper waters. Near Ripley, **Rollins Lake** offers ADA-accessible fishing from the pier, while the **Fisherman's Trail** leads to other prime locations for trout and hybrid striped bass. At **Lake William** in Barbourville Park, cast for bass, trout, bluegill and catfish. **Middle Fork River** in **Audra State Park** is a favorite for trout fishing.

BOAT FISHING

For a wow-worthy haul, set sail on Roanoke's **Stonewall Jackson Lake** for trophy largemouth bass and huge muskie—trout-stocked tailwaters mean prize fish lurk at every turn. Steer from cove to cove on **Tygart Lake** near Grafton, home to yellow perch, smallmouth bass, crappie, catfish and walleye. Head northwest to **Jennings Randolph Lake** to find walleye, bass, catfish and crappie, or net smallmouth bass in the **Greenbrier River**.

NIGHTTIME FISHING

Bring bait and a flashlight to **Burnsville Lake** in Braxton County for moonlight flathead catfishing. Near New Martinsville, the **Hannibal Dam Tailwaters** on the **Ohio River** promise nocturnal catfish, bass and sauger.

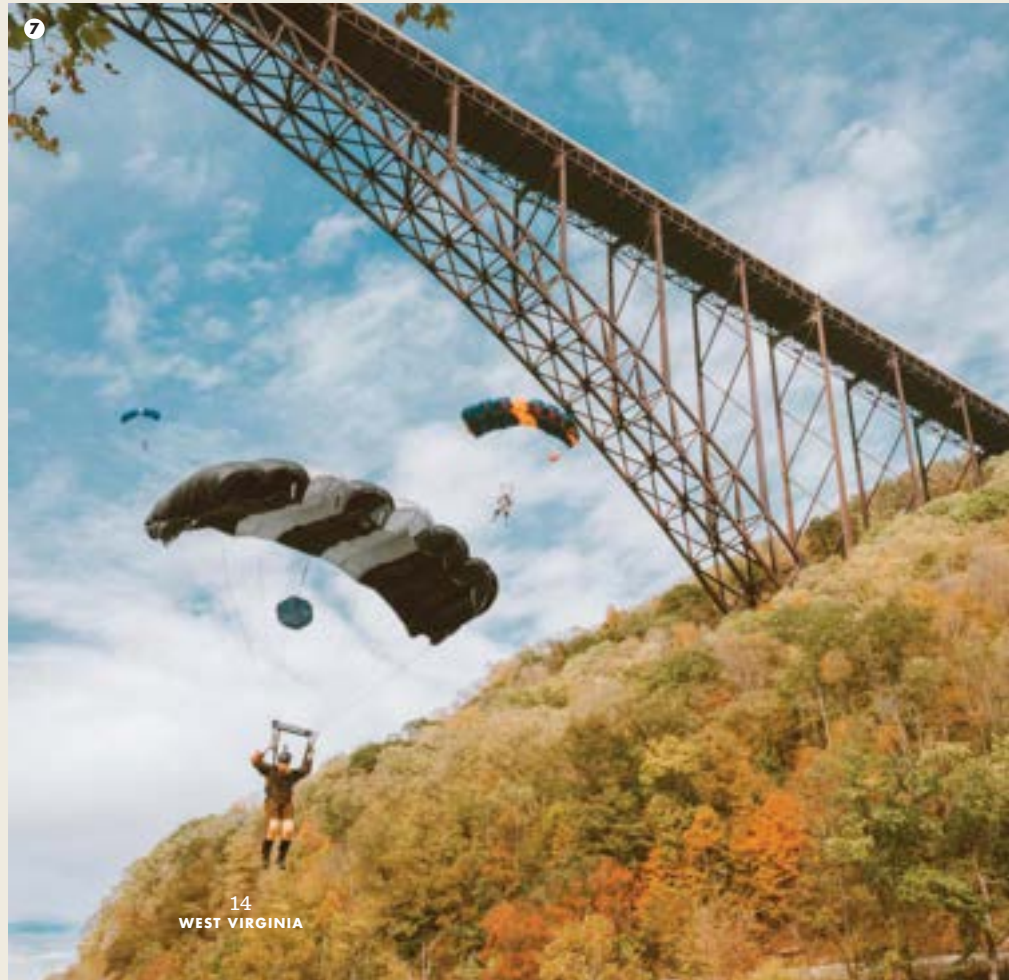


GREENBRIER RIVER

LICENSE TO REEL Residents and visitors need a valid ID, a West Virginia fishing license and a trout stamp (when targeting trout). Visitors require a conservation stamp and, depending on location, a national forest stamp. Review fishing regulations and buy a license online at wvdnr.gov/fishing. For more great fishing spots, visit WVtourism.com/fishing.



AUDRA STATE PARK



A Fest for All

Toe tapping, beer tapping and bridge jumping are all part of the fun at West Virginia festivals. They're also a way to tap into local culture while getting a jump on trends in art, music and drama.

Ramps and Rail Festival

ELKINS **APRIL**

Celebrate winter's end with two seasonal traditions: Sample pungent native ramps (aka wild leeks) in burgers, sandwiches and pizza. And get in some spring training with a ride on the Durbin and Greenbrier Valley Railroad.

West Virginia Food Truck Festival

ELEANOR **APRIL**

The best meals on wheels converge at Eleanor Park for a day of chowing down and getting down to live music from regional bands. While you peruse the food trucks, be sure to visit artisan vendors.

West Virginia Strawberry Festival

BUCKHANNON

MAY

Strawberry fields forever! Well, for eight days, at least. Salute the fruit with a carnival, four parades, two street parties, arts and crafts, and food vendors offering strawberry treats of all kinds, such as shortcake, cheesecake, pancakes and milkshakes.

3 8 FestivALL

CHARLESTON

JUNE

Visual arts, music, theater, dance and more fill 50 indoor and outdoor venues around the city. Events include the Capitol Street Art Fair, Porch Parade and Carriage Trail Walk—a shady stroll featuring live music and interactive art.

Mountain Music Festival, ACE Adventure Resort

OAK HILL

JUNE 1-3, 2023

New River Gorge echoes with traditional, funky and soulful sounds as more than 25 bands take to three mountaintop stages. The hosting resort is also home to world-class rafting, rock climbing and mountain biking.

5 Back Home Festival

NEW MARTINSVILLE

JUNE

Hey, it's good to be back home again. That's the sentiment that draws folks from across the country to this free three-day music event—plus an impressive lineup featuring top touring acts on the grassroots scene.

2 Contemporary American Theater Festival

SHEPHERDSTOWN

JULY

See some of the country's newest plays in West Virginia's oldest town. Hailed as one of the essential summer theater experiences, the festival produces a rotating repertory of six new works on edgy, thought-provoking themes.

1 Mountaineer Brewfest

WHEELING **AUGUST**

Do shotskis (group shots from a ski) with friends for charity and enjoy samples from more than a dozen West Virginia craft breweries at this one-day event at Heritage Port. The beer comes with chasers of live music and local eats.

Preston County Buckwheat Festival

KINGWOOD

SEPTEMBER

Once an insurance crop for local farmers during the Depression, buckwheat now inspires a harvesttime celebration with parades, a carnival and a livestock show. Try some buckwheat cakes drenched in syrup and served with sausage.

Mountain State Forest Festival

ELKINS **OCTOBER**

The Royal Coronation of Queen Silvia crowns a week-long tribute to the majesty of West Virginia's autumn woods. Watch a lumberjack competition, enjoy music and marvel at the work of crafters.

Hinton Railroad Days Festival

HINTON **OCTOBER**

Experience all the bells and whistles of railroading's heyday at this junction of history, food, live music and vendors. A special train takes visitors to the festival from Huntington to Charleston to Hinton (and back) each day.

4 6 7 Bridge Day

FAYETTEVILLE **OCTOBER**

BASE jumpers leap 876 feet from the New River Gorge Bridge into the gorge below at West Virginia's largest single-day festival. The bridge closes to traffic and opens to licensed jumpers, rappellers and walkers.



ENDLESS FUN
Click for more Mountain State events and festivals.

Home Away from Home

Think outside of the overnight box with one of these incredible Mountain State vacation rentals.

WRITER *Hilary Braaksma*



"HANG-OVER" HILLSIDE TREEHOUSE AT LAMBERT'S WINERY

TREE HOUSES

Elevate your trip with a gorgeous treetop view at one of these unconventional stays.

"Hang-Over" Hillside Treehouse

WESTON

This is one hangover that might make your morning better, thanks to details like a natural wood stair railing, hanging swings and a private patio overlooking Lambert's Winery.

Holly Rock Treehouse

HICO

Pause to enjoy a panorama of woodlands and wildlife from the wraparound porch at Country Road Cabins' leafy retreat. Double French doors open to a studio-style suite that's ideal for a solitary stay or a romantic rendezvous.

TINY HOMES

You don't need a lot of space to make grand memories in these snug stays.

Lost River Vacations

MATHIAS

Estle into the woods for a night in one of two compact cabins accommodating four to six people (dogs, too). These tiny homes are big on amenities—perks include a full kitchen, disc golf and breakfast by the host.

The Hideaway on Tacketts

HURRICANE

Striking views permeate an astonishingly airy shipping container-turned-tiny home. This two-person stay is a great way to get in some rest and relaxation: Sip drip coffee on the deck, stargaze from the hot tub or drop a line in the fully stocked pond.

COZY CABINS

Sleep soundly in lavish mountain lodging, cuddle up in an 1800s log cabin or soak in the hot tub outside of a modern A-frame.

Broken Triangle Escapes Cabin

AUGUSTA

Bask in natural beauty at this sophisticated Scandinavian-inspired suite. Eclectic touches like a moody modern exterior, retro appliances and a soaking tub help make this rental special.



Carnifer Ferry Cabins

SUMMERSVILLE

Eleven rustic cabins dot this 38-acre woodland site. Bring along friends for the 13-person Gauley Getaway, or get close with someone special in the 1800s-era, one-bedroom McKinley log cabin.

The Cabin on Coney Island

HINTON

You'll need a watercraft to access this ultra-private, 10-person island cabin, but the serene, secluded stay is worth the hunt. The waiting list fills up fast, so plan to book in advance.

Mountainaire Luxury Cabin

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY

Book this luxe 11-person cabin for your group

vacation. High-end perks like a three-season heated pool, on-site spa treatments and impeccable interiors make unwinding easy.

The Cabins on Puesta Del Sol Farm

YELLOW SPRING

Life on the farm is just a reservation away. This newly built cabin has a kitchenette, a B&B-style option, free-range chickens (plus fresh eggs) and majestic mountain views.

Dreamtime A-Frame Cabin

BERKELEY SPRINGS

This two-bedroom A-frame cabin has what you need for a weekend in the woods: a hot tub, grill, stack of board games and access to trails.

Discover more overnights at WVTOURISM.COM/LODGING

TRY THESE BOUTIQUE STAYS

Travelers who prefer classic perks like room service and a concierge can turn in for the night at these traditional lodging options with sophisticated touches.

THE SCHOOLHOUSE HOTEL

White Sulphur Springs

This renovated former high school is a mix of charming memorabilia, magnificent design and modern amenities, like a rooftop bar.

THE CORDUROY INN & LODGE

Snowshoe

Guests will find upscale amenities and accommodations at this scenic ski-in/ski-out boutique hotel.

HOTEL MORGAN

Morgantown

Enjoy a state-of-the-art fitness center and cocktail bar at this historic hotel with contemporary elements.

LAFAYETTE FLATS

Fayetteville

Book one of four contemporary vacation rentals housed in a historic building within walking distance of local shops and eateries.

Wildlife Watch

Spotting the critters, great and small, that populate West Virginia is part of the Mountain State experience. Grab your binoculars and head to these hot spots to see Mountain State animals right where they roam.

RAPTORS Hawks and owls and vultures... oh my! Bald eagles and other nongame birds (like hummingbirds) have found refuge at Hinton's **Three Rivers Avian Center**, a rescue organization dedicated to education and preservation. Visit the first Saturday of every month when the center is open to the public or schedule a private guided tour.

NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWLS

One of the smallest owls on the continent, this tiny bird is worth donning your hiking boots and heading to **Valley Falls State Park** in Fairmont for a chance to see. The puff-coiffed perchers like to hang out at the base of coniferous trees, but keep your eyes open: They weigh in at just 3.5 ounces at the heaviest and are barely taller than a cell phone.

NORTHERN FLYING SQUIRRELS, WHITETAILED-DEER AND BEAVERS

Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge protects the creatures that call Tucker County's unique high-elevation wetland environment home. Spot species that thrive across the state, like whitetailed-deer, turkeys and beavers, as well as more rare animals like the Northern flying squirrel, a population recently revived from near extinction.

ELK AND BOBWHITE QUAIL

Though one of these can grow up to 1,100 pounds and the other is a little bird, these beasts have a very important thing in common: They're the products of successful reintroduction projects. To see them both, take a guided tour at Logan County's **Tomblin Wildlife Management Area**.

BLACK BEARS

Dunlow's **Cabwaylingo State Forest** is a good habitat for West Virginia's official state animal. The forest itself is a result of a 1930s campaign to rebuild the region's original wooded environment, which, in turn, brought back black bears. If you see one of these majestic tree-climbing creatures, however, make sure to be careful and keep your distance.

BE KIND

Remember to respect wildlife. Admire from afar and stick to marked trails to avoid disrupting habitats.

CANAAN VALLEY
NATIONAL
WILDLIFE REFUGE

Discover more West Virginia wildlife at WVTOURISM.COM/WILDLIFE-WATCH

Pick Your Park

It's time to leave that inside life behind. You're never far from natural wonder in West Virginia, where acres of parkland, national forests and public waters are just waiting to be discovered.

4,863

The number of feet above sea level of Spruce Knob in Monongahela National Forest. It is the

highest point

in West Virginia and just one of many favorite challenges for rock climbers.

DID YOU KNOW?

Many parks feature sandy beaches and picnic-perfect shores. (Plus, find floating inflatable obstacle courses and splash pads at Pipestem Resort and Tygart Lake state parks.)

West Virginia state parks are home to more than

350

COZY CABINS

ranging from rustic to fully equipped with all the comforts of home and modern lodges.

WHAT'S

GEOCACHING?

A hidden treasure discovered by following clues and GPS coordinates.

You'll find permitted geocaching themed to history, science, mysteries and more tucked away in

25-plus state parks.

LEAVE NO TRACE

Help to preserve these natural spaces by traveling only on marked trails, disposing of trash properly, practicing fire safety and respecting wildlife.

All Aboard!

At Cass Scenic Railroad State Park, a roster of gear-driven

STEAM LOCOMOTIVES

transports visitors from a preserved 1920s town to Whittaker Station or the top of Bald Knob on a beautiful journey through the West Virginia forest.

county park perks

Fly along 7,540 feet of dual zipline at **Grand Vue Park** or float across 272 acres of peaceful, pristine water at **Lake Stephens**.

New River Gorge National Park and Preserve is the

NEWEST INDUCTEE

into the National Park Service.

PUPS

are welcome throughout the park system, but bring your equine pals to ride the trails at **Camp Creek and Holly River state parks**.

45

Number of state parks, forests and rail-trails in West Virginia.



Crafted to Perfection

Alcohol has always been artisanal in West Virginia, where the spirit of today's inventive brewers and distillers descends from its moonshining past. Sip on these innovative local libations for a true taste of Appalachia.

WRITER *Angela Ufheil*

Bold Brews

Abolitionist Ale Works

CHARLES TOWN

A block from the courthouse where abolitionist John Brown was tried for treason, brewers harness barrel aging to pull surprising flavors from beers, such as Purple is the New Noir, a black raspberry farmhouse ale matured in wine barrels.

Short Story Brewing

RIVESVILLE

Sip on Chasing Daylight IPA or one of many frequent new releases while sitting around the firepit or listening to open mic night on the wooden patio at the family-owned taproom and brewing facility.

Brew Keepers

WHEELING

Chase a day of antiquing at Centre Market with a pint of Wild and Wonderful, a brown ale infused with local honey, or the Irish Pirate, a toffee-forward Irish extra stout. Both are served year-round at the taproom.

Mountain State Brewing Company

BRIDGEPORT **MORGANTOWN** **THOMAS**

Opened in 2005 by two brothers, the brewery's team mills its own grain and grows some of its own hops. The resulting easy-drinking beers, served in Mason jars, pair well with the homespun decor (like sawhorse-inspired seats) at the company's three taprooms.

Big Draft Brewing

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS

Thanks to its massive open-air beer garden, stopping in for a Sauvign Saison or Foreman American Lager usually turns into an event. Jazz bands and bluegrass troupes frequently take the stage, and cornhole games add a competitive spark.

Fife Street Brewing

CHARLESTON

The craft brewery is near the revitalized Slack Plaza in Charleston's downtown, and the small-batch porters and West Coast IPAs it slings pair famously with sophisticated grilled cheese sandwiches, such as the kimchi, provolone and buffalo chicken combo.

Something Stronger

Hatfield and McCoy Moonshine

GILBERT

The famous family feud birthed both drama and this authentic, small-batch spirit. The white corn whiskey recipe originated with Devil Anse Hatfield himself and is distilled in copper kettle stills on what was once Hatfield land.

Swilled Dog

UPPER TRACT

Beachside. Trailside. Porchside. There's no bad spot to sip Swilled Dog's ciders and canned vodka sodas, but we're partial to the dog-friendly tasting room. Play vintage board games and sample spirits, including a selection of whiskeys and bourbons made from locally grown corn and grain.

Kirkwood Winery and Isaiah Morgan Distillery

SUMMERSVILLE

The winery has 28 varieties of vino to sample, and an on-site distillery lets visitors observe the crafting of Southern Moon, Rye, Grappa and Bourbon. The distillery is home for the oldest bourbon produced in West Virginia.

Appalachian Distillery

RIPLEY

Flavors both classic (apple pie) and unusual, like strawberry lemonade or pawpaw (a native fruit with a flavor profile akin to banana), all emerge from a 10,000-square-foot facility that's open to tours and taste tests.

Smooth Ambler

MAXWELTON

Tour attendees at the rust-red distillery can expect to learn the basics of distilling and sip on complimentary pours, such as Founders' Cask Strength Series Rye, a blend with hints of oak, toffee and sweet black tea.



NEXT ROUND
Craft breweries are poised to keep discerning taste buds happy, no matter which corner of Almost Heaven you find yourself exploring.





PRESERVED HISTORY
Visitors to Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine explore a restored coal camp house, miner's shanty and schoolhouse.

**INSIDE THE BECKLEY
EXHIBITION COAL MINE**



GOING UNDER
Tour the mine in a man car (underground vehicle). Bring a jacket—temps average 58 degrees.

TIME TRAVEL

Hands-On History

Live like a coal miner, hear the start of a revolution and uncover a West Virginia of yesteryear with interactive experiences that bring the past to life.

1 Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine

BECKLEY

It's not just another day in the coal mines as veterans of the industry take you underground and share stories from their time beneath the surface. Above ground, visit restored coal camp buildings and score sweet treasure (fudge) at the gift shop.

2 Beverly Heritage Center

BEVERLY

At this museum, exhibits housed in a cluster of preserved culturally significant buildings delve into daily life in a 19th-century rural town. Make a reservation to visit the restored jail just behind the center, where you'll hear tales of its nefarious past before plotting your next move as a bootlegger in the Prohibition-themed escape room it now houses.

3 Grave Creek Mound

MOUNDSVILLE

More than 2,000 years ago, the Adena people moved 57,000-plus tons of earth and sand by the basketful

to bury their loved ones within a towering conical mound. Imagine prehistoric living while exploring a replica Adena structure at the Delf Norona Museum.

4 John Brown's Fort

HARPERS FERRY

This modest brick fortress dodged Civil War destruction, served a brief stint near the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago and lived on a college campus before moving near its original location. Learn about its namesake and the famous 1859 barricade.

5 Matewan Depot Replica Museum

MATEWAN

Roll through the detour-worthy museum for the scoop on famous clashes, including the Matewan Massacre—a pivotal showdown during the West Virginia mine wars—and the Hatfield-McCoy feud. The Welcome Center provides far more amicable interactions, with friendly locals pointing you to your next destination.



BEVERLY HERITAGE CENTER

6 National Coal Heritage Area

NEW RIVER/

GREENBRIER VALLEY

While cruising through 13 coal-country counties, it's hard not to fall in love with the small towns and rural areas shaped by the industry. One of many must-stops: Madison's Coal Heritage Museum, where kids can peer into the replica company store and shovel coal onto a mine car.

7 Nitro Wars Museum

NITRO

A chronological walk through multiple wars moves military buffs and casual visitors alike in this 4,400-square-foot museum. Displays reveal

the process of making gunpowder, the trials of trench warfare and Nitro's significant contributions to the national war effort.

8 Oil & Gas Museum

PARKERSBURG

Vintage machinery and a video presentation fuel knowledge of this industry that plays a critical role in West Virginia's story. Find out how the state's abundance of salt sparked the boom of black gold, and discover Gen. George Washington's role in getting things flowing.

For more immersive learning experiences, visit WVTourism.com/history

ALMOST
HEAVEN
drives

country roads and city sights

Roll the windows down and take in the fresh mountain air en route to Almost Heaven's charming small towns, urban hot spots and natural wonders that prove, where winding roads run, excitement is sure to follow.



heavenly road trips

Take in the fresh mountain air en route to the charming small towns and urban hot spots. You haven't really road-tripped until you've tried these itineraries.

WRITER *Gary Thompson*



LEWISBURG

West Virginia's history-paved highways and backcountry byways traverse pastoral landscapes, ancient forests, laid-back mountain towns and energetic hubs. No matter which Mountain State route you choose, all roads lead to adventure.



SENECA ROCKS

seneca skyway

Kick off this drive in Lewisburg, aka America’s Coolest Small Town. Get your coffee fix (and maybe a breakfast burrito) at **The Wild Bean** then browse downtown’s boutiques, including **Harmony Ridge Gallery** purveyors of

artful jewelry, home decor and gifts. Head down the road 3 miles to Caldwell, where nearby **Greenbrier State Forest** stages its own kind of performance art. Lose yourself in 5,200 acres of secluded natural beauty while hiking, swimming or mountain biking, then stay the night at a cabin or campsite.

ALL DOGS GO TO ALMOST HEAVEN

Bring your four-legged friend on your four-wheel excursion. Pet-friendly stops include the trails at Dolly Sods Wilderness (where leashed pups are welcome), Cranberry Glades Botanical Area boardwalk (where dogs meet bogs) at Hillsboro, Summersville Lake (stand-up paddleboard with your pooch), and Sandstone Falls at New River Gorge National Park and Preserve (leashed dogs are welcome on all park trails).



DOLLY SODS

Drive about two hours north to **Seneca Rocks** dramatic white-gray formations that are a West Virginia landmark. You can take a 1.3-mile hike to the peak. History and hospitality converge less than an hour up the road at **South Branch Inn** in Moorefield, near a Civil War battlefield. The family-owned hotel promises peaceful lodging on the outskirts of town. Bonus: A night’s stay comes with a free pass to the local movie theater.

End your journey on a high note—including the musical kind—in Thomas, where **Purple Fiddle** hosts Appalachian-based acoustic music (and other genres) every weekend in a family-friendly atmosphere. Find more Appalachian artistry down the street at **Buñton and Landstreet Gallery and Studios** It’s a workspace for artists and a showcase for their paintings, prints, pottery, jewelry and glass.

capitol circle

See the highest state capitol dome in the United States on a tour of the **West Virginia State Capitol** in Charleston. Next door at the **West Virginia State Museum**, take an interactive journey through the state's eras, from prehistoric coal forests to today. For more fun, check out the revitalized **Elk City neighborhood**. It's home to **Kin Ship Goods**, a boutique with cozy

apparel and home decor, as well as **The Vandalia Company**, makers of scratch doughnuts, including all-time bestseller Strawberry Pretzel. **The Bullock Distillery**, the state's first micro-distillery, crafts whiskey, bourbon, gin and vodka. **Elk City Records** celebrates the return of the turntable with a carefully curated collection of vintage vinyl.

About an hour southeast of Charleston in Ansted, **Hawks Nest State Park** offers two gift shops, an aerial tramway, jet boat rides, hiking trails and a stunning overlook into the **New River Gorge National**



Park and Preserve in Glen Jean. **ACE Adventure Resort** in nearby Oak Hill guides park explorers via rafting trips, zipline tours, rock climbs and mountain biking treks. Circle back to Charleston through towns near the **Hatfield-McCoy Trails'** 1,000-plus miles of dirt routes for off-road vehicles. Find the Bearwallow trailhead near Logan and the Ivy Branch trailhead near Julian.





DOWNTOWN CHARLESTON Stretch your legs on the city's downtown streets and walkways, where road-weary travelers will find assorted eateries, a local brewery and a recently renovated city park.

**MAKE
A STOP IN
MATEWAN**

Learn about the bloody 1920s conflict between miners and coal company agents at the West Virginia Mine Wars Museum. Archival photos and videos, first-person accounts, rare artifacts, and detailed timelines document the struggle.

EXPERIENCE ELK CITY

This neighborhood on the west side of Charleston has exploded with urban appeal—blending established businesses with new energetic ventures. Enjoy a little midcentury modern moment over a warm brew at Mea Cuppa Coffee Lounge, pick up something cozy to remember your travels at Kin Ship Goods, sit down for a bite to eat at The Vandalia Company or go for a stroll to take in the sites along the Elk River.



**THE VANDALIA
COMPANY**

cranberry corridor

In a historic bank building, **The Vault On Main** restaurant in Summersville still looks like a vintage financial establishment—and the European-inspired cuisine is right on the money. Bank on fun at **Summersville Lake**, the state's largest lake. Go fishing, paddling or scuba diving in the 2,800-acre jewel. More water-based rec awaits at **Summit Lake**, a 43-acre cold-water fishing and camping spot in Greenbrier County.

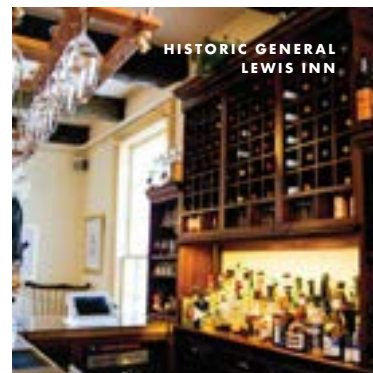
Nearby, just outside of Hillsboro, a trio of cascades mesmerizes at the **Falls of Hills Creek**. A 0.75-mile trail leads to the three falls, which drop 25 feet, 45 feet and 63 feet. Not far away, **Cranberry Glades Botanical Area** in Hillsboro is the southernmost spot in North America to find bogs—spongy, acidic wetlands where ancient plant species thrive. A 0.5-mile boardwalk offers views of the 750-acre ecosystem. In Lewisburg, 45 minutes south of Hillsboro, **Stardust Cafe** focuses on staying local, organic and sustainable, while sprinkling a little magic into its gourmet sandwiches and creative salads. **Historic General Lewis Inn** beckons with contemporary Southern cuisine—locally sourced—and guest rooms that fit a historic setting while pampering with modern comforts.



CRANBERRY GLADES
BOTANICAL AREA

Nearby, tour **The Greenbrier Bunker** in White Sulphur Springs, where the lodgings are more austere—think metal dorm-style bunk beds. The space was built below the famed resort as a secret fallout shelter for Congress. As you head back toward Summersville, stop at **Gauley Bridge**, a historic town at the confluence of the Gauley and New rivers. It's named for a strategically important span in the Civil War. It's also home to Cathedral Falls, one of the state's highest (and easy to access) waterfalls.

ROAD TIP Follow Midland Trail National Scenic Byway (US-60) for 180 miles across the state to find captivating vistas, outdoor adventures and culture-rich towns.



click for more

RIDE ON
Click to discover West Virginia's Mountain Rides and more road trip routes.

birdeye bend

Start the day with an espresso or latte at **The Blue Moose Cafe** in Morgantown, and come back for a sandwich or salad at lunch. Ready for a stronger brew? **Morgantown Brewing Company**, the state's oldest operating brewery, favors exotic ales and creative burgers. About 20 minutes south, in Fairmont, **Prickett's Fort State Park** re-creates the log fort that provided refuge on Colonial Virginia's western frontier, and period-costumed interpreters demonstrate crafts.

Another 22 miles southwest, **The Wonder Bar Steakhouse** in Clarksburg has been serving tender ribeyes since 1946. The wines and views are delicious, too—enjoy them on the patio or around the firepit. A half-hour away in Weston, it's all about glass. **The Museum of American Glass in West Virginia** exhibits pieces made primarily between 1900 and 1940, in both utilitarian and decorative designs.

From Weston, head 20 minutes east to Buckhannon's **Audra State Park**, a woody wonder bisected by the Middle Fork River. It's a great spot for a picnic, camping and hiking—the rock overhang on the Alum Cave Trail boardwalk is a selfie magnet.



PRICKETT'S FORT
STATE PARK

Downtown, nonprofit co-op **Artistry on Main** features a different artist every day creating textiles, jewelry, glass, paintings or other media.

Keep heading east to Elkins, where you've got a train to catch. The **Durbin and Greenbrier Railroad's New Tygart Flyer** is a vintage diesel-powered passenger train that chugs past mountain scenery on its way to the High Falls of Cheat waterfall. While in Elkins, stay at **The Forks** atop Kelly Mountain—its views are rivaled only by its restaurant's high-level cuisine.

POCAHONTAS COUNTY



MOUNTAIN RIDES Motorists looking for memorable rides by car or motorcycle in the Mountain State don't need to look far. The West Virginia Department of Transportation and Department of Tourism teamed up to create the Mountain Rides program, promoting popular road trip routes that travel along treasured country roads, awe-inspiring mountain vistas and charming small towns.

delightful day trips

Wherever your West Virginia road trip takes you, you're never far from a few worthy detours.

WRITER *Hilary Braaksma*

SANDSTONE FALLS,
NEAR HINTON



Make a day of visiting these quaint railroad towns, historic hubs and cultural city centers to see the beauty of Almost Heaven in all its forms. Shop for one-of-a-kind souvenirs, dine on impressive dishes and stop for breathtaking views in these lovely locales.



hinton

This Victorian-era railroad town is the southern gateway to the New River Gorge National Park and Preserve, a bastion of natural beauty.

Bid a busy week farewell in Hinton with fresh salads, sandwiches and other tasty treats at **Lucky Rivers Cafe**, a charming eatery inspired by Appalachian flavors and global cuisine.

Swing through **Bluestone State Park** to take in captivating views of the lake or put down a picnic blanket. The lakeside retreat is a picturesque place for a day on the water—boat rentals are available at the on-site marina.

Before leaving town, it's worth a stop at the **Hinton Railroad Museum** to see artifacts from the earliest days of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway, view model train displays, and learn about the legend of Steel Drivin' Man John Henry.



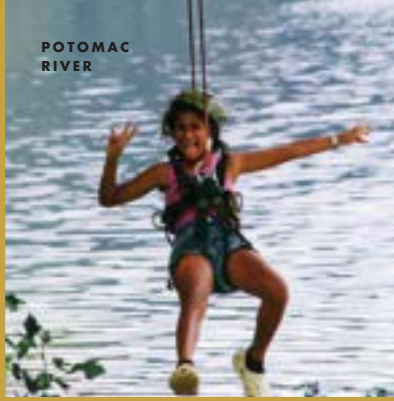
wheeling

Explore West Virginia's former state capital, nestled along the Ohio River in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains.

There's no shortage of time-honored traditions to enjoy in Wheeling. The city's **Centre Market** came to life in the 1850s, making it older than the state of West Virginia itself. Today, the market is a lively mix of antiques shops, eateries and boutiques.

While you're there, stop for lunch at **Coleman's Fish Market**, a joint that's been serving fresh fish fillet sandwiches since 1914.

Down the street from the market district is the **West Virginia Independence Hall Museum**, home to free exhibits highlighting the history of West Virginia, the road to statehood and the Civil War. Visit **Oglebay Institute** to tour the opulent mansion of industrialist Earl W. Oglebay, and see live glassblowing demonstrations at the Glass Museum or animals at the Good Zoo.



POTOMAC RIVER

harpers ferry

This town sits at the confluence of the Shenandoah and Potomac rivers, which Thomas Jefferson once described as “one of the most stupendous scenes in nature.”

Fuel up for an afternoon of exploration at **The Rabbit Hole Gastropub** ☒ an unassuming eatery with savory shareable specialties like Loaded Pork Fries, Old Bay Brined Shrimp and Braised Short Rib Poutine. Post-meal, it’s a short drive to **Harpers Ferry National Historical Park** for a look at the place where some of the nation’s most storied legends played out. Guided tours walk visitors through the history of

John Brown’s raid, Civil War battle sites, Storer College and Virginius Island, where shipping once thrived.

If it’s outdoor recreation you are after, this neck of the woods has you covered. **River Riders Family Adventure Resort** is a great place to spend the day taking guided whitewater rafting excursions, going flatwater tubing or seeing the sights from a zipline canopy tour.

HARPERS FERRY





parkersburg

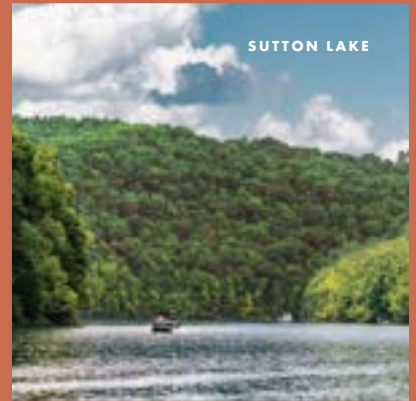
Island excursions, grand historic homes and innovative Appalachian craft brews call day-trippers to the state's fourth-largest city.

Around 10,000 people a year trek to Parkersburg to visit **Blennerhassett Island Historical State Park**—an island attraction on the Ohio River. The voyage starts with a scenic 20-minute riverboat ride, followed by tours of the grounds and an on-site mansion (with enthralling stories about Vice President Aaron Burr's time there), and horse-drawn carriage rides.

After working up an appetite, head back to the mainland for a hearty meal and a mouthwatering selection of craft beers at **Parkersburg Brewing Company**. Try Cell Block 30, a World Beer Cup gold medal-winning



American-style brown ale. Wrap up your visit with a trip to **Henderson Hall** in nearby Williamstown. The historic 29-room mansion was built in 1859 and houses artifacts of everyday life dating back to the 1600s.



sutton

Easy access to popular road-tripping routes, rich history and inviting downtown shops make this stop a no-brainer.

Step back in time for a day at **Bulltown Historic Area**—a Civil War-era site that once saw battle and today hosts reenactments. Guests are allowed to walk through historic buildings.

After time traveling, nosh on burgers, pizza, pasta and a sizable selection of vegetarian-friendly dishes at **The Cafe at the Elk River Hotel**. Dine alfresco at this riverfront eatery or settle inside to enjoy the old-world ambience of the 19th-century building.

Just a short walk from the cafe is **Landmark Studio for the Arts**—a renovated 1886 church that now hosts live local theater—check the show schedule online. Before skipping town, skip across the street to **Mountain Laurel Country Store** to pick up one-of-a-kind Mountain State souvenirs, like handmade jewelry and wood carvings.

If you're looking for an adrenaline rush, rent Jet Skis and CraigCats to cruise across **Sutton Lake**.

Plan your small-town getaway at WVTOURISM.COM/MOUNTAIN-TOWNS

seasons greetings

Any time of year you choose to make your Mountain State memories, the wonder of West Virginia's ever-changing landscape is waiting to welcome you.

Bask in the blooming hillsides and fresh flavors of spring. Or beat summer's heat with a plunge in mountain-chilled lakes and streams. Autumn brings a confetti shower of color with just as many ways to leaf peep. And winter delivers adventure-filled days and cozy nights alike.

Stop in and say hello to your Almost Heaven season.

ALMOST
HEAVEN
Spring



SPRINGBEAUTY [NATIVE WILDFLOWER]

ALMOST
HEAVEN
Summer



SUMMERSVILLE LAKE

ALMOST
HEAVEN
Fall



HIGHLAND SCENIC HIGHWAY

ALMOST
HEAVEN
Winter



WINTERPLACE SKI RESORT

taste of appalachia

The bounty of spring provides the perfect excuse to celebrate the unique flavors of Appalachia. Turn through the hands-on adventures of agritourism, meet culinary artists who bring mountain tradition to life with modern sophistication and raise a toast to the fruit of the vine.

WRITER *Prasana William*

kitchen confidential

The restaurant landscape in Almost Heaven has burgeoned into a bastion of edible elegance that still remembers its roots. Pop behind the scenes with West Virginia's Chef Ambassadors and discover the mountain magic in every dish.

BANK-ABLE BITES

THE VAULT ON MAIN, SUMMERSVILLE

Though the sandstone columns and marble floors remain, Nicholas County Bank now houses treasure of the culinary kind as the home of The Vault on Main. Chef Elizabeth Nolle serves French-inspired flavors under these soaring ceilings, leaning on the interplay of different spices to create a dining experience as memorable as its setting. Stop in during the day for quick bites, like the Goddess Bowl with roasted chickpeas and Brussels sprouts, but make

INGREDIENT SPOTLIGHT

A relative of onions, **ramps** are garlicky greens prized for their elusiveness. Since ramps resist cultivation, the only way to harvest them is to forage. They find their way into kimchi for Chef Elizabeth Nolle's pork belly tacos.

plans to come back for dinner, when the ambience transitions under glowing chandeliers and truly travel-worthy entrees, like tender filet mignon sourced from only miles away, take the spotlight. (Pro tip: Don't leave without a nightcap in the speakeasy.)

HIDDEN TREASURE

TRAIL 12 BBQ, GILBERT The end of an ATV trail deep in the Hatfield-McCoy Mountains might be the last place you'd expect to find a meal with a fine-dining pedigree, but that's exactly what you get at Chef Karie Ellis' barbecue joint. Her background as an executive chef shines through in award-winning hickory-smoked barbecue and dishes like wings tossed in blackberry sauce, hand-seasoned ribs and perfectly seared steaks. You'll come for the tender pulled pork, but stay for the clear view of West Virginia skies as far as the eye can see.



CHEF PAUL SMITH

PALATE PLEASERS

1010 BRIDGE; ELLEN'S HOMEMADE ICE CREAM; THE PITCH; CHARLESTON

"To me, Appalachia and West Virginia hospitality is coming in, sitting around the table, and making strangers friends and making friends family," says Chef Paul Smith, who puts that philosophy into practice at his three Capital City eateries: 1010 Bridge, Ellen's Homeade Ice Cream and The Pitch. At 1010 Bridge, Chef Smith describes his approach as "Appalachian ingredients with Low Country flair," with dishes like the Crispy Fried "Nashville Hot" Oysters, in which Southern-inspired spice is amplified by the brine of pickled vegetables (a preservation method long favored by Appalachians), and the cast-iron seared 1010 cut of steak is accompanied by creamy lobster mac and cheese. The Pitch sports bar creates a fun social space with a menu full of innovative pub food going more than the distance. The Sloppy Angelo upgrades the Italian sausage sandwich with house-made queso.

INGREDIENT SPOTLIGHT

The **pawpaw** is a small fall fruit with flavor akin to banana and mango. Chef Paul Smith's pawpaw ice cream at Ellen's Ice Cream is one of the best ways to enjoy it.



CHEF YANCY ROUSH

ELEVATED EATS

THE BLENNERHASSETT RESTAURANT AND LOUNGE • PARKERSBURG

For 18 years, Chef Yancy Roush has set the tone for fine cuisine in Parkersburg, overseeing the opulent fare at The Blennerhassett Restaurant and Lounge. Head to the European-inspired dining room and expect a memorable meal with classic American-style entrees, like a New York strip drenched in bourbon

INGREDIENT SPOTLIGHT

West Virginia's waterways abound with trout. The Greenbrier River rainbow trout is a favorite for Chef Yancy Roush, who serves it a number of ways, including smoked on green salad.

butter, plus inventive seasonal offerings that spotlight fresh ingredients from right in the Mid-Michio Valley. West Virginia honey is a highlight, especially in the house-made black walnut-honey ice cream.

REMIXED RECIPES

FARM UP TABLE • THOMAS

Behind the enchanting blue-and-white brick exterior of Farm Up Table awaits an equally captivating menu peppered with unusual takes on familiar dishes. House hand-cut fries become Sea Fries when tossed with butter and shrimp. Crostini takes a walk on the wild side with blistered shishito peppers. But Chef Tiffany Villar is a purist at heart when it comes to technique. Inspired by European, Creole and Southern cuisine, the influences you taste in her inventive repertoire are executed with respect to tradition.



THE FRENCH GOAT

FARM FRESH

THE FRENCH GOAT • LEWISBURG

You could say farm-to-table was always Chef Jared Masters' destiny. He credits growing up on his family's farm—not far from where The French Goat stands—with the work ethic that's allowed him to succeed in the kitchen. Now he draws on those roots to present classical-style cooking, honed over the years in fine-dining venues like The Greenbrier, in an approachable way. European favorites gain new layers of flavor in dishes, such as a panzanella, which pairs the Italian bread salad with regionally beloved deep-fried soft shell crab and fresh vine-ripened tomatoes. For the Foie Gras Tourchon, where a French wine gelée shares the plate with simple brown butter pear. In addition to sourcing from multiple area suppliers, Chef Masters partners with his own ancestral farm to grow the next season's menu.

DISH ON

TABLE SHES

West Virginia's Chef Ambassadors put their own twist on Mountain State staples. Make sure to try their favorites

VENISON

Considered a delicacy for having a rich flavor without high fat, venison is a favorite in this wooded region. At Lot 12 Public House, Chef Damian Heath serves venison sausage skewered with shrimp in a balsamic barbecue sauce.

POTATOES

Humble tubers thrive in rockier regions and have a special place in the hearts of West Virginians. Chef Karie Ellis loves their versatility and features them as parabola-shaped fries.

CORNBREAD

Dripped with honey or served salty, no matter how you take your cornbread, one thing is for sure: It's been a West Virginia favorite for generations. Chef Elizabeth Nolle uses the native Bloody Butcher cornmeal to give her cornbread a colorful pop.

BERRIES

Plump, juicy and irresistibly cute, berries are fine for any meal come spring. Chef Matt Welsch dresses strawberries in balsamic vinegar to top tender corn cakes.

MUSHROOMS

Friendly fungi grow well in West Virginia's climate and come in a wide variety, including morel and hen of the woods. Chef Jared Masters prefers chanterelles, which are particularly abundant in Greenbrier County.

REINVENTING HOME

VAGABOND KITCHEN WHEELING

After traveling to 60 kitchens across the country to learn how different chefs approach their art and chronicling his journey in his blog, *The Vagabond Chef*, Chef Matt Welsch has found a calling in the food traditions of northern Appalachia. "I am sharing my experiences through trying to actually learn more about where I started," he says. "I try to update an Appalachian cultural dish. I'll take food that I've seen in the rest of the world, and I'll try to transform it into an Appalachian dish by using locally appropriate ingredients."

You'll find West Virginia classics, like the simple corn fritter, gussied up with maple mayo made with syrup from nearby Family Roots Farm, served up beside watermelon gazpacho. Locally sourced ingredients are always the stars at Vagabond Kitchen.

ATLAS TO APPETITE

CODY'S BRIDGEPORT

Never expect a repeat visit to Cody's to be the same—Chef Cody Thrasher doesn't let his guests (or kitchen) get bored. "Chefs get burned out on cooking the same stuff over and over," he says. "I like to keep things creative and fresh." The menu of international flavors rotates more than seasonally. Chef Thrasher borrows from his travels abroad, replicating dishes that have left a strong memory. Roast marrow, by way of South America, sings with chimichurri. Peru

INGREDIENT SPOTLIGHT
Purslane—a forager favorite, is a low-growing, succulent-like herb with omega-3-rich green leaves and red stems. Chef Cody Thrasher likes adding it to salads.

meets Southeast Asia in a ceviche, which adds a drizzle of Rwandan chili oil to the kaffir lime-spiked seafood dish. Pair these destination delights with local craft brews and curated cocktails.

UPSCALE COMFORT

LOT 12 PUBLIC HOUSE BERKELEY SPRINGS Home is at the heart of Lot 12 Public House, from the moment you cross the threshold of its charmingly restored 1913 house to your first rich bite of lamb in a pomegranate demi-glace. "You're going to be taken care of, but you're going to feel comfortable as well," explains Chef Damian Heath. High-quality service and elevated dishes ditch the pretension here. Chef Heath imbues his menu with nods to his Italian heritage (think gnocchi toasted with garlic) and what is fresh and in season. A warm-weather trip to Berkeley Springs is complete without a meal on the veranda alfresco.



CHEF DAMIAN HEATH

perfect pairings

Drinking West Virginia wine is an event unto itself, and these experiences only heighten the flavor. Discover the best places to enjoy your vino accompanied by live music, gorgeous views and excellent eats.

LISTEN TO LIVE MUSIC

Warm-weather months bring out the sweet melody of live music and other entertainment at **Lambert's Vintage Wines** in Weston on Wednesdays. These laid-back affairs are the perfect way to wind down with Lambert's blush, white or red varietals from the castle-esque, hewn-stone tasting room.

TAKE A HIKE

A day of fresh-air adventure deserves a just as lively crisp glass of white wine. Located on the trailhead of the Ben's Run trails, **Chestnut Ridge Winery** in Spencer is ready to greet you with more than 30 varieties of wine ranging from sweet to dry. Explore the trails and the artist colony that houses the winery before relaxing on the porch with a glass and Merlot the winery dog.

EAT, DRINK AND BE MERRY

It might be tough to improve upon the scintillating flavors of **WineTree Vineyards** vintages, but a new menu of tasty bites makes a strong case. Pair your pours from this Vienna institution with light fare. Let the Bavarian pretzel's rich salinity bring out the green apple overtones in the Cayuga White, or match the dry red Noriet with the decadent petits fours.

GET IN GOOD SPIRITS

Double up at **Kirkwood Winery** in Summersville, home to not just a unique variety of vino, but also Isaiah Morgan Distillery. In addition to classic varietals, the winery itself concocts fascinating savory wines in flavors like ramp, dandelion and rhubarb. Add a tour of the distillery to see how Southern Moon, a corn liquor that pays homage to the moonshiners of West Virginia past, is made for a truly one-of-a-kind winery experience.

SIGHTSEE WHILE YOU SIP

There's no question the beauty of West Virginia's rolling landscape deserves an excellent vintage to match. Sprawling over 192 acres of grapevines, roses, forest and waterways cupped by the Appalachian Mountains, **Daniel Vineyards** in Crab Orchard creates a paradise for wine-lovers best enjoyed from the wide viewing deck, naturally shaded by the trees it was built cleverly around. The conservation-focused farm sustainably grows 15 varieties of grapes able to withstand the cooler weather at its high elevation, resulting in pours like the popular Sweet R&B wine.

Perched on a hillside near Morgantown, **Forks of Cheat Winery's** open-air deck overlooks a valley of rippling Almost Heaven countryside. Linger over a glass of the Bad Cat Catawba (a semi-sweet rosé with melon tones) or the bright Sauvignon Blanc, and enjoy the work of award-winning vintners.

Learn more about West Virginia wineries at WVTOURISM.COM/WINERIES





set the table

Get hands-on with agritourism experiences that allow you to participate in the farm-to-table process. Feed barnyard buddies, grow mushrooms and discover West Virginia's salty past.

ORR'S FARM ■ MARTINSBURG

Plan to spend a full afternoon on an agriculture adventure at this family-owned farm. Start with a stop by the barnyard to meet the cutest baby goats, mini horses and bunnies around. Then swing through the farm market, where the season's produce awaits fresh-off-the-vine and in baked goods made in-house. Peruse a wide array of locally sourced wares and make sure to time your visit for when the peach and apple blossoms light up the hillside with pink glory.

HERNSHAW FARMS ■ KANAWHA COUNTY

The humble mushroom takes on a greater purpose at Hernshaw Farms, where spent organic material is recycled into compost to reclaim former mining land



LOST CREEK FARM

for farming. Call ahead and plan a walk through the rows of fungi with owner George Patterson, whose mission is to support Appalachians with access to fresh food and sustainable agriculture.

RIFFLE FARMS ■ TERRA ALTA

Inspired by a desire to help regenerate the world's grasslands and work in harmony with Mother Nature, Riffle Farms' owners, Lisa and Mimmie Riffle, found themselves drawn to the inherent wildness of the bison—a creature once known to roam across America. Now the farm is home to a herd of the grass-fed beauties known for their lean and nutritious meat. Take a guided tour to see these majestic beasts up close.

WICK ■ DICKINSON

SALTWORKS ■ MALDEN

An ancient ocean once flowed over what is now West Virginia, and all that remains are beds of salt beneath the Appalachian Mountains. Experience the rebirth of this age-old mineral as artisanal table salt, harvested by the same family for more than 200 years. Tour the grounds to see the gleaming crystals forming into the familiar mealtime condiment or taste it yourself at farm-to-table dining events.

SUNSET BERRY FARM ■ ALDERSON

Why is a treat better when you've had to work for it? Find out how sweet a strawberry can be at this U-pick spot. Visit during May and June for bright green bushes dripping with those fully red fruits (and a farm store stocked with the chocolate-dipped variety). The Flat Top Mountain farm also features activities the kids will love, like the Bucking Cow Barrel Train Ride, a fairy garden and a massive bounce pad.

SUNDOGS BED AND BREAKFAST COUNTRY RETREAT ■ SHEPHERDSTOWN

Where forest meets field, you'll find this cozy eco-friendly B&B nestled on 6 quiet acres of the Eastern Panhandle. Animal-lovers, delight—Sundogs welcomes your pups, and you'll want to keep an eye out for resident Tony Award-winning goats Sparky and Peapod, from the Broadway production of *Once on This Island*. After you've enjoyed a hearty gourmet vegetarian breakfast, venture out on 2 miles of mown trails through pawpaw groves, creekside vistas and a meadow full of pollinator-loving greenery.



WICK ■ DICKINSON
SALTWORKS



**FARM AND FORAGE
SUPPER CLUB AT
LOST CREEK FARM,
LOST CREEK**

This small-plate series serves up the season's best over six courses on the grounds of beautiful Lost Creek Farm. Reservations open in spring and go fast, so be sure to keep an eye out for this special series lauded by *The New York Times* and prepared by James Beard award-nominated chefs.

LOST CREEK FARM

RICHTER'S MAPLEHOUSE, PICKENS Early spring's sun-warmed days followed by deep cold nights create the ideal conditions for harvesting maple sap. Learn the syrup-making process firsthand with a tour of Richter's Maplehouse, where modern techniques are used to tap the trees and transform this natural gold into a favorite pancake topper. Be sure to savor the panoramic views of three counties and come back for the West Virginia Maple Syrup Festival, held in March.



Discover more fun on the farm in Almost Heaven.

renew you

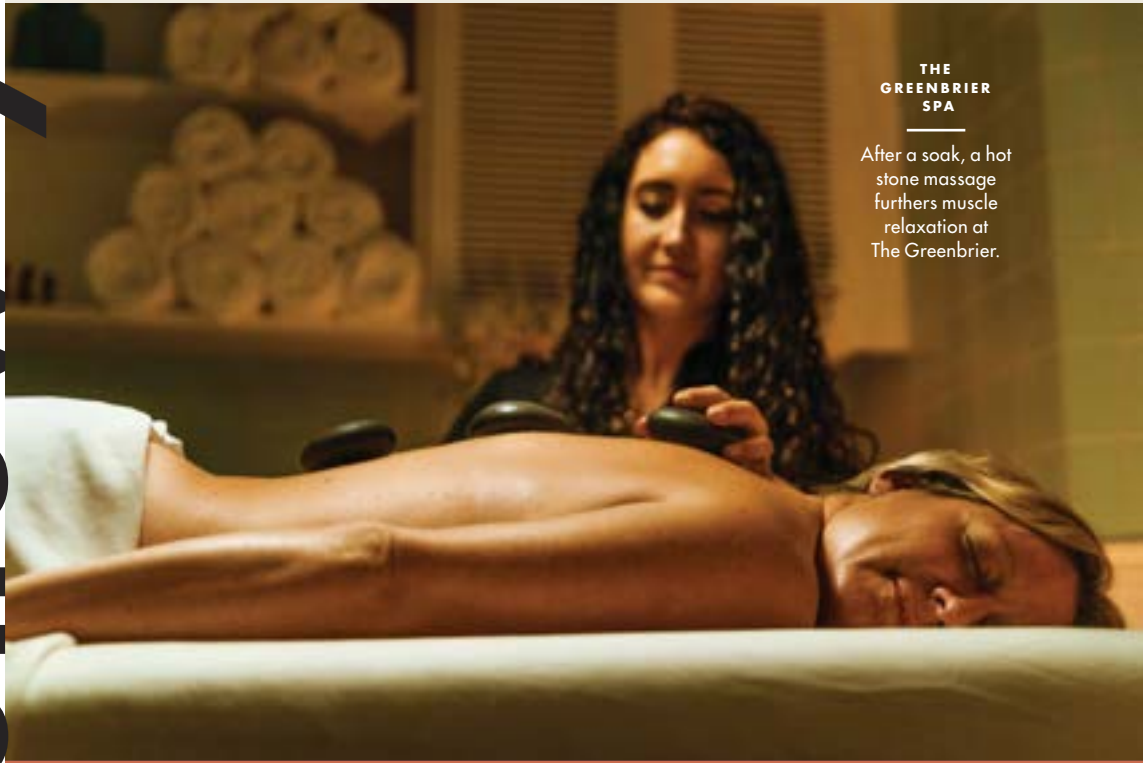
Recharge with a quiet, calming soak; a scenic horseback ride; or something just a little less expected at these soothing spots.

WRITER *Lindsay Day*

SOOTHING SOAK

MINERAL MOUNTAIN BATH AT THE GREENBRIER • WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS

For an experience that's equal parts relaxing and healing, head to a historic resort that has drawn guests from around the world for more than 200 years to "take the waters." Today, it's home to a full-service, award-winning spa whose Mineral Mountain Bath allows guests to enjoy a tranquil soak in natural Alvon Springs waters. What makes the water so special? A high concentration of minerals, which not only soothes worn, achy muscles, but rebalances the body's natural minerals too. Visitors can also indulge in more standard spa treatments, like facials and massages.



THE GREENBRIER SPA

After a soak, a hot stone massage furthers muscle relaxation at The Greenbrier.

FLOWER FLOW

YOGA IN THE GARDEN • WEST VIRGINIA BOTANIC GARDEN • MORGANTOWN

Take time to stop and smell the roses, and maybe practice your lotus pose too. A serene evening yoga class hosts yogis of all skill levels. Visitors can bring their own mats to the botanic garden for a vinyasa flow class inspired by the natural setting that surrounds them. During the hour-long practice, seasoned instructors lead guests through calming and heat-building breathing exercises, poses that lengthen and strengthen the muscles, and guided relaxation to help quiet the mind, body and spirit—all while surrounded by the garden's beautiful, fragrant blooms.

TRAIL TROTTING

HORSEBACK RIDING AT HIDDEN TRAILS STABLES • MATHIAS

Lush leaves rustling gently overhead. The rhythmic clip-clop of hooves on soft earth. Sweeping mountain views at every turn. Those are just some of the sensory experiences that await guests at Hidden Trails Stables, a family-friendly riding center located in Lost River State Park. Riders of every skill level can opt for guided rides that range from 30 minutes to two hours. Routes include scenic shaded trails, babbling streams and peaceful overlooks that offer verdant views from as high as 3,000 feet. Along the way, riders can keep their ears and eyes peeled for chirping birds, grazing deer and other woodland animals.

MEDITATE AMONG THE TREES

FOREST BATHING AT CACAPON RESORT STATE PARK, BERKELEY SPRINGS

Nothing says deep relaxation quite like a long, peaceful bath—in the woods, no tub or towel required. In Cacapon Resort State Park, experience forest bathing, a calming practice the Japanese have embraced for centuries. The immersive outdoor experience includes a short, guided walk and time to create your own nature haiku in the park's forest, along with deep relaxation exercises and an unhurried meditation session that will set minds at ease. Extend the tranquility and opt for a relaxing massage or facial at Healing Waters Spa housed in the park's luxe lodge.

FARMYARD YOGA

BABY GOAT YOGA AT ARTHURDALE HERITAGE, ARTHURDALE

The only thing more satisfying than holding a perfect downward dog pose? Holding your concentration—and balance—with playful baby goats perched on your back or nibbling gently at your toes. Thanks to the good-humored, animal-loving folks at Arthurdale Heritage, expert yogis and novices alike can preregister for baby goat yoga sessions. During class, participants will flow and practice traditional poses with an experienced instructor leading the way, and with adorable kids (the four-legged kind) bringing the entertainment. Although a wobble-free garudasana pose can't be guaranteed, plenty of giggles can be.

KICK BACK

A CUP OF CALM

Grab a book or a buddy, order some sips and snacks, and cozy up at these neighborhood cafes.

STONE TOWER BREWS

Bridgeport

This java shop's inventive coffee menu includes lattes inspired by lava cake, apple pie and banana pancakes. Tummy rumbling? Satisfy it with bites such as vegan tacos and bacon-topped avocado toast.

HOT CUP COFFEE

Logan

All are welcome at this inclusive Logan cafe, with a laid-back atmosphere locals love. Gourmet coffee and sweets aren't all you'll find on the menu, either: Hot Cup also serves up live music, comedy and local art.

UNITY CAFE

Parkersburg

This Bulgarian-American cafe's menu is packed with internationally inspired bites, like Belgian waffles, sweet and savory crepes, and Philly cheesesteaks.

Wash your order down with a smoothie, frappe or cold brew.

THE MARKET CAFE

Wheeling

Willy Wonka would love this lively pocket, whose festive seasonal frappes are garnished with freeze pops, cookies and other indulgent treats. There are also plenty of classic options for those whose tastes skew more traditional.

SPA STOP

TOUCH OF GRACE SPA AND SALT CAVE, MARTINSBURG

Loosen stiff muscles or melt away mental stress at this serene spa. Weary travelers storing tension in their backs can try hot-stone therapy, which uses rounded and heated stones to deliver relief exactly where it's needed. Want to feel lighter and more limber from head to toe? Stop by for a Swedish massage, which increases blood flow using long, soothing strokes. For an inside-and-out refresh, set sights on the spa's otherworldly salt cave. It's lined wall to wall with pink Himalayan salt, which can aid in alleviating physical conditions such as asthma and eczema.



TOUCH OF GRACE SPA AND SALT CAVE

CANAAN VALLEY RESORT STATE PARK



Mountain adventures aren't just for adrenaline junkies. Find your center in the tranquility of West Virginia's wilderness.



RELAX
Plan your next pamper session.

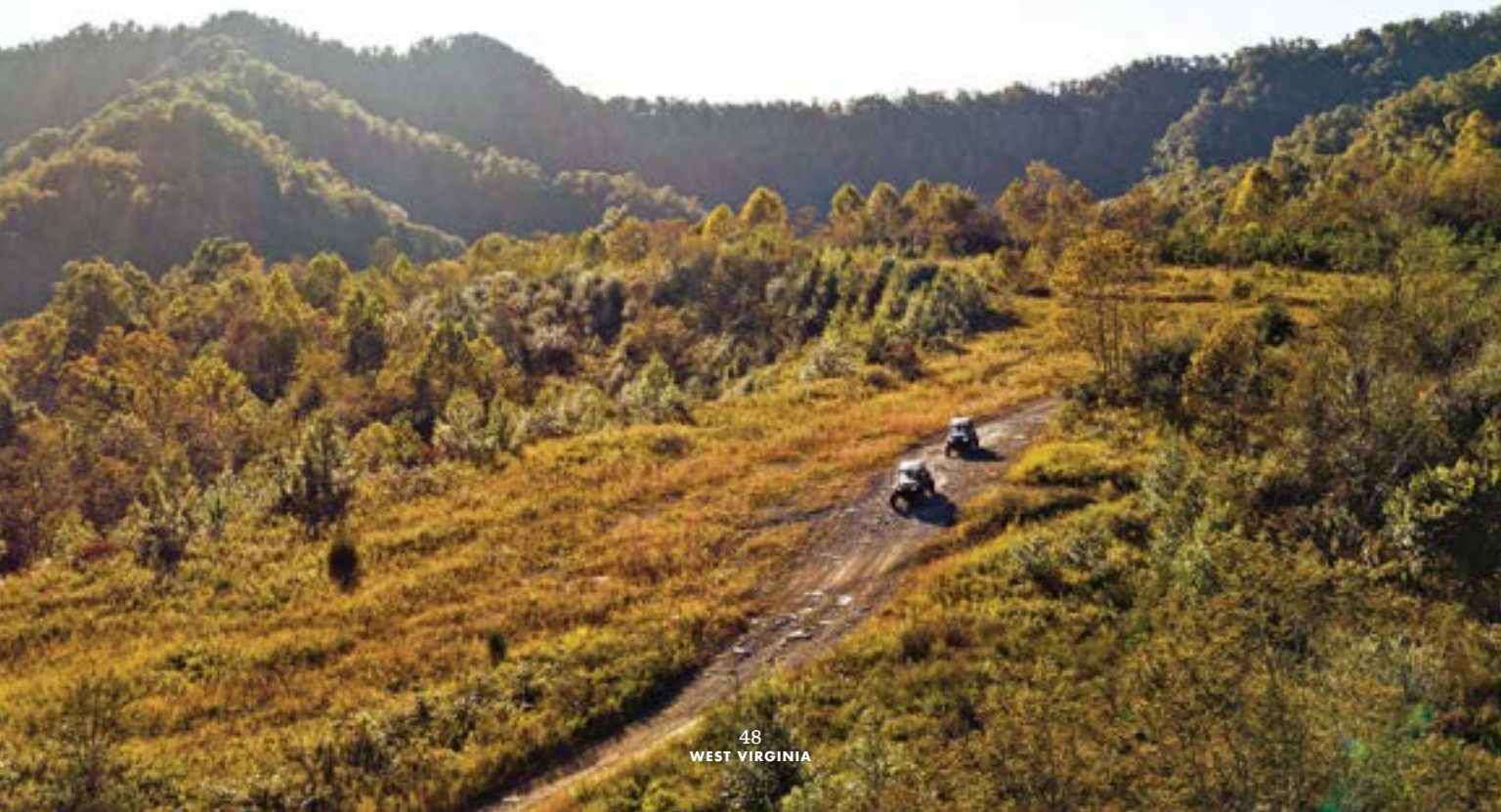
hit the dirt

Put the pedal to the metal on your West Virginia vacation with myriad motorsports guaranteed to get your adrenaline pumping.

WRITER *Gary Thompson*

IN A STATE FAMOUS FOR ITS COUNTRY ROADS, SOME OF THE MOST THRILLING DRIVES ARE EVEN FARTHER OFF THE BEATEN PATH.

Test the terrain and satisfy your need for speed while off-roading on West Virginia's vast Hatfield-McCoy Trail System, tooling around backcountry ATV and motocross parks, or watching races at legendary tracks.



OFF-ROAD HEAVEN **HATFIELD-MCCOY TRAIL SYSTEM, MULTIPLE TOWNS**

Who won the Hatfield-McCoy feud? Off-road fans. More than 1,000 miles of trails cover land in southern West Virginia where the two families waged their famous long-running war. The system is one of the nation's largest for ATVs, UTVs, dirt bikes and Jeeps, with 10 individual trails crossing multiple counties. Find the right one for your experience level by checking the ratings on the trails' website. Landmarks include Blair Mountain and Matewan, where much of the feuding took place. The routes pass through ATV-friendly towns like Gilbert, Man, Delbarton and Williamson, where you can stop for a meal or stay for the night.



HATFIELD-MCCOY TRAILS

HATFIELD-MCCOY TRAILS

DREAM MACHINES

GREENBRIER OFF-ROAD ADVENTURES, WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS

With miles of forest, mountains and creeks to explore at The Greenbrier resort's 11,000-acre private mountain preserve, all you have to do is match a machine to your mood. Going full rogue? Get behind the wheel of a Jeep Wrangler Rubicon or a four-person Polaris RZR side-by-side—perhaps the planet's most extreme ORV—and take on rocks, ruts, creek crossings and steep hills. Just want to cruise? Go for a half-day or all-day spin through the countryside in a two-person, open-air Slingshot—a street-legal, three-wheeled roadster. And for a more leisurely adventure, tour the resort grounds in a Segway—top speed: 12 mph.



THE GREENBRIER

MORE MOTORSPORTS

Watching auto races on a perfect weekend night is a long-time Mountain State tradition for families. And motocross (MX) is fast becoming a new one.

MOTOCROSS

Two wheels are better than four at these spots.

MASON MOTOCROSS

Point Pleasant

Ride and camp at this family-friendly track located at the Mason County Fairgrounds. There is plenty of parking, plus well-maintained facilities and open practices.

TOMAHAWK M² PARK

Hedgesville

Ride three tracks and 3 miles of hare scrambles on 110 acres. The venue offers a main motocross course, beginner's course, trails and a pit bike track.

SUMMIT POINT MOTORSPORTS PARK

Summit Point

Three circuit tracks with varying levels of difficulty accommodate road, kart and motorcycle racing. Two of the tracks—The Jefferson Circuit and Shenandoah Circuit—were designed by World Champion racer Bill Scott.



DIRT TRACKS

Racing gets down to earth as drivers hit the dirt.

OHIO VALLEY SPEEDWAY

Washington

Opened in 1958, the venerable short track maintains its vintage aura after morphing into a more modern $\frac{3}{8}$ -mile oval built with clay.

TYLER COUNTY SPEEDWAY

Middlebourne

The $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile oval opened in 1974 and earned the nickname "The Bullring" for the way cars race three and four wide. It hosts the Hillbilly 100, the granddaddy of Super Late Model major events.

BECKLEY MOTOR SPEEDWAY

Prosperity

They call this clay oval the fastest $\frac{3}{8}$ -mile track in the South. Fans can opt for stadium seating or tailgate on the tiered hillside.

ELKINS RACEWAY

Kerens

Lights, dirt, action! The $\frac{3}{8}$ -mile track hosts seven racing classes between April and October, including Budweiser Fastrak Late Models, creating a rumble of thunder Saturday nights.

TAKING THE WHEEL

Discover the joy of off-roading. Newbies can get started with rental gear and guided tours at WV ATV Resort in Rock, and Mountaintop Adventures in Gilbert.

ROCK AND ROLL

CHAOS OFF-ROAD PARK[®] CAPON BRIDGE

Fun for all and all for fun is the spirit at this family-friendly spot that's like a skate park for 4x4 vehicles and trucks, side-by-sides, and most UTVs. Fasten your seatbelt and take a scenic ride on more than 400 acres of trails (ranging in difficulty from mild to wild), test your skills on an obstacle course, crawl over some serious rocks, or sling some mud in shallow and deep pits. Experts show off their skills on huge boulders, rock ledges and steep hill climbs. Training in off-road driving and recovery are available for all experience levels.



PARK AND RIDE MOUNTWOOD ATV ADVENTURES, WAVERLY

Wake up, hop on and ride away at Mountwood Park, where the ATV trailhead is located right next to the campground. Off-roaders come from around the state and country to tackle more than 12 miles of trails with varying grades—some easy, some tough. All the routes are marked for direction and degree of difficulty. The trails traverse a 600-acre tract of land on the north side of US-50, away from the park's main area, which is on the opposite side of the highway. Stop at an overlook and rest area atop one of the ridges for spectacular mountain views.

HATFIELD-MCCOY TRAILS

HANG UP YOUR HELMET

Extend the adventure with ATV-friendly overnight stays right along the Hatfield-McCoy Trail System.

APPALACHIAN OUTPOST

Lyburn

Find more than two dozen well-equipped cabins and an on-site restaurant, The Broken Axle.

BRAMWELL HILL MANOR

Bramwell

This 1900s Airbnb overlooks town and boasts comfy king beds, just a ¼ mile from the Pocahontas trailhead.

DEVIL ANSE ATV RESORT

Delbarton

Choose from cabins and a campground for RVs and tents in the middle of the Devil Anse Trail.

DEVIL'S BACKBONE ADVENTURE RESORT

Matewan

Stay in a large cabin with a hot tub or a simple trail shelter that keeps you out of the elements.

ASHLAND RESORT, AN ATV RESORT

Northfork

Take your pick of lodges, cottages and cabins, plus rent ATVs at their company store.



DRIVE ON
Find more
ATV adventure
ideas.

bloom time

Add fragrant splashes of color to your spring vacation by touring postcard-ready parks and wildflower-rich natural areas.

WRITER *Jess Hoffert*

AS THE LAST BIT OF SNOW MELTS FROM THE SLOPES

Anticipation builds toward what many consider to be West Virginia's most painterly season. Welcome to wildflower country, a land of rhododendrons rooted in rich mountain soil and scene-stealing bluebells bestowing pops of color through dense woodlands. You don't have to venture far to catch the spring show. Parks and gardens alike showcase mood-lifting flora. So take a walk, wherever you are, and breathe in the beauty of Almost Heaven.

WVU Core Arboretum

MORGANTOWN
A quick jaunt from West Virginia University campus buildings takes hikers worlds away from the bustle of college life. At the heart of the core: 3 miles of trails engulfed in old-growth forests and sprinkled with spring wildflowers, such as the pretty-in-pinkish Virginia bluebells.

Sunshine Farm and Gardens

RENICK
Call ahead to peruse Barry Click's mountaintop oasis teeming with thousands of plant and tree species from around the world. Native plants and the adaptable, easy-maintenance hellebores are his specialty, and you'll find just about every variety here to photograph and purchase.

West Virginia Botanic Garden

MORGANTOWN
A patchwork of themed gardens provides different vibes to match visitor moods. Seeking peace? Listen to water flow near rhododendrons in the Meditation Garden. For more playful scenes, pop into the Fairy Garden or flutter among pollinators in the Butterfly Garden.

Cranberry Glades Botanical Area

HILLSBORO
A half-mile wheelchair-accessible boardwalk trail makes it easy to wander above these wetlands, the southernmost spot in North America, to see many plant species common in northern bogs. Keep an eye out for skunk cabbages, insect-eating pitcher plants and naturally—cranberries.

New River Gorge National Park and Preserve

GLEN BEAN
The floral foreground to some of the park's most breathtaking views rotates by the season: A burst of purple catawba rhododendrons in mid-May eventually yields to a fresh coat of white great rhododendrons around the Grandview Main Overlook, towering 1,400 feet above the New River.

Bissonnette Gardens

WHEELING
Gardeners cultivate a full year of splendor at Oglebay's Bissonnette Gardens, beginning in April with the emergence of tulips, pansies, hyacinths and daffodils. Redbrick pathways accented by fountains and hanging flower baskets weave past more than 30 flower beds.

Ritter Park

HUNTINGTON
A sea of more than 3,000 roses makes the park blush beginning in late May and lasting until mid-June. Beyond the striking blooms, visit a fountain; a playground; and a 1,000-seat amphitheater that hosts concerts, community theater productions and festivals.

click for more



BEST BUDS

Click here to add more flower power to your springtime visit.



**GRANDVIEW
MAIN
OVERLOOK**

Rosy pink and white mountain laurel blooms (*pictured below*) add flair to the foothills in spring.

Spring soaking

Natural mineral-rich waters flow just under the surface of Almost Heaven, promising rejuvenation to those who discover one of the Mountain State's most refreshing adventures.

WRITER *Vada Abrahamson*

BOTTLE DRIVE

LOST RIVER STATE PARK, MATHIAS

Escape to the secluded woodland of this state park, where the purportedly mystical Lee Sulphur Spring breaks through the mountainous terrain. Formerly known as Howard's Lick, the spring has attracted visitors for centuries to the site where Henry "Lighthorse" Lee, Revolutionary War general and father of Civil War Gen. Robert E. Lee, built his family cabin. What makes this spring different from some other sites around the state is that the water isn't heated for soaking. Instead, visitors are allowed to bottle it up to take home and drink at their own discretion.

MISTY MARVELS

EIDOLON NATURE PRESERVE NATURAL SPRINGS, MORGAN COUNTY

Pack your binoculars when seeking out these gorgeous natural springs. The preserve is named for maidens made of mist by Zeus, and is dappled with bubbling springs along the Zapoleon Loop trail. Hike for mountain views and rare bird sightings. (Eidolon is managed by the Potomac Valley Audubon Society.) In spring, you can hear the mysterious flow of chilled spring waters under the ground beneath your feet.

TIME-TESTED RELIEF

BERKELEY SPRINGS STATE PARK, BERKELEY SPRINGS

This hot spot has been renowned for its magical waters for centuries. The springs served as a health mecca for Indigenous people and later, a favorite destination of George Washington, who helped establish it as a luxury getaway. Experience a private Roman-style bathhouse or modern whirlpool, where the spring-sourced water is heated to 102 degrees, and indulge warmed-up muscles with a therapeutic massage. Outside, wade in stone pools to feel the fresh, always 74-degree water under a leafy canopy. Take the springs with you with a pour from the public pump.

STEAM POWER

CAPON SPRINGS AND FARMS HYGEIA BATH HOUSE, HIGH VIEW

Enjoy a calming break from the hustle and bustle of life in one of this wellness spa's three private hydrotherapy baths. Pure spring water is heated to a steamy 102 degrees and enhanced with optional aromatherapy mineral salts and bubbling jets. Add a spa service, such as a traditional massage or Thai massage, to extend the benefits before taking in the gentle breeze on the porch.



Plan your next visit to the natural springs in Almost Heaven.



LEGACY OF WELLNESS When it comes to relaxing, Berkeley Springs has the time and experience required to perfect the practice. This spring was the nation's first spa, and has been attracting visitors from around the world since the 1700s.

ALMOST
HEAVEN

Summer

the
**wander
list**

With room to roam and scenic routes to follow, West Virginia's trails indulge wanderlust. Chart a dream course for the crew, the views or the thrill of a challenge.

WRITER *Gary Thompson*

rails to trails

West Virginia's railroad legacy includes miles of track turned into trails, each a route to adventure.

The east-west direction of the **North Bend Rail Trail** from Parkersburg to Clarksburg includes the reportedly haunted Silver Run Tunnel, along with striking mountain vistas and rock cuts. Follow **Allegheny Highlands Trail** from Elkins to Hendricks, the original route of the West Virginia Central and Pittsburgh Railway. It's an exceptionally beautiful trail, with panoramic sights of the countryside and mountain backdrops.

Get three trails in one on the **Mon River Rail-Trail System**: Roll with an urban vibe on **Caperton Trail** through Morgantown, follow **Mon River Trail** along the Monongahela River or climb **Deckers Creek Trail** beside a cascading creek to scenic farmland.

Two trails on the old B&O rail line form **Wheeling Heritage Trails**. **Ohio River Trail** follows the river's eastern bank, while **Wheeling Creek Trail** passes through the 1904 Hempfield Tunnel. The Chesapeake and Ohio Railway used to haul timber through the countryside in Pocahontas and Greenbrier counties, where **Greenbrier River Trail** now rolls into small towns and some of the state's most remote areas.

Hike or bike the 23-mile **West Fork Rail Trail** between Durbin and Gladys while imagining lumber trains hauling timber a hundred years ago. One of the state's newest routes, **Elk River Trail**, follows the former rail line between Duck and Hartland Bridge.

post-worthy perspectives

These naturally photogenic Mountain State spots never get tired of posing for pictures, but the real joy is in the journey.

At **Gaudineer Picnic Area** near Durbin, a sun-dappled path winds past trees and where the fire tower once stood to enchanted views of miles of mountains from the **Gaudineer Knob** overlook. At **Audra State Park** in Buckhannon, aim your camera at the Alum Cave rock overhang and the gentle waterfalls on the **Middle Fork River**. West Virginia's highest point, **Spruce Knob**, rises nearly 5,000 feet above sea level near Circleville, begging for high-flying pics from its summit. The night sky here is famously dark, exposing stars, planets and galaxies—catch the show from the observation tower.

Near Morgantown, **Coopers Rock State Forest** promises an eyeful: a panorama of Cheat River Gorge from **Coopers Rock Overlook**. The sight at the end of **Long Point Trail** in **New River Gorge National Park and Preserve** has achieved snapshot superstardom. A rock outcropping (the titular Long Point) is perfect for posing with the **New River Gorge Bridge** in the background.

Covering 300-plus miles, **Allegheny Trail** passes through or near three state parks, four state forests and two national wilderness areas. Keep your camera ready for bird's-eye vistas from **Hanging Rock Raptor Observatory** and majestic **Blackwater Falls**.





HANGING ROCK RAPTOR
OBSERVATORY

IN FULL SWING Celebrate summer in West Virginia with a rockin' photo op—snap share-worthy pics in the handcrafted Almost Heaven swings installed near iconic backdrops all over the state. Pose with the gleaming State Capitol dome. Perch in front of the Wheeling Suspension Bridge. Go full forest fantasy at Glade Creek Grist Mill and Blackwater Falls. Or let the simple beauty of the Hatfield-McCoy Mountains frame one viral vision.

all in the family

The family that plays
together stays together, right?
Take the gang on trails fit for
everyone from baby boomers
to Generation Alpha.

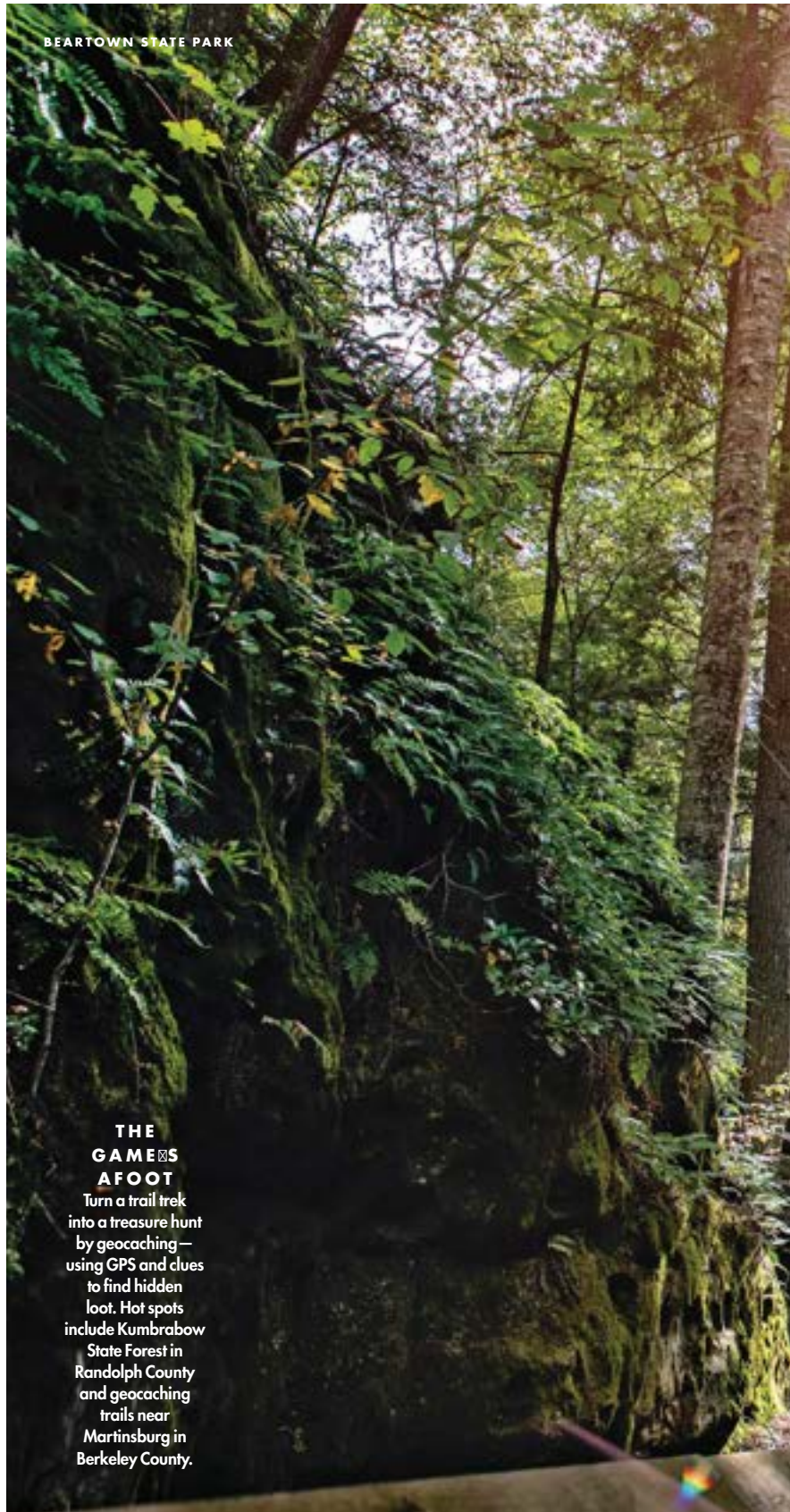
At **Pipestem Resort State Park** in Summers County, easy routes include the 0.7-mile **Cottage Trail** which starts behind Cottage Number 1 and travels to Long Branch Lake, and the 0.6-mile **Dogwood Trail** which begins and ends by the **Nature Center** pond. Get a look at bobcats, elk, gray wolves, bison and mountain lions at **West Virginia State Wildlife Center** in French Creek. The woodland creatures live along a wheelchair-accessible interpretive trail that stretches 1.25 miles round-trip through a hardwood forest.

Striking rock formations line the accessible 0.5-mile boardwalk through a secluded forest at **Beartown State Park** in Hillsboro. Located north of Lewisburg, **Droop Mountain** is the site of one of the most important Civil War battles in the state's history. The 1.2-mile round-trip **Sunrise Carriage Trail** in Charleston connects the riverfront and South Hills, winding past historic markers and scenic overlooks. For a family-friendly adventure on wheels, bike through the tunnel-like foliage of **Meadow River Trail** in Nallen. The smooth route leads riders to an old tunnel located beneath the Route 19 bridge.



TRAILS FOR ALL
Find accessible trails
around Almost Heaven.

BEARTOWN STATE PARK



THE GAMES A FOOT

Turn a trail trek
into a treasure hunt
by geocaching—
using GPS and clues
to find hidden
loot. Hot spots
include Kumbrabow
State Forest in
Randolph County
and geocaching
trails near
Martinsburg in
Berkeley County.



MORE WAYS TO PLAY

Family fun is more than just a walk in the park. Pair these all-age outings with your outside excursions.

POTOMAC EAGLE SCENIC RAILROAD

Romney

Ever ridden on a real passenger train? Discover the perks (like dining in a lounge car) on three-hour or full-day trips with views of the South Branch of the Potomac River. Keep an eye out for those namesake eagles!

GOOD ZOO

Wheeling

Lemurs, kangaroos and red pandas are among more than 50 animal species—many rare or endangered—on the grounds of Oglebay.

POKY DOT

Fairmont

If Candy Land had a restaurant, this colorful little diner would be it: all-American food, a fun atmosphere and oversized desserts.

advanced routes

Challenge yourself—on two feet or on two wheels—with tough hiking and mountain biking routes.

Skyline Trail

BABCOCK STATE PARK

The 4.0-mile round-trip starts with a rocky climb and takes you near a high cliff's edge, offering three overlooks for your viewing pleasure, including the main one near Manns Creek picnic area.

Appalachian Trail

MULTIPLE TOWNS

The world's longest hiking-only footpath includes a section through Harpers Ferry and a 25.4-mile route through rugged and remote Appalachian high country along the state border of West Virginia and Virginia.

Castle Rock Trail

GRANDVIEW

Follow the base of several large cliffs on this tough stretch in New River Gorge National Park and Preserve for a close look at exposed coal seams.

Loudoun Heights Trail

HARPERS FERRY

A strenuous 7.5-mile round-trip rewards with sights of Harpers Ferry, the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers and valleys, and striking rock formations.

Arrowhead Bike Trails

NEW RIVER GORGE NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE

Members of the Boy Scouts created this stacked loop trail system in the Craig Branch area. Earn a mountain biking merit badge by completing the four loops, rated from moderate to difficult.

Cliffside Trail

HAWKS NEST STATE PARK

Rugged stretches and sheer drop-offs make this 1.7-mile round-trip moderate to difficult hiking. Enjoy seeing Nuttall sandstone cliffs, Turkey Creek Falls, and Hawks Nest Dam and Tunnel.

Meeks Mountain Trails

HURRICANE

Private landowners joined forces with city officials and local volunteers to create this community trail network. Intricate loops and 20-plus miles of ever-evolving pathways beckon trailblazing hikers and bikers.

Blackbear Mountain Bike Trail

KANAWHA STATE FOREST

Test your mettle on this stern downhill route from Middle Ridge Road to Pigeon Roost Trail. There's an alternative route around the steepest section, dubbed Spectator Falls.

Overhanging Rock Trail

NORTH BEND STATE PARK

It's only a 0.5-mile loop, but it's a tough hike. The route starts at the recreation area entrance and ends at the Extra Mile Trail. Watch for a large rock formation jutting out of the ravine.

Fire Tower Trail

SENECA STATE FOREST

Unless you're a glutton for vertical punishment—this trail has an extremely sharp grade—save it for your descent. Take the Thorny Creek and Allegheny Trails up to the Thorny Mountain Fire Tower first.

Potato Knob Trail

HOLLY RIVER STATE PARK

Hike deep into thick forest to a series of woodland waterfalls along the Left Fork Holly River. For an even steeper challenge, make the tough climb to the top of Potato Knob, elevation 2,450 feet.

North Fork Mountain Trail

RIVERTON

The 24-mile point-to-point trail climbs nearly 3,000 feet along North Fork Mountain in the Alleghenies. There's so much to see that you can make it a two-day adventure or tackle the trail in shorter sections.



NEW HEIGHTS The same terrain that tests hikers throws down the gauntlet for mountain bikers at Pocahontas County's **Snowshoe Bike Park**. One of the largest of its kind on the East Coast, Snowshoe's vast trail system packs in epic berms, jumps, flow and 1,500 feet of vertical descent. These hills host elite competitions, like the Mercedes-Benz UCI Mountain Bike World Cup, but are also approachable to newbies. Bring your own bike or rent from their fleet for a downhill experience that elevates spirits.



Find even more mountain bike trails at
WVTOURISM.COM/MOUNTAIN-BIKING

on the water

Revel in the sound of rushing waterfalls, the cooling sensations of splashing river water and the scenic lakeside views on these aquatic excursions.

WRITER *Jodi Helmer*

ride the river

For the daring or the laid-back, tubing and kayaking are ideal ways to explore West Virginia's pristine bodies of water at your own pace.

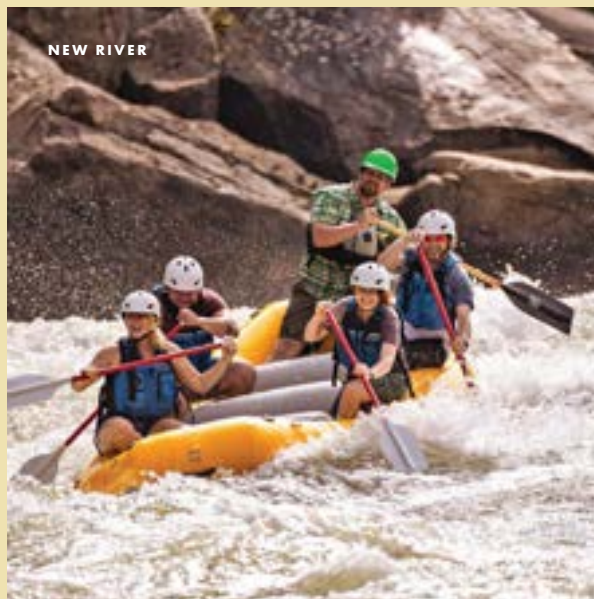
Travel to Harpers Ferry to the **Shenandoah River**, which stretches more than 55 miles through West Virginia and Virginia and flows into the Potomac River, providing ample stretches of river for flatwater or whitewater tubing and kayaking.

The **Gauley River** is an iconic spot to steer your kayak. Explore the Upper Gauley for more whitewater, or head to the beginner-friendly Lower Gauley, where calm currents create the right speed for a relaxing trip.

Float the **Tygart River** along the Monongahela National Forest or stop by the **Little Kanawha River** in Parkersburg, perfect for paddleboarding or tubing. Nearby outfitters are prepped to suit you up for a day on the water.

COAL RIVER WALHONDE WATER TRAIL

This river trail covers 88 miles of waterways, with scenic small-town docking spots and more than 20 boat launches along the way to accommodate paddlers.



rapids revival

Add braving the rapids to your summer bucket list—these local outfitters have everything you'll need for your expedition.

The second-oldest river in the world is one of the best places for a "new" experience. The New River is considered one of the top whitewater rafting destinations in the nation, and the Class I-III rapids on the upper section of the river make it an ideal pick for beginners and intermediate paddlers. Oak Hill-based businesses **ACE Adventure Resort** and **River Expeditions** lead visitors on half- and full-day trips down this iconic West Virginia waterway.

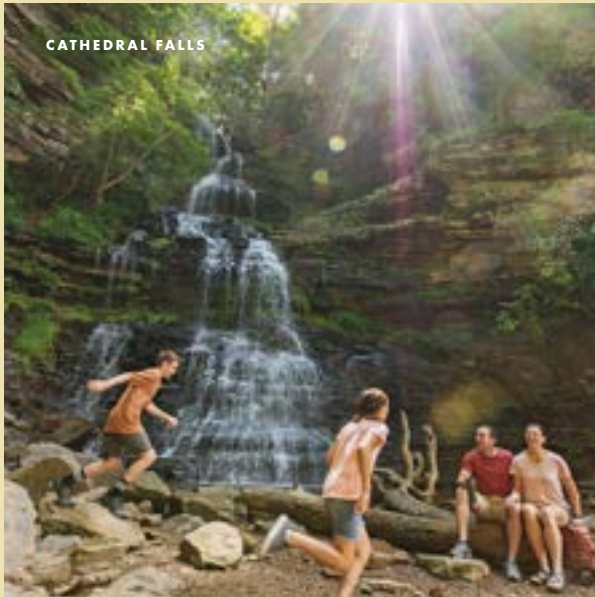
Intermediate to experienced rafters will enjoy the action on the Lower New River, where there are more than 25 Class II-IV rapids to traverse. Overnight rafting excursions with **Adventures on the Gorge** in Lansing offer even more water fun.

The Cheat River is the largest untamed watershed in West Virginia, so the water levels (and rapids) are in constant flux. Shoot down the Class III-V rapids in Cheat Canyon with **Cheat River Outfitters** in Albright or ride the Class II-III rapids in Cheat Narrows with Parsons-based **Blackwater Outdoor Adventures**.

Book a paddling playdate for the family with **River Riders Family Adventure Resort** in Harpers Ferry. The outfitter offers half-day guided whitewater rafting trips down the Class III rapids on the scenic Shenandoah and Potomac rivers.



READY TO RAFT
Discover more West Virginia whitewater rafting outfitters.



CATHEDRAL FALLS

finding the falls

Set out in search of cascading waterfalls with a major wow factor—and don't forget to bring a camera.

Waterfalls thread the wild places of West Virginia. Follow the West Virginia Waterfall Trail to uncover natural wonders like **Cathedral Falls**, where Cane Creek splashes near the scenic trail below. Rock formations in the Tygart Valley River created **Valley Falls**, a series of four waterfalls in the river that can be seen up close from a kayak or spotted from the beginner-friendly Tygart River Trail in Valley Falls State Park.

Enchantment abounds at **Oglebay Falls** in Wheeling—the double-drop cascade flows over a moss-covered floor and allows close access to its misty waters from a wooden viewing platform.

Distinctive amber waters, created when the tannic

acids in fallen hemlock and red spruce needles meet a magnificent 57-foot-tall drop, make **Blackwater Falls** one of the most photographed spots in West Virginia. Hike along Gentle Trail in Blackwater Falls State Park for some of the best views of the cascades.

Tucked into the trees at Babcock State Park near Clifftop, a perennial stream flows down **Glade Creek Grist Mill Falls**. The historic grist mill water wheel operates when the Glade Creek water is diverted to the sluice, making visitors feel as if they've stepped back in time. Travel to the lush greenery of Webster County, where the cascades of **Whitaker Falls** create a tableau that evokes the artistry of a watercolor painting.



WEST VIRGINIA WATERFALL TRAIL

Click here to download a digital waterfall passport and start your cascade countdown.



SUTTON LAKE

lake life

Spend sun-soaked summer days swimming, paddling, boating or fishing in one of West Virginia's sparkling lakes.

Known as the Little Bahamas of the East, **Summersville Lake** is the largest lake in the state. The 2,800 acres of crystal-clear waters are a haven for snorkeling, scuba diving, wading and steering watercrafts. Stop by **Sarge's Dive Shop** to rent some gear and hit the water or pack

a lunch and spend the day exploring 60 miles of shoreline.

Anglers have virtually limitless choices for prime fishing in West Virginia. At **Cheat Lake** in Morgantown and **Sleepy Creek Lake** in Berkeley Springs, bait from a boat or cast a line from the pier for largemouth bass, bluegill,

yellow perch and crappie.

Lake Stephens in Surveyor and **Beech Fork Lake** in Barbourville are also popular fishing spots.

The calm waters of **Jennings Randolph Lake** in Mineral County draw canoers, kayakers, paddleboarders and water-

skiers. On select dates, scheduled water releases from the dam create Class III rapids on the lake, making it suitable for whitewater rafting.

Spread a blanket along the 44 miles of shore at **Sutton Lake** speed across the clear water on Jet Skis or rent a boat with an attached waterslide.





destination drives

Stunning views and challenging courses by celebrated designers await golfers in West Virginia. Mountain settings provide testing terrain along with cart-stopping scenery.

THE RESORT AT GLADE SPRINGS

The Resort at Glade Springs

DANIELS

The bunker-heavy Cobb Course has hosted a U.S. Open qualifier, the West Virginia Open and CAA national championships. The resort's two other courses, Stonehaven and Woodhaven, offer a mix of rolling fairways, tricky elevation changes, prominent stone and Appalachian Mountain atmosphere.

Canaan Valley Resort State Park

DAVIS

Wide-open fairways and plenty of greenside hazards give these 18 holes the balance they need to appeal to both beginners and low handicappers. Consistently named one of the top courses in the state, the layout features eight water hazards and 62 bunkers, as well as a luxury lodge for weekend stays.

Raven Golf Club

SNOWSHOE

Gary Player made the most of the Allegheny Mountains when he designed this course: The fourth hole offers huge drive opportunities, thanks to a 200-foot drop from tee to fairway, while No. 18 has a green protected by a bunker on the left and a fringe-hugging rock face on the right.

PAR PLUS

Golfers, horse-lovers and retired NFL players all tee it up at Charles Town's Locust Hill Golf Course for the Sam Huff Golf Classic. The one-day tourney is part of the West Virginia Breeders Classic, a horse racing event founded by Huff, a West Virginian football legend.

Lakeview Golf Resort

MORGANTOWN

No one's ever reached the green in two on the 620-yard (from the blue tees) par-5 18th hole at the Lakeview Course. Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer and Sam Snead all tried. Could you be the first? The scenic Mountainview Course winds through the foothills of the Alleghenies, and a 180-foot drop on the seventh hole of the Lakeview Course gives golfers stunning views of Cheat Lake.

Oglebay

WHEELING

Warm up on the nine-hole par-3 course before taking on two tougher layouts designed by acclaimed architect Robert Trent Jones Sr. and golf legend Arnold Palmer. Wheeling's gentle topography creates holes that reward big drives and a skillful short game.

Twisted Gun Golf Course

WHARNCLIFFE

Perched high in the heart of southern West Virginia, Twisted Gun's 7,015-yard course sprawls across a mountaintop, promising tremendous scenery with every round. Holes nine and 18 share a well-guarded green. A mix of long par 5s, strategic par 3s and tricky pin placements require even scratch golfers to bring their A game.

The Greenbrier

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS

Sam Snead carded a record-breaking 59 in a tournament on The Greenbrier course in 1959. Try to best your own personal record on The Old White course (a former PGA Tour stop) or The Meadows, which has hosted the Ryder and Solheim cups. Easily shoot a 59—or better—on The Ashford, the resort's nine-hole par-3 course.



click for more



Swing away at more of West Virginia's legendary courses.

summer nights

Modern campgrounds and backcountry adventures make West Virginia the right place to settle in and soak up warm-weather evenings.

WRITER *Jodi Helmer*



UPSCALE OUTDOORS**STONEWALL RESORT
STATE PARK****ROANOKE**

Camping doesn't have to mean roughing it. This luxe destination promises peaceful seclusion and stunning mountain views. The 1,900-acre park draws nature and relaxation enthusiasts alike with high-end features like a spa, pool and golf course, plus miles of hiking and biking trails. Book a room at the lodge or opt to stay outdoors and spend the evening stargazing from one of the lakeside tent or RV sites, where you'll slip into a restful slumber to the sound of the water lapping at the shoreline.

SCOUT FOR ADVENTURE**THE SUMMIT BECHTEL
RESERVE****GLEN JEAN**

Boy Scouts of America uses Summit Bechtel Reserve as their training and adventure center and to host the BSA Family Adventure Camp. The 10,400-acre property is adjacent to the New River Gorge National Park and Preserve, an ideal setting for outdoor fun. Book a tent—with bunk beds—or bring your own for primitive camping. Find iconic camp activities, such as water sports, hiking, rock climbing and archery, along with new takes on outdoor rec like mountain biking and ziplining.



FIND YOUR (NOT SO) USUAL SPOT

West Virginia's winding roads are a treat for RV travelers. After a long day of driving, turn in for the night at one of these lodging options for RV campers. The locations offer space to park—and explore unique settings.

Grand Vue Park MOUNDSVILLE

This park has 40 full hookup sites; two new bathhouses; and on-site amenities like ziplining, minigolf, disc golf and a playground. Take in exquisite views of the Ohio Valley while you relax by the firepit before retiring to your RV.

Valkyrie Springs Farm and Forage

CAPON BRIDGE

Tucked away on a forested acreage, the farm promises barnyard encounters, plus trails to walk and forage for medicinal herbs.

Black Dog Ranch Off Road Resort

ROCK

Explore hundreds of miles of trails on the Hatfield-McCoy Trail System after settling into one of this site's 75 RV rental spots.



Find more places to set up camp in West Virginia.



DARK SKY SITE

**THORNY
MOUNTAIN
FIRE TOWER**

DUNMORE

Book early and stay overnight in this 65-foot observation tower for awe-inspiring views of the night skies over Seneca State Forest.

CREATURE COMFORTS

MOUNTWOOD PARK FAMILY CAMPGROUND

WAVERLY

With spots for tents, trailers and recreational vehicles—plus bathhouses for hot showers and a campground store stocked with sundries—you'll have all of the essentials for a comfortable stay. After you set up camp, explore the nature trail, cast a line in the 50-acre lake or race around the track in the on-site ATV park. When the sun goes down, return to your site, light a fire and make s'mores.

MAKE MEMORIES

BEECH FORK STATE PARK

BARBOURSVILLE

Head to the hills of southwestern West Virginia to experience the rugged natural beauty of this state park. Hike or bike the trails, and paddle across Beech Fork Lake while surrounded by more than 3,000 acres of unspoiled wilderness. The park caters to overnight visitors, with 275 campsites spread across four distinct campgrounds, including sought-after lakefront sites. The abundance of campsites, along with amenities like picnic shelters with charcoal grills, makes the park a popular spot for large-group camping adventures.



BEECH FORK STATE PARK

GO GLAMPING

LOVES WAY VILLAGE

MOOREFIELD

Nestled in the mountains of the Potomac Highlands, a camping experience with a touch of sophistication awaits your discovery. At Loves Way Village, canvas glamping tents dot the serene landscape. Lounge in the fresh air on your personal covered porch or on the fresh linens of the comfy bed inside. It's the ideal location to explore nearby Seneca Rocks or Dolly Sods Wilderness. Book one of the hot tub suites and spend the evening soaking and looking upward after a day of exploring.

ADVENTURE AWAITS

TYGART LAKE STATE PARK

GRAFTON

Just add water to grow big fun—the 1,750-acre lake at the heart of this state park takes the average camping trip up a notch. Set out to Tygart Lake to sightsee by kayak, water-ski the waves or cast a line. For a quintessential summer experience, pitch a tent in one of the campsites, prepare meals over the campfire and sleep under the stars. Prefer a less rustic stay? Book a cabin with amenities like linen service, outdoor grills, full bathrooms and Wi-Fi.

BLACKWATER FALLS STATE PARK



SCORE THE PERFECT SPACE

Rent a fully equipped, ready-to-camp site from Tentrr at Blackwater Falls, Cacapon Resort, Coopers Rock, Hawks Nest and Lost River state parks. tentrr.com

STARGAZING SITES

When the sun goes down, look up. The constellations shine brightest in these dark sky destinations.

Calhoun County Park

GRANTSVILLE

Mark your calendar for this park's annual dark sky parties, when hobbyists set up their scopes to share in the joy of stargazing.

NROCKS Outdoor Adventures

CIRCLEVILLE

Reach for the stars with a guided full moon tour of the Via Ferrata, a thrilling route navigated by climbing iron rungs mounted in the rock face. (Previous experience required.)

Green Bank Observatory

GREEN BANK

Marvel at the National Science Foundation's 485-foot-tall, 17 million pound telescope. Or

spread a blanket and spend the evening viewing the heavens with your own eyes.

Dolly Sods Wilderness

GRANT, RANDOLPH AND TUCKER COUNTIES

Take in the phenomenon of a night sky untainted by surrounding light pollution from one of the highest plateaus east of the Mississippi River.

Watoga State Park

MARLINTON

Perch on the dam or hike to Ann Bailey Lookout Tower for a crystal-clear view from one of three parks in the state to be named an official Dark Sky Park by the International Dark-Sky Association.

Spruce Knob

RIVERTON

Admire the Milky Way from the observation tower at the highest peak in West Virginia.



Play it cool

There are plenty of places to chill out during summer in the Mountain State. Beat the heat with these refreshing outdoor adventures.

WRITER *Gary Thompson*



LOST WORLD CAVERNS

Go Underground

Amazing sights and natural air-conditioning await in Almost Heaven's many caves and caverns.

A caver named Bob Addis once spent nearly 16 days at **Lost World Caverns** in Lewisburg. He was perched on a 28-foot stalagmite called War Club in hopes of setting a world record. No need to stay that long, but don't rush the self-guided tour of this subterranean wonderland discovered in 1922. Dinosaurs and a prehistoric cave bear lived here millions of years ago, and their fossil remains are among the treasures

to behold. Wear good shoes and a light jacket to ward off the chill of being 120 feet underground. More adventurous types can sign up for the Wild Cave Tour, a four-hour guided trek into the deepest, darkest corners. Be prepared to crawl, climb and get muddy.

Farther north, explore the underworldly beauty of **Smoke Hole Caverns and Log Cabin Resort** in Cabins. Clouds of smoke from fires made by Seneca Indians as they prepared wild game in the caves led early settlers to give the place its name. After the Civil War, moonshiners commandeered the caverns to make corn

whiskey—the spot's secluded location and supply of clean, cold water were perfect for distilling under the radar. As many as 20 stills operated in the caverns at one time—an original unit remains on display. Today, the constant, trickling flow of mineral-carrying water continues to create stunning stalactites and stalagmites on the cave ceilings and floors. Cavern tours are just part of a destination resort, with lodging in log cabins and cottages, plus proximity to guided hunting and fishing adventures, horseback riding, canoeing, berry picking, and motorcycle rides.

Let It Slide

Are the kids looking for thrills while you just want to chill? Dive into one of these water parks for the best of both worlds.

Hop on a tube and float your cares away along the lazy river at **Clarksburg Splash Zone** in Clarksburg. This 2013 addition to Veterans Memorial Park also stars two large body slides, a six-lane lap pool and a full artillery of water features for the kiddos. **Water Ways** water park in Julian prides itself on getting raves from all ages, starting with the tots who find paradise on pint-size slides and swings. Older kids get their kicks in a junior Olympic-size pool and on five slides, including a serpentine tube slide that makes for a grand entrance into the lazy river. Surrounded by the serene Allegheny Mountain foothills, **Tygart Lake** packs an adrenaline punch with **Adventure Lake**—a fun zone filled with 25 inflatables made for climbing, balancing, jumping, crawling and sliding (or falling) into the otherwise peaceful water.

Take a Dip

The state's winding rivers and forested mountains provide a picturesque backdrop for these beautiful pools of water.

Hike through lush forest and towering trees at **Holly River State Park** in Webster County to discover **Shupe Chute**. This popular natural pool has sparkling blue waters and rests at the foot of one of the park's many flowing waterfalls. Another waterfall-fed natural pool awaits warm-weather visitors in Fayette County at **Babcock State Park's Glade Creek** near the iconic Glade Creek Grist Mill. The small basin beneath the mini waterfalls provides a refreshing perspective of the famous mill. For calmer currents, wade into the still waters at the base of **Seneca Rocks** in **Monongahela National Forest**. This splashy spot has stunning views in every direction and a shallow entry, but does get deep in the middle of the river.

summer safety

Keep Your Cool in WV

July is West Virginia's hottest month, with average temperatures in the 80s, and days that peak in the 90s. Stay safe outside by drinking plenty of water, wearing sun protection and scheduling outdoor activities around daily temperature spikes.

See more chill spots around the state at WVTOURISM.COM/SUMMER

ADVENTURE LAKE





ALMOST
HEAVEN
fall

autumn beauty

The forests of West Virginia burst into a kaleidoscope of color every autumn. Immerse yourself in Almost Heaven's iconic harvest landscapes and untamed wilderness in the most spectacular of seasons.

WRITER *Alicia Underlee Nelson*



foliage finds

Appreciate autumn's splendor from a scenic byway, family farm, fall festival or even a vintage railcar.

STEP BACK IN TIME Retrace George Washington's footsteps along the **Washington Heritage Trail**, a 136-mile loop through West Virginia's Eastern Panhandle. The route passes over 40 Colonial, Civil War and abolitionist sites, including a historic racetrack; the nation's oldest spa; Harpers Ferry National Historical Park; and acres of historic sites, buildings and hiking trails nestled in the valley where the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers meet.

HIT THE TRAIL Rolling hills, a tranquil lake and secluded fishing spots lure nature-lovers to **North Bend State Park**, an idyllic Mid-Ohio Valley setting near Cairo. Mountain bike or hike one of 17 trails under a vibrant canopy of autumn leaves. One trail connects to the 72-mile North Bend Rail Trail, where hikers cross 36 bridges and scurry through 10 tunnels.

CONQUER WHITEWATER RAPIDS **Gauley River Canyon's** steep chutes, turbulent runs and churning rapids challenge whitewater rafters for six heart-pounding weekends, starting the first Friday after Labor Day. (Locals call it Gauley Season.) Experienced rafters 16 years and older can tackle the Upper Gauley, rated Class III-V. The 12-mile Lower Gauley (Class III-V) offers Gauley Season thrills for adventurers ages 12 and up.

MAKE MEMORIES ON A FAMILY FARM Visit **Byrnside Branch Farm** in Union to feed the goats, calves and sheep; stock up on pumpkins, gourds and winter squash; and conquer the 10-acre corn maze (or 2-acre kiddie version). Hayride tours provide visits to the sunflower field and the longhorn steers, or to a hilltop view of Peters Mountain while a crackling bonfire lights up the night.

TASTE FARM-FRESH FOOD Book tickets for one of the Farm to Table Dinners at **Gritt's Farm** near Buffalo. Guests feast on decadent four-course meals made with ingredients harvested from the farm as close to dinnertime as possible. Event menus include creative dishes like Rustic Ratatouille and Mustard and Whiskey BBQ chicken.

MAKE A PUMPKIN PILGRIMAGE The **West Virginia Pumpkin Festival** in Milton is known to draw five-figure crowds to its annual celebration of the orange gourd. Come for living-history demos, at least 150 commercial vendor booths, and more than 100 juried artisans and craftspeople. Stay for seasonal treats like pumpkin cheesecake, roasted corn, hand-churned apple butter and pumpkin ice cream, as well as the largest pumpkin contest. Last year's winner weighed over a ton!





take a scenic drive

Views of towering trees in the Monongahela National Forest and soaring Allegheny Highlands tempt travelers along every turn of the **Highland Scenic Highway**. Settle in for a leisurely drive, braking often to take in picturesque picnic spots, four overlooks and wooded hiking trails tucked along the 43-mile route that runs from Richwood to just north of Marlinton.





GOLDEN HOUR

**WHEN
TO VISIT**

Fall foliage in West Virginia is at its finest from early October through November.

elevated perspective

Shake things up and see the autumn leaves from a different angle: above. These guided tours and aerial rides showcase panoramic views.

WRITER *Prasana William*

ZIP TO IT Take the fast track to leaf peeping on a zipline tour or other energizing aerial activity.

WV Adventures at West Virginia University near Morgantown perches above Coopers Rock State Forest, with four ziplines, an aerial bridge and a rappel station crossing the forest canopy. Soar through golden-tinged treetops for dazzling zipline views or book a thrilling high rope trek on the site's Giant Swing, Alpine Tower or Odyssey Course.

FLY ON OVER Board an authentic 1943 Stearman biplane, used as a primary trainer during WWII, for the highlight of the season (or year).

Wild Blue Adventure Company in Fayetteville guides sky tours with an awe-inspiring overhead view of New River Gorge National Park and Preserve, Summersville Lake, and Kanawha Falls. Add in aerobatics like barrel rolls to see the warm-hued foliage in a whole new way.

ADRENALIZE THE SEASON

The legendary steel span is a classic West Virginia photo op, but the view from under the New River Gorge Bridge itself is a wonder come autumn. Brave the **Bridge Walk** and cross on a 24-inch-wide catwalk just 25 feet below the structure's surface for one-of-a-kind sights of the New River Gorge National Park and Preserve.

FLOAT FAR ABOVE Watch the Allegheny Mountains shift from green to golden at an angle typically enjoyed when leaves are long gone: from a ski lift. **Canaan Valley Resort State Park's Scenic Chairlift Ride** in Davis journeys up the mountain, with the opportunity to take a round trip or hike back down and get two perspectives for the price of one. This scenic chairlift only operates until the trees are bare.

SOAR INTO THE SEASON

Zoom among the trees on a 2,100-foot-long zipline, rappel down a wall, bounce on a bungee trampoline and navigate three suspended bridges at **Grand Vue Park** in Moundsville. The unforgettable Ohio River Valley forms the backdrop for outdoor adventures on two disc golf courses and hiking and biking trails. Book a cabin, campsite, treetop villa or a spot at the RV park for a fun-filled fall getaway.



Leaf through this colorful foliage-focused itinerary for more stunning fall views across the state.





get into the **game**

Hunting has long been a part of West Virginia's heritage. Aim for success in the state's most target-rich spots.

WRITER *Prasana William*





QUAIL IN BURNSVILLE
LAKE WILDLIFE
MANAGEMENT AREA,
MOUNTAIN LAKES

You need a license from the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources to hunt in the state. Visit WVDNR.GOV to learn more about seasons and regulations before you visit.

**AS THE
THIRD-
MOST
FORESTED
STATE,**

West Virginia harbors a bountiful variety of wildlife. Big game species, including white-tailed deer, wild turkey, bear and wild boar roam through many counties in mountainside woodlands and wide-open fields. During fall and into winter, turkey, grouse, pheasant and quail (especially bobwhite quail, which are part of a recent statewide stocking initiative) make frequent appearances. Though areas popular with hunters vary by the season, the Greenbrier Valley, Mid-Ohio Valley and Mountain Lakes regions remain favorites of many. Bow hunters for deer can find areas exclusive to the sport in Mingo, Logan, Wyoming and McDowell counties. Challenge yourself and forge a deeper connection with the natural world during staggered hunting seasons all year long.

HAPPY HUNTING

Level up with these experts for a truly once-in-a-lifetime sporting experience.

Hans Creek Outfitters

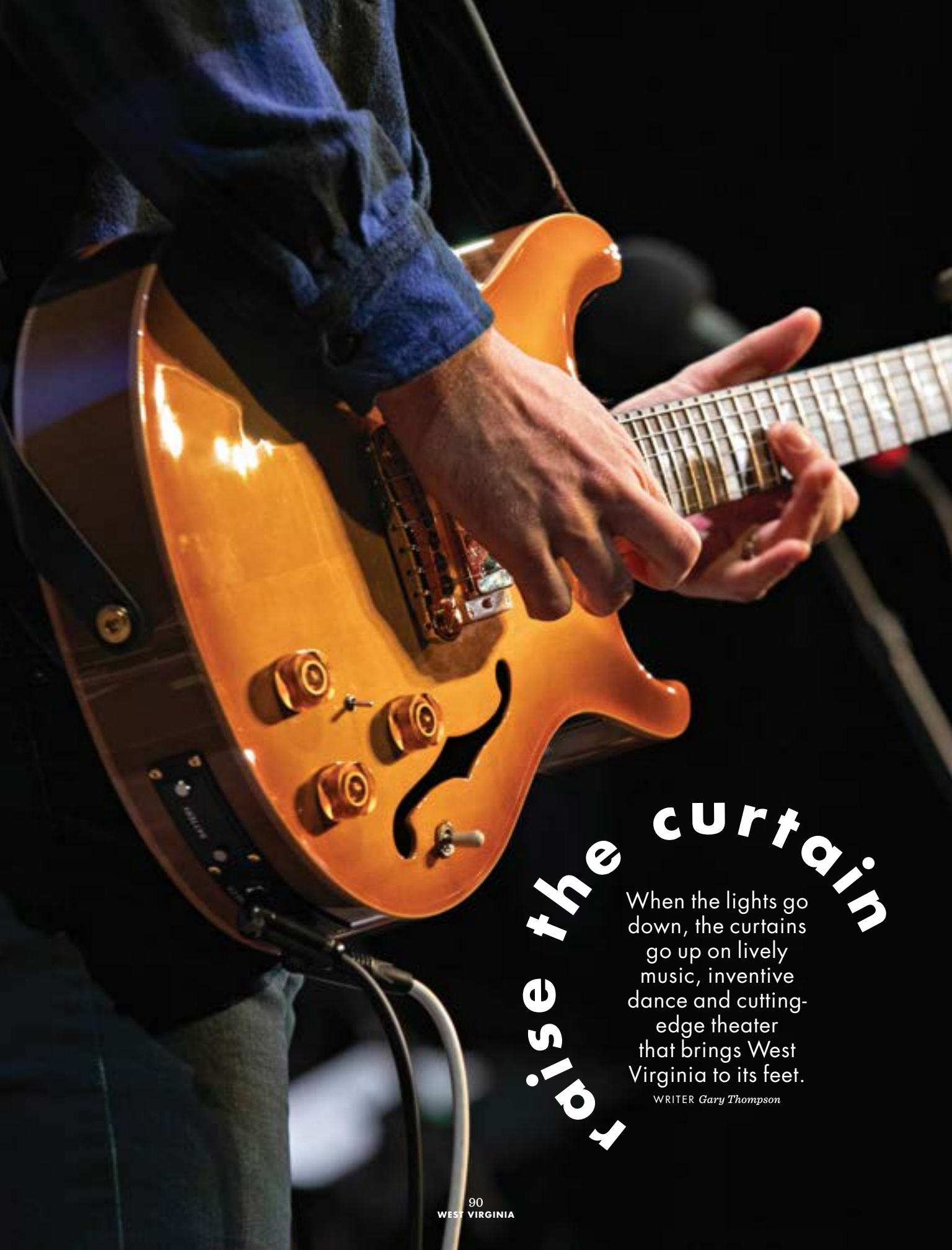
GREENVILLE
Surrounded by forested lands and farms, this outpost offers an ideal setting for nabbing white-tailed deer, pheasant and turkey. Go free range or head on a guided hunt before retiring to a furnished cabin for an evening by the firepit.

Mountain Meadows Hunting Preserve

MONROE COUNTY
Big game is the challenge on tap at this high-fence protected preserve. With 16 species populating the land, enjoy the chance to bring home a true trophy. Make it a getaway with a stay at one of the luxurious cabins on property.

Quail Hollow Hunts

BERKELEY SPRINGS
Track with your own dogs or take advantage of this preserve's trained guides and dogs to flush out quail, pheasant and chukar. The property is larger than 300 square acres and features a variety of environments.



raise the curtain

When the lights go down, the curtains go up on lively music, inventive dance and cutting-edge theater that brings West Virginia to its feet.

WRITER *Gary Thompson*

LIVING LEGENDS

These storied halls have witnessed the evolution of the arts and continue to host tomorrow's cultural icons.

Carnegie Hall WHEELING

The philanthropic legacy of steel tycoon Andrew Carnegie lives on in this iconic cultural center, one of just four Carnegie Halls in the world still used for concerts. Past performers include Taï Mahal, Wynton Marsalis, the Vienna Boys Choir and West Virginia's Kathy Mattea.

Metropolitan Theatre WHEELING

MORGANTOWN

An anchor for downtown's historic district, the Met opened in 1928 and hosted top vaudeville acts before its star power dimmed. Now restored to its neoclassical Revival glory, the revived venue draws thousands of visitors annually to showcase national and local music acts, cinema, theater, and dance.

Capitol Theatre WHEELING

Built nearly a century ago for \$1 million, the Beaux Arts-inspired auditorium still looks like a million bucks inside and out. It's a red-velvet setting for live theater and concert acts, including the Wheeling Symphony Orchestra.

Apollo Civic Theatre WHEELING

MARTINSBURG

The Miracle on East Martin Street has survived and thrived amid more than a century of change since opening in 1913. The 500-seat hall brings the town together for community theater, concerts, movies, dance recitals and more.

Keith-Albee Performing Arts Center HUNTINGTON

The renovated 1928 theater is an elegant place to see a show, thanks to ornate Spanish Baroque architecture, a vintage theater organ and a domed ceiling that simulates a night sky, complete with twinkling stars.

KEITH-ALBEE
PERFORMING
ARTS CENTER



CHARLESTON COLISEUM
AND CONVENTION CENTER

BIG TIME

When it comes to big lights, big hair and big sounds, these arenas have you covered.

Charleston Coliseum and Convention Center

CHARLESTON

Whether you're in the impressive 13,500-seat coliseum or the intimate 738-seat theater, entertainment rules in this multi-venue campus. The center is perfect for dramas, comedians, world-class music acts or a circus on ice.

Mountain Health Arena

HUNTINGTON

In the city's heart, the 7,500-seat arena draws crowds from a three-state area for concerts, family shows and sports. Recent performers include rockers Greta Van Fleet and country music stars Travis Tritt and Lee Brice.

Summersville Arena and Conference Center

SUMMERSVILLE

Flexibility is the forte of this multipurpose facility. The arena is configured to host a variety of events, including concerts, dinner theater and sports. Retractable seats with backs and armrests hold up to 2,400 people.



CLASSY CONTEMPORARY

Avant-garde artists and traditional acts share the stage at these thoroughly modern venues.

Greenbrier Valley Theatre, **LEWISBURG**

West Virginia's state professional theater group links art to life by engaging audiences with innovative new plays and classic favorites at an intimate downtown theater. The artist-driven venue also hosts musical acts and local cultural events, such as art exhibits, youth programs, literary teas and poetry readings.

Mountain Stage, CHARLESTON

Recorded in front of a live audience, the legendary music radio show is heard by listeners across the country on NPR. You can watch the performances in person on occasional Sunday nights, typically at the Culture Center Theater.

Clay Center for the Arts and Sciences, CHARLESTON

Experience music, theater, art and science under one roof. The Clay Center stage offers Sound Checks, a series of concerts by emerging music acts, and Broadway in Charleston, spotlighting favorite musicals. The West Virginia Symphony Orchestra plays here too.

MOUNTAIN STAGE



ART ALFRESCO

TAKE IT OUTSIDE

Live shows exude a different kind of energy when held in outdoor settings.

Applaud the atmosphere at these fresh-air theaters.

The Clarksburg Amphitheater

CLARKSBURG

Originally envisioned for small, free performances, the Amp now attracts concerts by nationally known performers, like country music's Florida Georgia Line and classic rock band Kansas.

Theatre West Virginia

BEAVER

The Cliffside Amphitheatre in the Grandview section of New River Gorge National Park and Preserve provides a stunning backdrop for shows staged by this theater group founded in 1955.

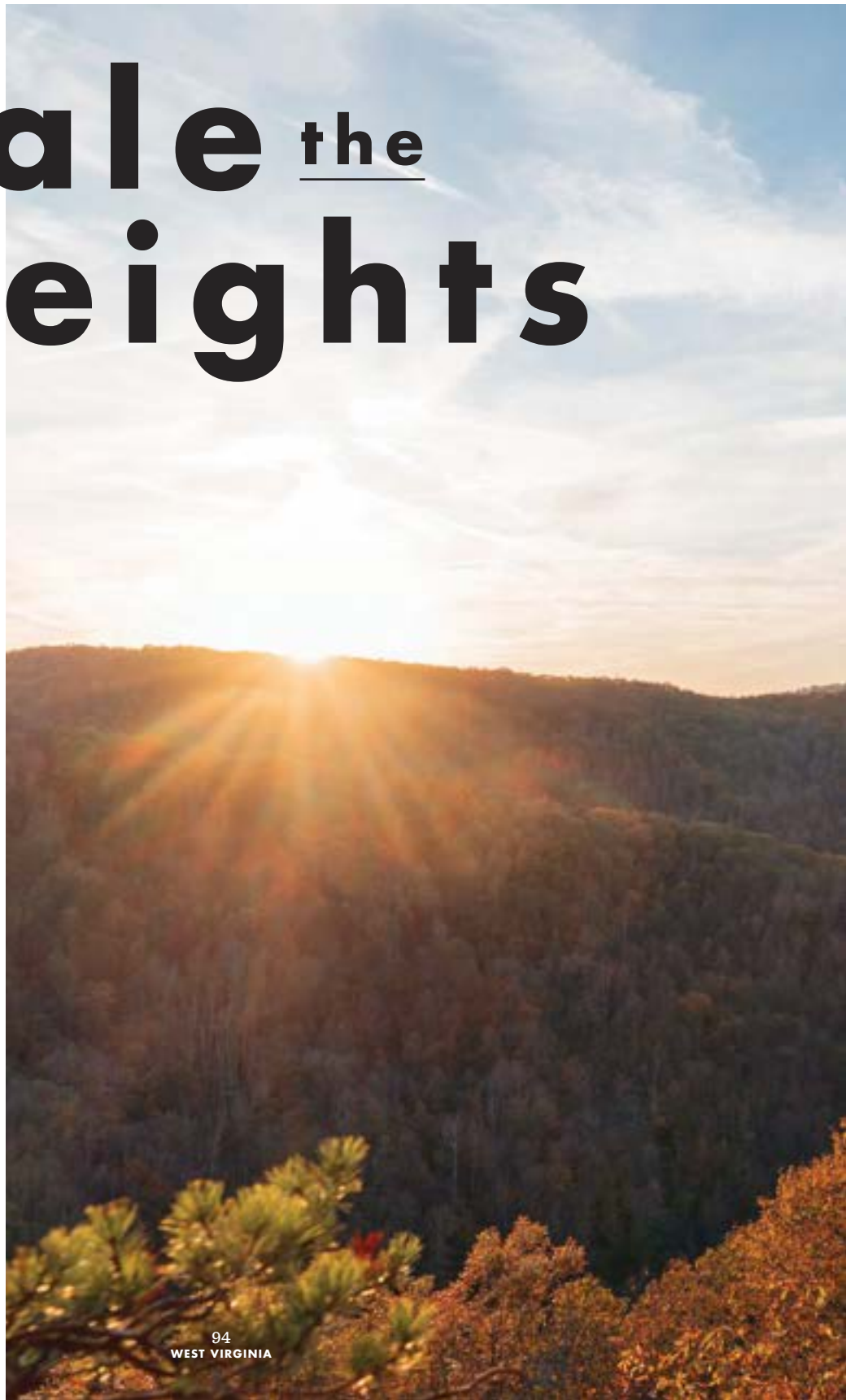


Learn more ways to explore the Mountain State's entertainment scene.

scale the heights

It's called the Mountain State for a reason. Be a rock star at these climbing and bouldering destinations.

WRITER *Gary Thompson*



PEAK EXPERIENCE

SENECA ROCKS

PENDLETON COUNTY

Multi-pitch trad climbs abound at this landmark nestled in the Monongahela National Forest. The terrain is as much alpine as Appalachian, and tough enough that the U.S. Army's 10th Mountain Division trained here for World War II. Nearby NROCKS Outdoor Adventures offers fixed-anchor, professionally guided rock climbing on its Euro-style Via Ferrata route. **DIFFICULTY: 3/5**

GORGE YOURSELF

ENDLESS WALL TRAIL

**NEW RIVER GORGE
NATIONAL PARK
AND PRESERVE**

For hikers, it's a moderate 2.4-mile walk through forest, across Fern Creek and along a cliff's edge. For climbers, the trail provides access down to the base of Endless Wall via ladders. Nearly 3 miles of unbroken cliff line earn the trail its name. Most climbs are single-pitch, rising 30–150 feet.

DIFFICULTY: 3/5

ENDLESS
WALL TRAIL



TRUE GRIT

COOPERS ROCK STATE FOREST

MORGANTOWN

It's one of the best bouldering and top-rope climbing sites in the eastern United States, thanks to stiff grades and highly gripable gritstone (a coarse sandstone sometimes called God's Own Rock). Hundreds of boulders challenge all skill levels, from basic scrambling to expert. Popular spots include Roadside Rocks, Upper Rock City and Tilted Tree. **DIFFICULTY** 2

SUMMER SUMMITTING

SUMMERSVILLE LAKE

SUMMERSVILLE

Formed in the Gauley River gorge, the lake boasts plenty of sport climbing along its shoreline cliffs. About 150 routes range 5.6–5.13c on the difficulty scale, with plenty at 5.10 and up. In summer, you can free-climb right out of the water—just boat to the cliff of your choice.

DIFFICULTY 2

WHOLLY SMOKE

SMOKE HOLE CANYON

PETERSBURG

A bit of a secret and still being established, this half-mile-deep canyon was cut by the South Branch Potomac River and features more than 250 climbs, from beginner-friendly to expert. Good routes to start on include Ugly Duckling (rated 5.7) and Raindancer (5.8+).

DIFFICULTY 3



Discover more places to climb the Mountain State at WVTOURISM.COM/ROCK-CLIMBING

School of Rock Newbies can learn the ropes at Seneca Rocks Climbing School, which has been offering instruction for more than 50 years. Their two- to three-day Climbing 101 course teaches the basic knowledge and skills to climb outdoors, with equipment provided.



AWE-INSPIRING VIEWS

**DOLLY SODS
WILDERNESS**

TUCKER COUNTY

Rocky remains of ancient times puncture the landscape at this U.S. Wilderness Area in the Allegheny Mountains, making for a hike with a seriously scenic payoff. The Rocky Ridge Trail runs 3 miles along the ridge of Cabin Mountain, giving hikers access to stunning views of Canaan Valley 800 feet below.

DIFFICULTY: 1/5

legends and lore

As fall settles in, The Mountain State's infamous folklore and storied past come to life. Learn more about West Virginia's spooky legends at these local haunts.

WRITER *Hilary Braakma*





HAUNTED BLANNERHASSETT TOURS

After dinner, book a tour at this legendary hotel to see the historic building and hear spooky stories and paranormal possibilities.

TERRIFYING TREKS

Do some of the spirits from West Virginia's past still linger? These eerie educational events might convince you.

Fright Nights WV at The Resort at Glade Springs

DANIELS

Horror fans and adrenaline junkies can take on five freaky-themed attractions during Fright Nights, which runs late September through October. Visitors can expect grisly displays and jump-scare encounters with costumed staff. The over-the-top experience is best suited for ages 13 and up.

Haunted Parkersburg Ghost Tours

PARKERSBURG

Join this slightly scary downtown walking tour to scout out paranormal hot spots and hear tales of strange events around the city. The storytelling starts in front of The Blennerhassett Hotel and Spa, a 137-year-old building with a rumored history of hauntings. Attendees must be 5 and older.

MACABRE MUSEUMS

View a menagerie of metaphysical items and monster memorabilia in these ghastly galleries.

Mothman Museum

POINT PLEASANT

In the mid-1960s, citizens of this small town reported sightings of a flying man with glowing red eyes. The sensational story has since transcended West Virginian folklore to inspire movies, books and more. Stop by the museum to see handwritten eyewitness accounts and original news clippings.

Archive of the Afterlife

CAMERON

This museum is a mix of ominous oddities, including cursed dolls, a Depression-era embalming table and a collection of possibly possessed household items donated by frightened former owners. The displays include relics from North America, South America, the Middle East and Europe.

Flatwoods Monster Museum

SUTTON

The tiny town of Flatwoods was the focus of national attention in 1952 when six children and two adults reported seeing a mysterious flying figure. Investigators later concluded shadows, a meteor and a barn owl had caused an optical illusion, but some still believe in the monster. Look over artifacts at the museum, then decide for yourself.

Ghost Tours of Harpers Ferry

HARPERS FERRY

Join costumed guides on a walk through downtown's historic Lower Town section (home to violent Civil War clashes and John Brown's rebellion) to hear dramatic retellings of the city's chilling legends and unexplained apparitions. The family-friendly event runs a little under two hours and spans close to 15 blocks.

HAUNTED HOUNDS

Well-behaved dogs are welcome to join their humans for a hair-raising downtown stroll.

SPOOKY SPOTS

Pitch a tent in a petrifying amusement park or take a thrilling hunt through an old jail at these spine-tingling seasonal attractions.

Dungeon of Horrors Haunted House West Virginia Penitentiary

MOUNDSVILLE

Thrill-seekers ages 13 and older can spend 45 minutes getting lost inside a Gothic-style stone building that once served as a state prison. One of the more fear-inducing features of this attraction is the experience of being locked in one of the old jail cells.

Lake Shawnee Amusement Park Dark Carnival

MERCER COUNTY

The now-closed amusement park has earned its place among the nation's most popular haunted spaces. Each weekend in October, the park opens once again to host Dark Carnival, which includes tours, ghost stories around a bonfire and even overnight camping if you're feeling brave.

Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum Flashlight Tours

WESTON

This state hospital operated for 130 years before closing in 1998. Since then, there have been numerous reports of creepy sightings. A 30-minute flashlight tour includes in-depth asylum history and the chance for your own otherworldly experience.

TRANS-ALLEGHENY
LUNATIC ASYLUM

Experience more of mystical West Virginia with these fun, frightful fall-time activities at WVTOURISM.COM/ALMOST-HEAVEN-AFTER-DARK



ALMOST
HEAVEN
winter



**LEARN THE
SLOPES**
West Virginia
provides the perfect
powdery backdrop
for beginners
eager to discover
snow sports at
destinations like
Snowshoe Mountain
Resort pictured here
and at right

peak performance

Gear up for winter in the Mountain State. Discover the wonder of snow season in West Virginia at slope-side resorts that make the most of an elevated reputation.

WRITER *Hilary Braaksma*



FAMILY-FRIENDLY FUN

Kids 17 and younger lodge with parents for free at Canaan Valley Resort, and there are enough on-site activities to keep them busy. Hit the bunny slopes, lace up a pair of rental ice skates or traverse the tube park.





chill days, warm nights

Canaan Valley Resort State Park

DAVIS

Carve lines through freshly fallen snow and take in stunning views of the Allegheny Mountains on one of the 47 trails at this ski resort. The slopes are fit for serious fans of snow sports and amateur adventurers alike, with experienced instructors available to guide beginners. The park also offers adaptive ski lessons with specialized equipment, like sit skis and sliders that help guests with physical and cognitive disabilities enjoy the sweet rush of downhill skiing.

Turn in for the night in one of 160 amenity-packed suites or warm up next to the wood-burning fireplace in a cozy cabin rental. Travelers staying at this scenic ski spot benefit from plush perks like access to the property's Beech Club, a fitness center with a heated indoor pool and a hot tub. Kids (and kids at heart) take a break from the blustery weather and hunker down in the resort's arcade for an afternoon of air hockey and video games.





winter wonderland

Snowshoe Mountain

SNOWSHOE

This Appalachian resort and winter sports spot has over 200 skiable acres with 60 trails, five terrain parks and nighttime skiing adventures under the sparkling evening sky. A fleet of snowmakers ensures guests enjoy the slopes even when nature doesn't comply, and lessons are available to accommodate beginners of varying ages, interests and abilities.

Lodging options at Snowshoe are impressively vast, with condominiums that accommodate one or many, luxury home rentals for special occasions, and sprawling cabin stays for reunions and group gatherings. Relax by the fireplace or soak in a mountain view from a private balcony at Soaring Eagle Lodge; ski in and out of a spacious five-bedroom townhome at Loggers Run; or get everyone together in an eight-bedroom, 20-person Westridge Road vacation home. Spend your downtime dining out, sipping craft cocktails and shopping at village boutiques.

MOUNTAIN MAGIC

Snowshoe Mountain is located on the southern end of Cheat Mountain—and on the two highest peaks in the state. The 4,848-foot elevation helps ensure climate conditions are perfect for powdery snow.



eternal snow

Winterplace Ski Resort

GHENT

Strap into your skis or snowboard and prepare to hit the packed powder at this snowy spot near Flat Top Mountain. Even when Mother Nature fails to produce the flakes, snowmaking machines provide fluffy full coverage on the 27 slopes and terrain park. Winterplace offers rental gear, lessons for first-timers, and a kid-friendly SkiWee and Snow Explorers program that helps children ages 6 to 12 build the confidence to conquer their first hill.

Make it a friends and family group vacation by reserving a spot in one of the resort's rustic cabin rentals, which can accommodate up to 15 people. Every overnight stay includes a fresh breakfast at Mountain Mama's Food Court. Visitors can also swing by The Snowdrift Lounge for an après-ski cocktail after a rigorous day on the runs.



TIMBERLINE MOUNTAIN

ski on in

Timberline Mountain

DAVIS

Nestled in the Monongahela National Forest and the Allegheny Mountains, this traditionally styled ski lodge has trails fit for a variety of experience levels. First-timers and younger snow enthusiasts can take it easy on beginner-friendly trails like Bear Stroll, while seasoned experts can tackle more difficult terrain like the expert-level Off the Wall trail. On-site instructors offer private instruction, as well as group lessons, children’s lessons, adaptive lessons and equipment rental.

Recent renovations at Timberline include a new six-person ski lift that can take riders to the summit in under five minutes. The updated 20-room hotel has ski-in, ski-out access and suites that sleep four to eight people, plus family suites with a convenient bunk bed setup. Hungry guests can find grab-and-go food service in the updated lodge, or head to lunch at Slippery Slope Bar & Grill for fish tacos and local brews on tap.

fun on (and off) the slopes

Oglebay

WHEELING

This 2,000-acre public park was deeded to the city in the 1920s by industrialist Earl W. Oglebay. Today, the impressive municipal recreation area boasts beautiful landscaping, luxe lodging and opportunities for cold-weather fun, including skiing and snowboarding at Nutting Winter Sports Complex. Newbies and novices need not worry—Oglebay offers lessons and rentals, and amateur skiers and snowboarders can easily master the park’s beginner-friendly slope.

Overnight options include a suite in the recently renovated Wilson Lodge, which also houses two dining rooms, a fitness center, indoor pool and sauna. Or stay in one of the park’s 55 cabins designed to accommodate families and larger groups. Once you have exhausted your energy on the ski run, book a deep tissue massage at The West Spa or explore the park’s seven specialty shops and two museums.



TIMBERLINE MOUNTAIN



OGLEBAY



SNOWY SIDE TRIP Make a stop at Snow Sports Museum of West Virginia in Davis, the state's first ski town. View rotating exhibits of vintage skis, 1960s snowshoes and other memorabilia honoring a rich history of snow activities.

click for more

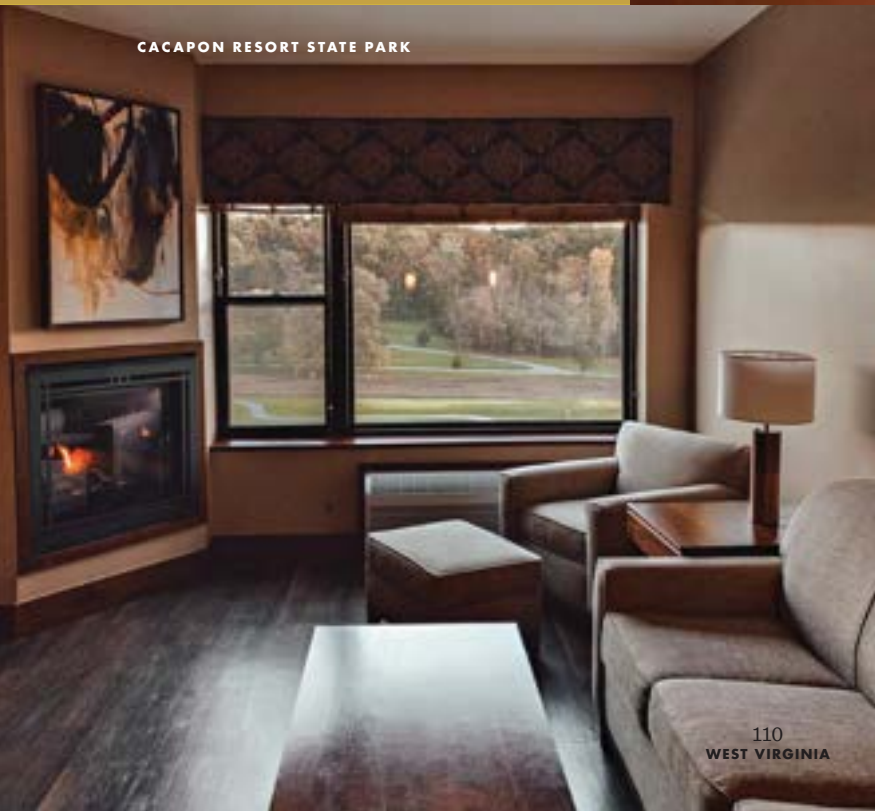


**IT'S ALL
DOWNHILL
FROM HERE**
Click to discover
more skiing and
snowboarding
destinations in
Almost Heaven.

the art of indulgence



CACAPON RESORT STATE PARK



When the weather outside turns frightful, retreat to these high-end getaways, luxurious spas and sophisticated nightlife spots for an elevated experience.

WRITER *Lindsay Lambert Day*



THE WEST SPA

SPA DAY

TREAT YOURSELF

These signature services will leave you feeling like new.

24 Karat Gold and Diamond Facial

THE GATEHOUSE SPA, HILLBROOK INN AND SPA, CHARLES TOWN

Rewind the clock with this decadent anti-aging treatment's diamond exfoliation, Vitamin B-infused 24-karat-gold mask and pearl moisturizer with caviar extract.

Sound Healing

POMONA SALT CAVE AND SPA, WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS

Soothe both body and mind with a combination of salt therapy, which reduces inflammation in the lungs, and sound healing, which eases stress and aids sleep.

Oglebay Signature Journey

THE WEST SPA, OGLEBAY, WHEELING

The skin-tingling scalp massage, soothing rain shower and rhythmic salt-stone massage in this full-body treatment will have you feeling zen from head to toe.

Spa Orange Signature Wrap

SPA ORANGE, THE RESORT AT GLADE SPRINGS, DANIELS

In this namesake service, exfoliation, reflexology, a full-body wrap and an invigorating scalp massage work together to alleviate aches, pains and joint discomfort.

HARMAN'S LUXURY LOG CABINS

CABINS

Love the idea of a nature-filled getaway but not exactly into roughing it? Try this family-friendly retreat tucked away in the appropriately named town of Cabins. This stay caters to adventurous guests, with easy access to activities such as hiking, fly-fishing, rock climbing, ziplining and horseback riding. There are also seasonal wellness retreats and plush, riverfront cabins for those seeking a little more peace and quiet. The one- to four-bedroom abodes include ways to heat up your visit, like outdoor hot tubs, indoor Jacuzzis, fireplaces and table tennis.

CACAPON RESORT STATE PARK

BERKELEY SPRINGS

Nature and pampering—this sprawling resort has it all. Guests can choose between cozy cabins, Tentr campsites, the vintage 12-room Old Inn or the recently remodeled 124-room luxury lodge. Wake with the dawn to grab a hearty breakfast sandwich or fresh fruit smoothie at the full-service on-site restaurant. Or take in the glow of sunset in newly designed and comfortably outfitted Appalachian-inspired rooms. Fill your itinerary with activities like rejuvenating spa services, horseback riding or relaxing by the indoor pool.

luxe lodging

GRAND FIVE-STAR ICONS,
ELEGANT ECO-LODGING AND
EXTRAVAGANT RESORTS
YOU'LL NEVER WANT TO LEAVE
ARE ALL WAITING TO EXTEND
A PAMPERING WELCOME.



STONEWALL RESORT STATE PARK

FIRST CALL

Stonewall Resort's three restaurants offer unique dining experiences and pours. Try TJ Muskies for casual lakeside drinks.



STONEWALL RESORT STATE PARK

ROANOKE

Set on the 1,900 parkland acres along Stonewall Jackson Lake, Stonewall Resort offers tranquility at every turn—plus plenty of plush perks. The resort's 26 miles of lake shoreline and 20-plus miles of trails are perfect for hiking and biking, while the lake itself beckons boaters, kayakers and canoers. Fans of traditional sports can take their pick of golf, tennis, pickleball, fishing, disc golf and nearby clay shooting. When it's time to refuel and relax, stop by one of Stonewall's on-site restaurants or the head to the Mtn. Laurel Spa for a calming massage or beauty treatment.

BAVARIAN INN, RESORT AND BREWING COMPANY

SHEPHERDSTOWN

Mountain State hospitality meets old-world charm at this Almost Heaven resort. In the style of a European chateau, the Bavarian Inn blends the beauty of the Potomac River woodlands with sophisticated hospitality. Indulge in lodgings with whirlpool baths, crackling fireplaces and breathtaking views of the river valley below. Or warm up with a mug of cheer from the on-site brewery and s'mores by the firepit. Extend that intercontinental feeling with an evening of German-inspired fine dining.



THE BLENNERHASSETT HOTEL



THE BLENNERHASSETT HOTEL

THE BLENNERHASSETT HOTEL

PARKERSBURG

If you want a romantic in-town getaway or an artsy urban escape, Parkersburg's Blennerhassett Hotel delivers. The historic boutique hotel houses 86 rooms and suites designed in sophisticated style. It's the perfect place to unplug and live life at a slower pace—on-site amenities include timeless perks like a daily newspaper and a cozy lobby library stocked with classic board games. Guests can freshen up with a facial at the convenient second-floor spa.



THE GREENBRIER

THE GREENBRIER

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS

Known for its colorful interiors and elegant ambience, The Greenbrier welcomes guests with gourmet cuisine, lavish accommodations and outdoor activities. Get star treatment at Studio G Hair Salon's blowout bar or book a private on-site guided meditation. After a long day of treating yourself, sit down for a celebratory steak or seafood dinner in the Main Dining Room or enjoy a rare bourbon at Café Carleton on a Friday or Saturday night.



HOLLYWOOD CASINO AT CHARLES TOWN RACES



THE CASINO CLUB AT THE GREENBRIER

take a chance

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A HIGH ROLLER TO ENJOY GAMING IN WEST VIRGINIA. BUT YOU'LL SURE FEEL LIKE ONE AT THESE CASINO RESORTS.

THE CASINO CLUB AT THE GREENBRIER

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS

Don your sharpest sports coat (they're required after 7 p.m.), grab a lucky charm and claim a spot at one of The Casino Club's 37 tables for blackjack, craps, roulette and other games. Between hands, refuel with modern Asian cuisine at In-Fusion, sip a craft cocktail at Greenbrier Royale, or raise a glass of bubbly to your big win during the nightly (and complimentary) 10 o'clock champagne toast.

HOLLYWOOD CASINO AT CHARLES TOWN RACES

CHARLES TOWN

With more than 2,000 slot and video poker machines, 75 table games, a live poker room, and on-location sports betting, Hollywood Casino could give plenty of Vegas venues a run for their money. Join weekly Pour House Trivia night in the Barstool Sportsbook, get in on live horse racing action, and strategize over a feast of fresh sushi at 9 Dragons, or steak and lobster at Final Cut Steakhouse.

WHEELING ISLAND HOTEL CASINO RACETRACK

WHEELING

Cheerful beeps, bleeps, dings and chimes are a constant soundtrack at this casino with 1,100 slot machines, classic table games, live greyhound racing, a poker room, and a Betty Sportsbook for fans who want to bet on their favorite teams. Fill up before you double down with a steak at The Pointe, grab a bite (or more) from The Buffet, or take out a sandwich from Sportsbar.

MOUNTAINEER CASINO, RACETRACK AND RESORT

NEW CUMBERLAND

This sprawling playground features world-class thoroughbred racing, slots (including \$10, \$25 and \$100 high-limit games), and live table games like Mississippi Stud and Spanish 21. Sports enthusiasts can post up in Caesars Sportsbook, where big games and matchups are shown on a giant video wall. Dining options include an upscale steakhouse or quick deli bites for hungry players who are on a roll.

MARDI GRAS CASINO AND RESORT

CROSS LANES

Ante up at this lively resort with slot machines, table games and a poker room. Want to place a bet on a big football game, auto race, boxing match or other major sporting event? The resort has Betly Sportsbook kiosks on-site to make it easy. And if you can't resist coming back, join the resort's Lucky North Club to earn rewards for future endeavors.



Learn more about luxury experiences in West Virginia.



CHARLESTON BEE WORKS



APPALACHIAN GLASS



WHEELING ARTISAN CENTER

GIFT OF GIVING TREAT SOMEONE ELSE

Feel good on the inside when you gift these West Virginia-made specialties.

Handcrafted Beeswax Soap

CHARLESTON BEE WORKS, THE VANDALIA CO., CHARLESTON

Give the ultimate gift of self-care with these handmade bars of soap. These creamy, all-natural bars make each use feel like a tranquil spa treatment.

Mouth-Blown Glass Paperweights

APPALACHIAN GLASS, WESTON

Wherever they're placed, these heartfelt, handcrafted creations will provide a pop of color and a reminder of your love to your nearest and dearest friends.

Pickled Wild Ramps

WHEELING ARTISAN CENTER, WHEELING

Need the perfect souvenir for a gourmand? Inspire West Virginia memories every time this jar of garlicky, go-with-everything wild onions makes a mealtime appearance.

crossing paths

There's something to be said for the scenic solitude of the forest, the calming silhouette of fallen snow, and the peace that comes from knowing there are no crowds to trek through or ski lifts to catch. Cross these must-see Nordic-style skiing sites off your winter to-do list.

WRITER *Hilary Braaksma*

RESORTS

Make it a luxury experience by spending a day or two at one of these charming cross-country skiing destinations.

CANAAN VALLEY RESORT STATE PARK DAVIS

Traverse more than 35 kilometers of marked and ungroomed trails. Rental gear is available at the resort's Recreation Center.

WHITE GRASS SKI TOURING CENTER DAVIS

Tucked away in the Cabin Mountain range, the state's premiere cross-country spot boasts up to 160 inches of annual snowfall, miles of winding trails, a specialty shop and a welcoming on-site cafe.

ALPINE LAKE RESORT TERRA ALTA

Enjoy seven touring trails and peaceful winter views when you visit this resort ski lodge. Better yet, make a weekend of it by booking a stay at the resort's 35-room hotel.

BEGINNERS

Amateur hour is a blast when you're learning your way around these novice-friendly ski spots.

PIPESTEM RESORT STATE PARK PIPESTEM

When snowfall hits a minimum of 4 inches, first-timers can perfect their cross-country moves on the park's easy-to-navigate 18-hole golf course. The only fee is the price of renting gear.

ELK RIVER TOURING CENTER SLATY FORK

Beginners can take advantage of on-site lessons and rentals before tackling over 30 kilometers of cross-country opportunities at this snow-sport site.

BACKCOUNTRY

Soak up the serenity of snow-covered forests while you make your way across these wild winter trails.

MONONGAHELA NATIONAL FOREST, ELKINS

Secluded service roads, ungroomed trails and open fields are a few of the places you can carve through the snow while taking in the beauty of the majestic Allegheny Mountains.

COOPERS ROCK STATE FOREST, BRUCETON MILLS

Choose from three moderate-difficulty trails to take on at this park. Try the popular 6.8-mile Coopers Rock Loop or the Advanced Route, which leads directly to the historic Henry Clay iron furnace.

BLACKWATER FALLS STATE PARK, DAVIS

Trek 20-plus kilometers of powdery trails at this scenic state park—some of the trails are even specifically for cross-country skiers, including the half-mile Gee Haw and Spudder Track trails.

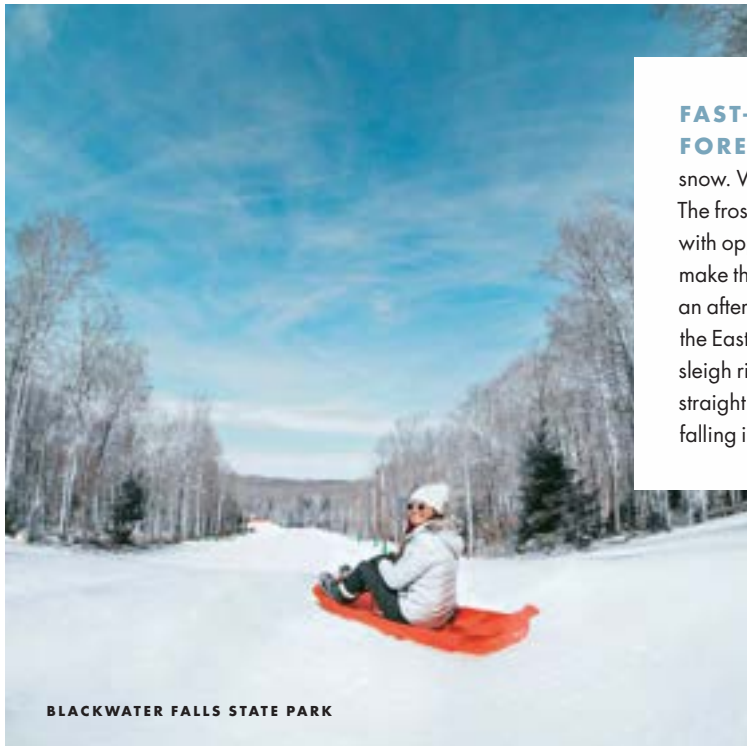
click for more



GLIDE ON
Never enough Nordic-style skiing? Click to see more West Virginia trails.

dashing through the snow

WRITER *Hilary Braaksma*



BLACKWATER FALLS STATE PARK

FAST-PACED VIEWS OF FROZEN FORESTS.

Twisting trails blanketed in sparkling snow. Winding rides across a winter wonderland. The frosty pathways of West Virginia overflow with opportunities for adventurers of all interests to make their mark on the opaline landscape. Spend an afternoon sliding down the longest sled run on the East Coast, hit the stables for a horse-drawn sleigh ride or book tickets for a holiday rail trip straight out of a storybook. Once the flakes start falling in Almost Heaven, the fun doesn't stop.



SNOWSHOE MOUNTAIN RESORT

SNOWMOBILING Whisk across the wintry terrain of Appalachia on an adrenaline-pumping snowmobile excursion. **Snowshoe Mountain Resort** in Snowshoe has two guided tour options for riders: a daytime backcountry drive or an evening experience that takes riders on a guided one-hour tour along the ski slopes of scenic Snowshoe Basin.



HOT ON THE
TRAIL

After a sleigh ride across The Greenbrier, warm up with a cup of hot cocoa by the firepit at the resort's ice-skating rink.

HORSE-DRAWN SLEIGH RIDES

The sound of jingling bells and heavy horse hooves plodding through soft snow hearkens to wintertime traditions of years gone by. When snow depth reaches 4 inches, take a nostalgic sleigh ride, complete with snuggly lap blankets, across the glittering white-covered grounds at **The Greenbrier**.

Another mesmerizing spot for seasonal sleigh and trail rides is **Autumn Breeze Stables** in Snowshoe. Cuddle up under warm blankets inside the back of an original 19th-century one-horse open sleigh. Listen for the cheerful jingle of sleigh bells on a 2-mile round trip that passes through a red spruce forest.

HOLIDAY TRAIN RIDES

Keep your cold-season activities on track by booking an enchanting experience on the **North Pole Express** at Potomac Eagle Scenic Railroad in Romney. This 75-minute interactive train ride to see Santa in his natural habitat includes milk and cookies, storytelling and caroling. The Potomac Eagle also runs the Holiday Trough Trip, a three-hour scenic ride with a holiday-inspired multicourse meal service. An event barn at the station provides entertainment to guests before their trip departs, so consider arriving early.



SNOW MUCH FUN
Click here to discover more ways to spend a snowy day in the Mountain State.

FROZEN FALLS

Follow hiking paths through the snow-covered forest at Blackwater Falls State Park to see the splendor of glistening icicles descending from wintertime falls.



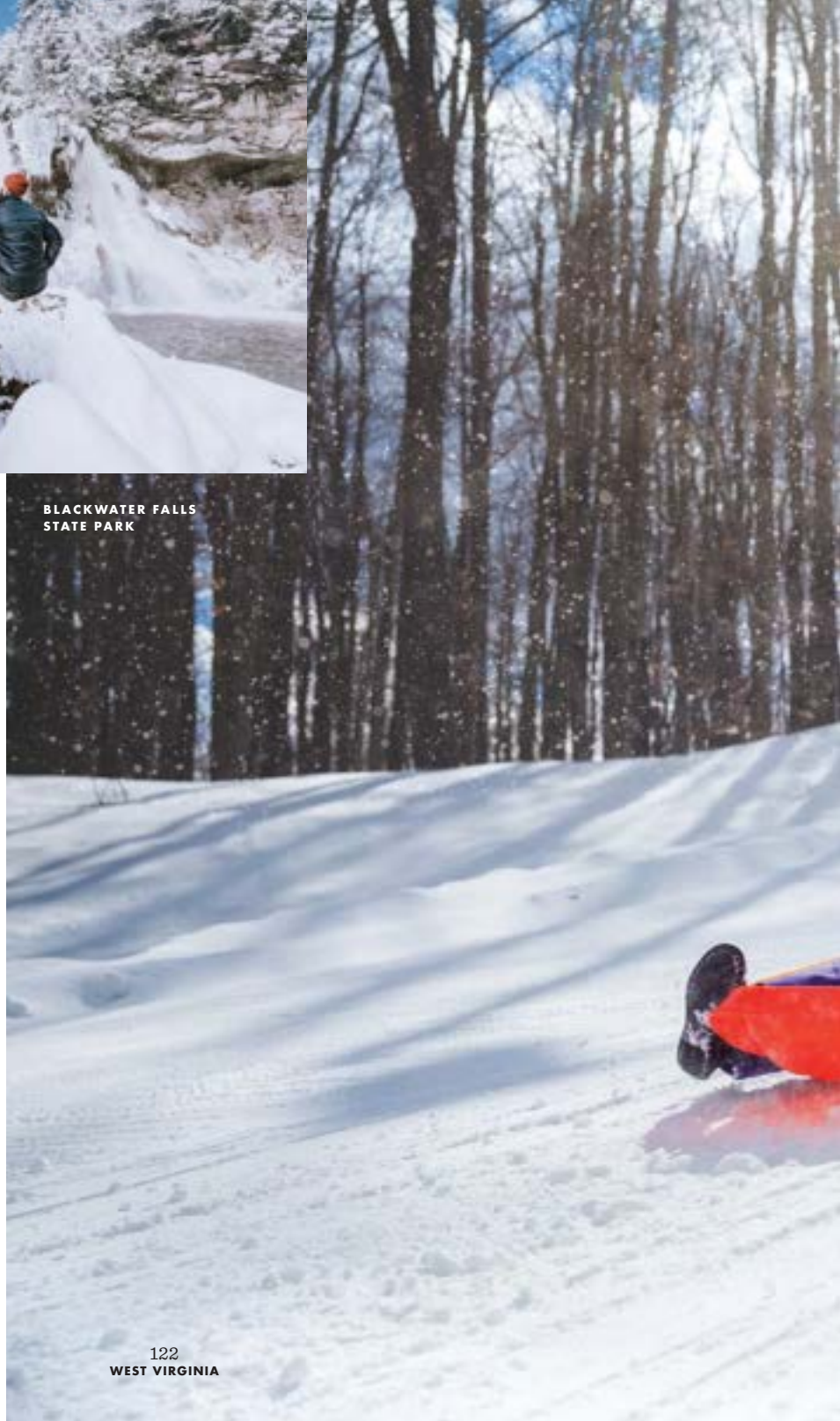
BLACKWATER
FALLS STATE PARK

TUBING

Bundle up for a night of Galactic Tubing at **Coca-Cola Tube Park**, an eight-lane, six-story tubing park in Snowshoe. The after-dark experience lets riders fly down the hill under a glowing LED light show. Take a break on the Party Deck, with crackling firepits, warm heaters and comfy seating. Children must be 4-plus years to tube, but younger kids can enjoy an on-site play area.

Winterplace Ski Resort

in Ghent is home to the largest snow tubing park in West Virginia. Spend your almost two-hour tubing sessions gliding down the shining white hill and riding one of two conveyor belts back to the top of the run. Little ones who don't meet the height requirement (44 inches) can still get in some fluffy fun at the Kiddie Park, depending on weather conditions.



BLACKWATER FALLS
STATE PARK

SLEDDING The longest sled run on the East Coast is at **Blackwater Falls State Park** in Davis. Experience the thrill of racing down the quarter-mile run at speeds of around 25 mph on sled, then kick back and relax on a “magic carpet” ride—a convenient conveyor belt that takes sledders back to the top of the hill in less than five minutes.



THE LAST WORD

Where Will West Virginia Take You?



COOPERS ROCK STATE FOREST @bklinephoto



SNOWSHOE MOUNTAIN @graceefully










FAYETTE COUNTY @s.c.shank_shooter



CHARLESTON @wvtourism

The journey is the destination.
Share your favorite Mountain State
moments with #AlmostHeaven.

 /WVtourism  /WVtourism  /WVtourism  /WVtourism
 /WVtourism  /WVtourism  # AlmostHeaven

LINDY POINT
BLACKWATER FALLS
STATE PARK





SEEING STARS
CAMP
AT WATOGA
STATE PARK

Our cover photo features Beaver Creek Campground at Watoga State Park. Watoga is one of West Virginia's three designated Dark Sky Parks.