

**the flat hat
travel section**

A traveler's guide to the internet

Online booking sites

The internet has been a great place to start your travel planning. Online travel guides and booking sites have become very popular tools for travel planning. Most booking sites will allow you to book flights, hotels, car rentals, cruises and more. Some sites even let you buy tickets to major attractions in your destination. The internet makes comparing prices simple. On most booking sites you can compare airfare prices and hotel prices on the same page. Most booking sites offer some sort of discount for booking both flights and hotel at the same time.

The only problems with online booking sites are that using outside discounts is generally not permitted and many flights and hotels are non-refundable upon cancellation.

One can also book flights and hotels directly through company websites. Direct booking often allows for outside discounts such as student, AAA, government or military. Booking online is simple to do. As soon as you book, you can print out the days, rates and times for your travel and one doesn't need to wait for tickets to be mailed to them. You'll be ready to go in no time.

Booking sites

www.travelocity.com

www.expedia.com

www.orbitz.com

www.priceline.com

www.hotels.com



Travel Guides

travel.yahoo.com

fodors.com

travelchannel.com

Online travel guides

You've picked out where you want to go, but what are you going to do when you get there? Online travel guides are a great source for finding the major attractions of your destination, plus help you find places

to eat and give you a background on the area you will be visiting. Yahoo! Travel even includes a user rating of attractions, hotels and restaurants. As an added extra, some of these sites also double as booking sites.

COURTESY PHOTO + YAHOO!

Yahoo! Travel provides a guide that includes overviews, hotel options, attractions, restaurants and deals for virtually any destination.

Orbitz, a popular online booking site allows you to view prices and book hotels, flights, cars, etc. for the dates and times you are looking to travel.

Keys to the successful road trip

Did somebody say road trip?! Using your car can be an ideal means of travel. You're on your schedule, you can come and go as you please. No long lines and security checkpoints or canceled flights. But as we all know, with freedom comes greater responsibility. As a driver, you will now be responsible for the safety and mental health of yourself and your passengers. The following are some safety and logistical tips to make sure your road trip doesn't become a wreck.

Safety first. Before you leave, you will want to make sure that your car is in good enough condition to safely make your journey. A trip to the dealer or your local Jiffy Lube would be great, but generally speaking, an oil, tire air pressure, tire tread and wiper fluid check will suffice. Once your car is taken care of, it's time to start driving. Now your actions are even more important. It goes without saying that you should never drive while under the influence of alcohol, but did you know that driving while sleep deprived can be just as dangerous? According to a Sept. 20, 2000 CNN,

com article, researchers found that people who have been awake for 17 to 19 hours performed worse while driving than those with a blood alcohol level of .05 percent (the legal limit in most western European countries). That being said, take nap breaks and have your friends share driving duties with you. Also, be sure to bring your cell phone and AAA membership card for any emergency situations that may arise.

Preparing logistically is also important for a smooth sail down the highway. First up, don't leave the dorm without a map and/or solid directions. You'll end up nowhere fast if you get lost. If you have time for it, and

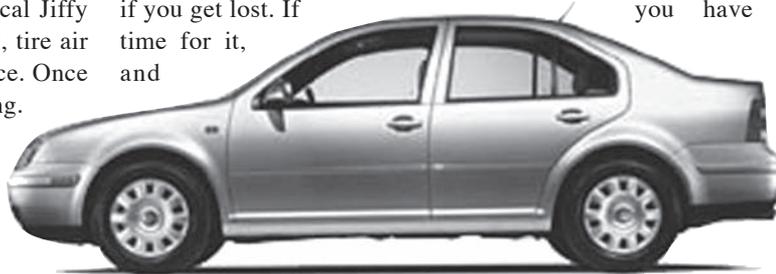
a membership, AAA will help you map out your route, among other services.

Also, be sure to have enough money to pay tolls, preferably in quarters so you don't have to wait for change at the toll booth. Even better, buy an E-ZPass. This electronic system allows you to pay tolls electronically without paying at the toll, and in some places without even stopping your car. Check with your state's transportation authorities for information about purchasing one.

Additionally, while on the road, check in periodically with the local radio stations for potential traffic problems and plan around them. Lastly, before leaving, plan ahead with your friends about how gas money will be handled, scheduling bathroom and food stops, and of course, who gets to listen to what music when. The last thing you want is to have what is supposed to be a fun trip turn ugly when disputes over relatively minor issues arise.

If you keep these tips in mind, all you need to do is lay back and enjoy the ride.

— V.P.



Williamsburg

There's more than meets the eye

While some students are venturing to exotic destinations such as Miami, Florida or Italy and others are just going home to reconnect with family and friends, you may be one of the lucky ones to find yourself here in Williamsburg. Lucky? That's right, because there's actually quite a lot going on in this "sleepy" southern town.

There are the dependable diversions like exploring Colonial Williamsburg and hopping on the bus to Busch Gardens, but you also might want to venture outside of the typical vacation spots and try something

new. Whether you want the tried and true or less-beaten path, these ideas are sure to please.

Kimball Theater, located on Duke of Gloucester Street, offers a variety of independent and foreign films with the occasional mainstream film. For \$5.50 it is worth the gas you will save by not driving to Hampton.

Start your Christmas shopping early at the plethora of Christmas stores or at the Prime Outlets, located only a few miles down Richmond Road.

Do you golf? How about mini golf? Try your luck at mini golf at the

touristy Pirate's Cove, located on Bypass Road, or the less touristy Mini Golf America, located on Richmond Road next to Wendy's.

Pierce's Pitt Bar B Que, hidden on Rochambeau Drive, will bring you back in time with their retro orange and yellow decor. Get some good ol' fashioned southern grub.

Up for a challenge? Try every pancake house in town. There are at least ten restaurants that include "pancake" in their name in this town. Just imagine if you could claim the "golden pancake."

— H.R., M.S.

Colonial Williamsburg: From the Governor's Palace to the Magazine, Colonial Williamsburg is a great place to take a study break. The Palace, home to nine governors of Williamsburg, takes you back in history as re-enactors tell the stories of both governors and servants. Be sure to explore the extensive grounds around the Governor's Palace. The maze will bring out the child within you. Students of the College have free admission with an ID (plus a sticker that can be acquired from the ID office) to any of the CW attractions. Also, students of the College receive ten passes at 40 percent off.

Go-Karts Plus: They have numerous tracks, including a Super Stockart Track, Figure Eight Track, Slick Track, Bumper Boats, Bumper Cars and Waterfall Miniature Golf. The Slick Track is coated in a slick finish that causes the karts to slide along the track and around corners, making a spin-out a legitimate fear. On the Super Stockart Track, the karts resemble cars used in NASCAR and use the power of a Honda 8 horsepower cogbelt driven engine. The go-karts are not bumper cars, but there is a bumper car course for those looking for a carnival experience. Tickets cost \$1.25 and each ride requires three to six tickets. Special rates can be arranged for groups of over thirty people. The park will be open until after the last weekend in October. For hours, call 564-7600.

Williamsburg Pottery: Looking for a tacky gag gift? Need something to spice up your dorm room? The Pottery has something for every occasion. The Pottery features over fifty factory outlets on 200 acres with over 70,000 items gathered from all over the world. You can find everything from plaster lawn ornaments to picture frames. According to legend, the Pottery started when a car broke down outside of Williamsburg. As he was fixing his car, people began stopping to see if he was selling things from his car. The man recognized a market for selling discount items and opened up the Williamsburg Pottery. In actuality, in 1938, James E. Maloney founded the business, making eighteenth-century saltglaze reproductions to sell at low prices. He added china and glassware at discount prices and bargain hunters flocked. Though it is a drive from campus, it is well worth it on a Saturday afternoon. Located at the intersection of Route 199 and Mooretown Road, it is open from 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Sunday to Friday and 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturdays.

Busch Gardens: Currently open from 10 a.m. until 10 p.m. Fridays and Sundays and 10 a.m. until 11 p.m. Saturdays, Busch Gardens is a close attraction, located only three miles east of Historic Williamsburg. A one day ticket costs \$49.95, but there are special multi-day options available, as well as season passes. The park boasts numerous rides, from waterslides to rollercoasters, and others such as the Battering Ram. The current highlight, Curse of DarKastle...The Ride! is a castle of horror designed with state-of-the-art technology, touted as the "newest, most intense thrill ride ever." Escape from Pompeii seems like a quiet boat ride through the ancient ruins of Pompeii, until a series of explosions gives the sensation of Mt. Vesuvius erupting once again.

In addition to rides, Busch Gardens provide a "pseudo"-cultural experience as well. Oktoberfest, the German section, is the home of the Big Bad Wolf roller coaster, Die Autobahn, the bumper car arena and Das Festhaus, a 2000-seat auditorium which features an oompah band and authentic German dances. Atmosphere is also key in San Marco, the recreation of Old World Italy. Vino e Caffè offers European wine, espresso, cappuccino and biscotti, and the Italian Pavilion hosts modern-day opera alongside a traditional menu.

Howl-O-Scream, from Sept. 16 to Oct. 30, brings Halloween to life. Catch the Jack's nightmare express for a frightening train ride or find your way through the Curse of Pompeii maze.

More information, including ticket purchasing, can be found at www.buschgardens.com/va.

Presidents Park: A unique feature of Williamsburg, Presidents Park, is comprised of 18-20 foot tall statues of all 43 presidents. Historical information at the park spans from the first permanent settlement at Jamestown in 1607 until today. Five different themed tours concentrate on the presidents from different points of view, including religion, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, assassinations and near-misses, human rights, civil rights and slavery, and protecting the nation. The park is open from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. Adult admission is \$9.75. The park is located at 211 Water Country Parkway. For more information call 800-588-437.



Experience Hampton Roads



The Hampton Roads area may be best known for sun, surf and sand, but there is more to the region than just the Virginia Beach oceanfront. The Hampton Roads area is perfect for a mini vacation for the average College student. Hampton Roads consists of Newport News, Hampton, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Chesapeake, Norfolk and Virginia Beach. Depending on how far from the College, the cities vary from 20 minutes to an hour and a half away (with traffic, it may be a little more). Yorktown, which is about 10 minutes outside of Williamsburg, has many fun activities year round, which are perfect if transportation isn't available and the bus is the only way to get around.

Norfolk is considered the "downtown" of Hampton Roads. Norfolk is home to the Chrysler Museum, the premier art gallery of the area. The museum has several collections, such as 20th century art and European art and sculptures. A new policy allows all college students with a valid ID into the museum for free. Make sure to visit on the weekend, the museum is closed Mondays and Tuesdays. In addition, the Norfolk Botanical Gardens has over 15 gardens to explore and admire. Norfolk is famous for the largest naval base in the world: the Norfolk Naval Station. The Naval Station gives tours to anyone interested. E-mail navytour@pinn.net or call (757) 444-7955 for more information. For even more Navy-related fun, step aboard the USS Wisconsin in downtown Norfolk and visit the adjoining musesum.

For anyone interested in skateboarding, **Chesapeake** has a new skate park open to the public. A visitor's pass is required, which can be picked up at any Community Center. Kayak tours are also available at Lake Drummond in the heart of the Great Dismal Swamp. The cheapest tour is \$40, and it includes a two and a half hour trip to Back Bay, First Landing, the Northwest River, Plum Tree Island, West Neck creek and the Blackwater River. For more pricing and reservations, look at their website at www.tidewateradventures.com/main.php.

For history lovers, **Yorktown** is the perfect place to explore the wonders of the Revolutionary War. There are the York County Historical Museum, Yorktown Battlefield and the Yorktown Victory Center. At the Yorktown Battlefield, tour groups are shown a brief film about Yorktown and the Revolutionary War and are taken around the battlefields and shown highlights, such as the surrender of Cornwallis to George Washington. At the Yorktown Victory Center, there is a re-enacted encampment and tour groups can experience a soldier's life on the battlefield. For more information regarding times, reservations and transportation, check out www.yorkcounty.gov/yhcm, www.nps.gov/colo and www.historyisfun.org.

According to Expedia.com, Ramada Inn on Atlantic Avenue in Virginia Beach has rooms for as low as \$55 per night, and the Rodeway Inn, which is one block away from the oceanfront, has rooms for as low as \$57 per night.

In Norfolk, the Clarion James Madison hotel has rates as low as \$82 per night, and the Omni Hotel in Newport News has rates of \$117 per night. The Omni Hotel is connected to Middy's, the newly renovated nightclub that is all the rage in Hampton Roads.

The Hampton Roads Transit, known as HRT, travels across the entire Hampton Roads area, from Newport News to the Virginia Beach

Oceanfront.

Whether you're looking for a relaxing vacation or an exciting adventure for fall break, Hampton Roads is guaranteed to satiate any thirst. From the ocean and boardwalk to the museum and festivals, the cities and events in Hampton Roads are indeed worth the short trip for fall break, especially if a change of scenery is needed.

Start making reservations early, though; Hampton Roads is a popular spot for mini vacations and hotel room prices increase if reserved at the last minute. Check out www.expedia.com or www.travelocity.com for cheap rates on good hotels.

—C.H.

Virginia Beach has a ton of fun activities year round. If you aren't in the mood for beaching it the entire fall break, don't worry. There is the Virginia Marine Science Museum with exhibits of sea turtles, seals, and a crocodile named Pip. The museum also boasts an IMAX theater, showing nature movies about sharks, safaris and the like. Peabody's, one of the most popular nightclubs, is at the heart of the oceanfront. For food, Mahi Mah's offers some of the best seafood on the oceanfront right on the beach.

The Mariners' Museum is an early exploration-themed museum with exhibits of early ships and the USS Monitor in **Newport News**. There is also the Virginia Living Museum, with displays of swamp animals and Chesapeake Bay wildlife. "The Stargazer" is showing at the Virginia Living Museum. It tells the story of a little boy and his wonder and fascination with the universe. Oct. 7 and 8, an Edgar Allan Poe interpreter will read some of Poe's most famous works at the Lee Hall Mansion. The event is \$15 per person. Look at their website, www.leehall.org, for more information. For less educational fun, visit the Patrick Henry Mall or any of the major retail centers nearby for consumer goods you can't find in Williamsburg.

In Yorktown, there is a **Haunting Cruise** (www.yorktownhauntingscruise.com) available at 8:30 pm every Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Connecting the Eastern Shore to South Hampton Roads is the 23-mile **Chesapeake Bay-Bridge Tunnel**. Concerts across the area include **Ashlee Simpson** Oct. 8 at the NorVa in Norfolk. In Virginia Beach, there is the **Back Bay Wildlife Refuge**, with tours of endangered animals and canoeing. In Hampton, the new **Saddle Ridge** is a cowboy-themed nightclub for ages 18 and up. For transportation, the **Hampton Roads Transit** provides bus services for the Hampton Roads area. For fares and schedule information, call 757-222-6100.



A Capitol Idea

Museums, shopping and fun in D.C.

As the nation's capital, Washington, D.C. and the greater metropolitan area has a lot of options for students who will be in the area during fall break. From the Northern Virginia area to the National Mall, there are countless activities to do over the course of the four-day weekend.

Because the area is so large and dense, hotel accommodations can be found in a wide price range. Staying in NoVa. or Maryland is a good option for those on a tighter budget. You can use the Metro, the public transportation system, to reach the city. While more expensive, a more centrally located hotel within the District of Columbia will help save time and money on transportation to events.

For those who wish to go sightseeing, historic monuments are located throughout the city, including the National World War II Memorial and Vietnam War Memorial. The National Mall is the most popular and concentrated loca-

tion for sightseeing, especially because there is no charge to enter the National Zoo and the sixteen other museums run by the Smithsonian Institution. A few Smithsonian museums, such as the National Portrait Gallery, will be closed for renovations, but for the most part things will be running as usual. There are close to a dozen special exhibitions at various Smithsonian museums that will be open during the fall break. One such highlight will be a series of film festivals featuring Hawaiian and Korean films, hosted by the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and Freer Gallery of Art. Information regarding all Smithsonian events can be found at www.smithsonian.org.

After suffering for the past few weeks through the minimal shopping opportunities of Williamsburg, the many options of the D.C. area may be a shock to some. Tysons Corner Centre, which has recently opened an extensive new wing, and Tysons Galleria in McLean,

Va. offer hundreds of stores ranging from Saks Fifth Avenue and Lacoste to Old Navy and Payless. The Shops at Georgetown Park in the District offer more unique boutiques as well as traditional stores. Throughout the area, there are a multitude of other malls and stores to meet any shopping need.

For a vacation that is more wild and fun than historical, nightlife in the District offers a whole new assortment of activities. The many nightclubs ensure that there is always something happening during the weekend, while others will have DJs playing music for open dance floors. Be sure to go clubbing earlier in the break though, because most clubs are open only Thursday through Sunday. For more information about nightclubs, go to www.hot995.com and follow the links to scene and then clubs.

—A.H.

Tysons Corner Center is just finishing its new expansion. Fall break will be a great chance to check out the new stores. The expansion features a 16-screen AMC megaplex with stadium seating, four fine dining restaurants and many new stores. Among the highlights are Five Guys Burgers and Fries, Banana Republic Petites and H&M Mens. Other additions include REUHL, the new Abercrombie concept store, which opened late in the summer.

Public transportation makes D.C. easily accessible. Metro stations are located throughout the District and into Maryland. and Northern Va. The Metro runs from 5 a.m. weekdays and 7 a.m. weekends until midnight Sundays through Thursdays and 3 a.m. Fridays and Saturdays. Fares range from \$1.35 to \$3.90, and tickets can be purchased at any station. More information can be found at <http://www.wmata.com>.

Concerts in the D.C. area

Saturday Oct. 8 at 8 p.m.
Sir Paul McCartney is performing at the MCI Center. Tickets range from \$49 to \$253 and can be purchased at www.ticketmaster.com.

Saturday Oct. 8 at 6:30 p.m. **Tribute to the Troops** is performing at Nissan Pavilion. The concert, sponsored by country music station WMZQ, features Montgomery Gentry, Chely Wright and Keith Anderson. Reserved tickets are \$29.50 to \$39.50 and lawn tickets are \$20; they can be purchased at www.ticketmaster.com.

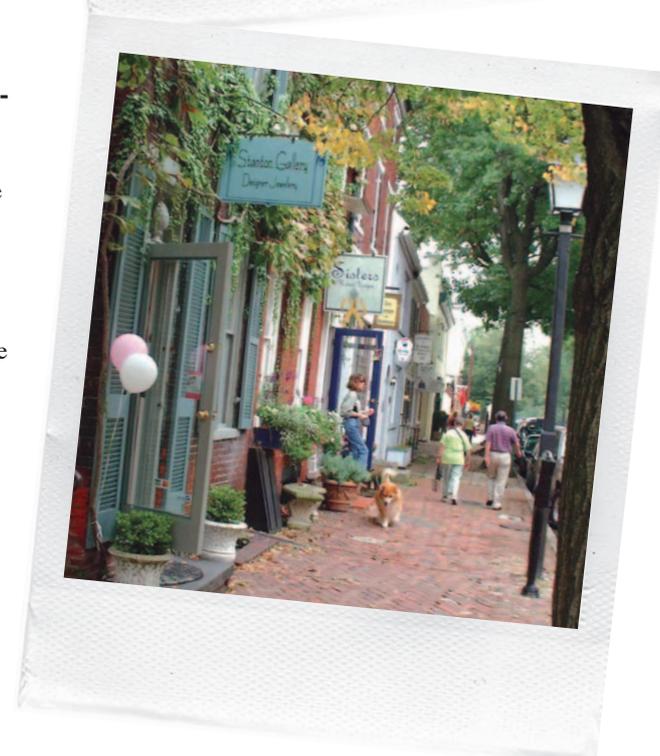
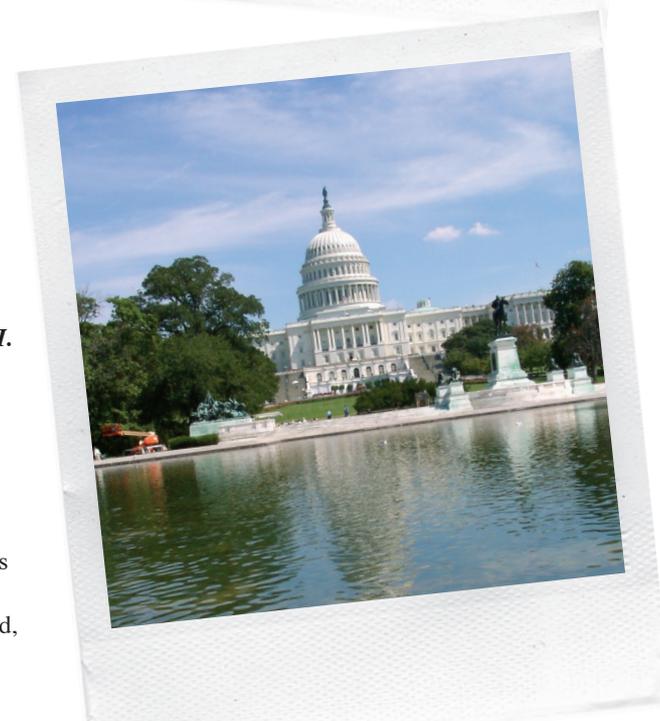
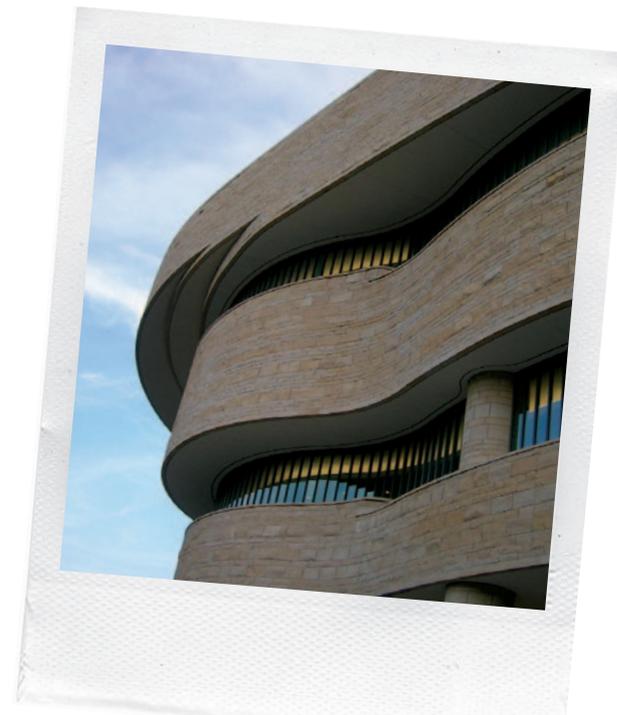
Sunday Oct. 9 at 6 p.m. **Story of the Year** is performing on the main stage at Sonor, in Baltimore, Md. Performing beforehand will be **Funeral for a Friend, Anberlin** and **He is Legend**. Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased through www.ticketmaster.com.

Monday Oct. 10 at 7:30 p.m. the **Foo Fighters** and **Weezer** are performing together at the GMU Patriot Center in Fairfax, Va. Tickets are \$45 and are on sale through www.ticketmaster.com and www.930.com.

The **International Spy Museum**, located at 800 F Street between 7th and 8th Streets, is one of the most popular non-Smithsonian attractions. The museum has information on what it refers to as the "second oldest profession," from spy technology over the past 50 years to over 200 spy gadgets. Museum-goers can learn about bugs and other technology, as well as disguises developed by Hollywood for the CIA. The closest Metro Station is Gallery Place/Chinatown, on the Red, Yellow and Green lines. It's open from 10 a.m. until 8 p.m. every day with the average visit lasting two hours. Tickets cost \$13 with a college ID and can be purchased at www.spymuseum.com.

Another option is the **National Museum of the American Indian**. The newest addition to the mall, it opened just over a year ago. The exhibitions reflect the great diversity of the native peoples of the Americas and feature historic and contemporary objects. For a unique cafeteria experience, try the Mitsitam Native Foods Café. All food is inspired by indigenous culinary traditions. It is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The closest Metro station is L'Enfant Plaza. Like all Smithsonian museums, entrance is free.

Want to get out of the 'burg, but scared you will miss it? If so, **Old Town Alexandria** is your locale of choice. The area's colonial history and downtown (but still sort of small town) excitement are the perfect combination for an escape. Visit King Street for pubs, restaurants and ice cream shops, as well as a number of exciting street performers. For a romantic evening, walk east toward the Potomac and sit on its banks. If you want culture, check out the Torpedo Factory. Formerly a WWII torpedo factory, it is now an art gallery and houses local artists' studios.



Top: National Museum of the American Indian, photo by Whitney Winn.
Middle: U.S. Capitol building, photo by Whitney Winn. Bottom: Old Town Alexandria, photo courtesy ntlworld.com.

Choose your own adventure

Variety of adventure options in Virginia



Camping: It's still warm enough to sleep outside and Virginia offers a variety of campgrounds to suit anyone's tastes. Less experienced campers can find cabins at many of Virginia's state and national parks starting at \$61 per night. Tent sites with electricity and water hookups run from \$20, while primitive camping is around \$9. Sites are usually close to lakes, rivers, hiking trails or other activities. Visit www.dcr.virginia.gov/parks for more information on specific parks. You can rent basic camping goods from the Outdoor Equipment Rental Program at the Rec Center. For four day rentals: tent (\$18 with \$100 deposit), stove (\$12 with \$25 deposit), sleeping bag and pad (\$20 with \$110 deposit), lantern (\$8 with \$25 deposit) and cook kit (\$8 with \$25 deposit). Don't forget other basic supplies like food, water and firewood. Call x3474 to make reservations.

Sky-diving: For the thrill of a lifetime, why not try sky diving? A tandem sky dive is ideal for first-timers. You will jump from the plane at a height of 13,500 feet and experience a 50-second freefall period. Expect an instructional course beforehand and a steep price tag. A dive will cost upward of \$200, with additional fees for video and photos of the event. Skydive Suffolk www.skydivesuffolk.com

Biking: There are plenty of biking paths scattered through the state. GORP names Shenandoah National Park one of the 10 best National Parks for biking. If you don't mind sharing the road with motorists, Skyline Drive offers stunning views of the entire valley from atop the Blue Ridge mountains. In nearby George Washington National Forest there are numerous biking roads and trails. Stick close to campus and bike the Colonial Parkway or one of the six trails at York River State Park. Bikesmith of Williamsburg has some mountain bikes available for rent. Call 229-9858 for more information.

White-Water Rafting: You can raft as close as Richmond, Va. or make the trek out to West Virginia. The James River in Richmond offers class I-IV whitewater making it the only US city with class IV rapids in its city limits. Richmond Raft (www.richmondraft.com) gives guided tours for rafts of three to six people. The four-hour tour runs Fridays to Sundays at 1 p.m. and costs around \$55 per person. Other tours are available.

Appalachian trail: One-fourth of the trail lies in Virginia. There is easy hiking suitable for beginners and more difficult terrain for the experienced.



A 'rich' experience

Capital city offers many diversions

Carytown is one of Richmond's hippest neighborhoods. The action centers around nine blocks of West Cary Street. One of the highlights is the historic **Byrd Theatre** at 2908 West Cary Street. Around since 1928, the theater preserves the original decor and continues to show mainstream and alternative movies. Every

Saturday at midnight, there is a classic film shown for only \$3. Call (804) 353-9911 for showtimes.

The area also has more than 25 places to eat ranging from casual bars to fine dining. The shopping is also superb. There are over 40 stores including many upscale clothing boutiques and vintage thrift stores.

You definitely don't want to miss the store **For the Love of Chocolate** that sells any kind of chocolate you can think of. To see it all, your best bet is to park at one end and walk up one side and back the other. To get there take I-64 West to I-195 North and take the Cary Street exit.

The Richmond area offers some of the best shopping close to Williamsburg. **Short Pump Town Center** houses many upscale stores including Nordstrom, J. Crew and Express. Restaurants include the Funny Bone comedy club and the new Cheesecake Factory. Nearby there is a 14-screen Regal movie theater and an ice skating rink. Take I-64 West to exit 178A. The mall is down Short Pump Broad Street West street on the right.

For the first time, Richmond plays host to the **67th Annual National Folk Festival**. Located downtown along the James River, the event brings together many diverse groups to showcase the country's various traditions. There will be seven stages featuring music and dance, instrument makers, parades, puppet shows and regional and ethnic foods. Performers include Ralph Stanley and the Clinch Mountain Boys, Dervish and Mountain Heart. It takes place from 6 to 10:30 p.m. Friday, Oct. 7, noon to 10:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 8 and noon to 6 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 10. The festival will stretch from 2nd to 7th Streets and from Byrd Street to the riverfront. Admission is free.

One of the most cherished attractions in Richmond is **Monument Avenue**, cobble-stoned street feature statues of famous men of the confederacy as well as tennis legend Arthur Ashe.

For an educational experience, try the **Science Museum of Virginia** on West Broad Street. Some of the museum's permanent exhibits include "Bioscope: A Journey Into Life," "Computer Bits & Pieces" and "Matter and Molecules." The museum also shows current IMAX films. It's open Monday through Saturday from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. General admission is \$10, with IMAX priced separately.



Top: Canoeing, photo courtesy W&M Rec Sports. MIDDLE: Biking, photo courtesy www.dulwich.org.uk. BOTTOM: Brown's Island, Richmond, Va., photo courtesy www.richmondriverfront.com.

Going places

Travel beyond the Commonwealth

The four-day fall break is barely enough time to recover from midterm stress, but it does allow plenty of time to take a mini-vacation. Why limit yourself to lounging around at home? A trip to a more exotic locale will refresh your spirits and provide a more interesting story when you get back to campus.

Some destinations are out of the question as far as time is concerned. Sure, you could probably make it to Sydney, Australia, but you'll be spending more time in airplanes than in the city (not to mention the \$2200 price tag). Don't rule out everywhere beyond the Eastern seaboard, however. Airline tickets to major

hubs can be pretty cheap, especially if you plan ahead. Try places like Chicago, Nashville, Los Angeles or Orlando.

You also can shoot for places a little closer to home. Driving or taking a bus or train is cheaper in most cases. Philadelphia, New York, Knoxville and the Outer Banks aren't too far away.

Even if the travel itself is inexpensive, you still have to worry about someplace to sleep. This is the perfect opportunity to call up that friend from high school you promised to visit. Bonus if they go to school in a fun city. Just make sure you clear the logistics with your friend before you show up at the door.

If you can't make arrangements (or all your friend go to school in Virginia), don't give up. Hotels can be found for reasonable prices. Some major cities even have youth hostels. Save the most by going with friends to split the cost. An online travel site like www.kayak.com is a good place to start looking for bargains. Bear in mind that the cheapest place may be outside the city and require public transportation to get downtown.

Below are just a few options to consider. When planning and executing your own trip, remember to be creative and flexible.

—W.W.

New York City: The bustling Big Apple is full of fun things to do, especially for college students. For a quick trip, try hitting the major tourist destinations. A trip to Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty is \$11.50, while one to the top of the Empire State Building is \$16. Score cheap theater tickets at the TKTS booth in Times Square after 3 p.m. Also check out Central Park, Rockefeller Center, Chinatown and the other Williamsburg, a trendy Brooklyn neighborhood.

Get there: \$75 r/t on the Greyhound, only \$55 if you can leave from D.C.

Where to stay: Pay as little as \$30 per night at the Hostelling International hostel (www.hinewyork.org). A room package (includes breakfast and tours) at the YMCA costs \$248 (212-579-7684).

Eats: Don't miss classic New York pizza and a cupcake from the Magnolia Bakery (401 Bleecker St.).

Boston, Mass.: If you can't get enough colonial history in the 'burg, Boston is just your cup of tea. Stop by Faneuil Hall to see where Sam Adams and other revolutionaries gave speeches about American independence. While you're in the area, visit Quincy Market for food and shopping. The two-and-a-half mile long Freedom Trail is a walking trail through the downtown area. Starting in Boston Commons, it's clearly marked with a red line on the ground. Other places to see include Fenway Park (\$12 for a tour), Newbury Street, Cambridge and the Museum of Fine Arts (\$13 for students).

Get there: \$124 r/t on the Greyhound, but it'll take you over 14 hours. AirTran flies direct to Logan International from Newport News for as little as \$248.

Where to stay: The Hostelling International hostel offers beds starting at \$32 per night (www.bostonhostel.org).

Eats: Try some seafood, especially New England clam chowder or a piece of Boston cream pie.

Topsail Island, N.C.: For a classic beach vacation, the Outer Banks fits the bill. Spend the days lounging by the water and the nights hanging out with friends.

How to get there: The best way to get to Topsail Island, N.C. is driving. All you have to do is fill up your gas tank and take Route 17 South. It's only a five hour drive to the island, which allows for a fun road trip with friends as precursor to all the fun guaranteed once you hit the beach.

Where to stay: There are a series of non-chain hotels all across the island, ranging from sketchy to luxurious. Places like the Seashell Hotel have a price range of \$50-\$100. Additionally, there is always the option of renting a house for the weekend.

Las Vegas, N.V.: Sin City is great for a short visit, especially if you're over 21. Each casino has its own charm. If you're looking for high class, the Bellagio is your best bet, while the Palms is best known for its hedonistic nightlife. For entertainment on the cheap, see the Mirage's volcano nightly between 7 p.m. and midnight or one of the fountain shows at Caesars Forum Shops every hour on the hour. To get the full Vegas experience, splurge on a show — Celine Dion will set you back over \$115 (www.vegas.com).

Get there: Southwest flies direct from Norfolk from as little as \$248.

Where to stay: Check travel web sites for travel packages and other deals on hotels. Orbitz offers rooms starting at \$31 per night at the Lady Luck Casino Hotel.

Eats: Try the ubiquitous all-you-can-eat buffet. The Rio offers one highlighting world cuisine.

West Virginia rafting: For the more adventurous among us, white water rafting offers a refreshing change of pace from the boredom of our everyday lives. Consider lacing up your life jacket and putting on those ridiculous water shoes for some serious action. The best part is, some of the best rafting in the eastern United States can be found close by. West Virginia in particular offers an array of world-class rapids and rafting trips to satisfy anyone from the novice to the thrill-seeker. Both the New and the Gauley rivers are especially well-known and offer more challenging rapids in October than in the summer months, and the best part is that a Gauley release is scheduled for fall break. A survey of Googled white water trips can be daunting, so check out the Rivermen (www.rivermen.com) and their vacation packages that combine rafting with either hiking, rock climbing, mountain biking or horseback riding.

Where to stay: Some packages include lodging and two meals per day.

Get there: The rivers are located about 15 miles north of Beckley, West Virginia and are accessible by taking I-64 West to exit 156 and then taking route 60 west to Fayetteville, about a four and one half hour drive.



Top: Quincy Market, Boston, Ma. MIDDLE: Outer Banks, N.C. BOTTOM: Chincoteague Island, Va. All photos by Allie Veinote.



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