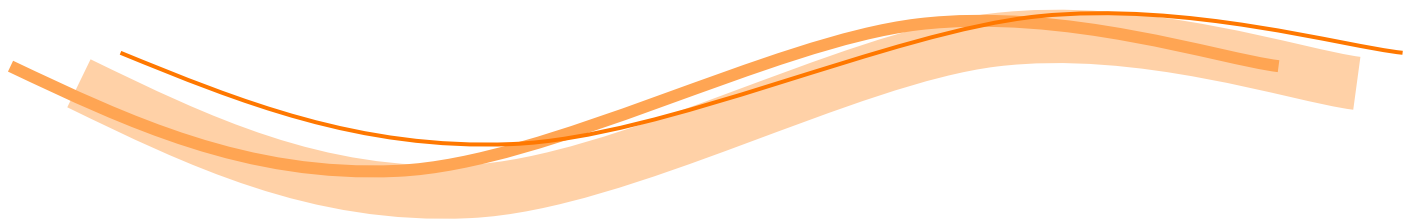




VIRGINIA'S OYSTER TRAIL





VIRGINIA'S OYSTER TRAIL & THE EASTERN SHORE

Virginia is for Lovers is about love - pure and simple. For people who love great seafood in a beautiful setting, Virginia is gaining ground as a hot destination for oyster lovers. The commonwealth - already known around the world as a top wine travel destination, is now becoming the oyster capital of the East Coast - with eight different oyster regions and status as the largest producer of fresh, farm-raised oysters in the country. The diverse flavours of Virginia oysters - from the saltiest of the waters of Chincoteague on Virginia's Eastern Shore to the sweet taste of Rappahannock River oysters and the rebirth of Lynnhaven oysters in Virginia Beach - give visitors a lot to love about oyster travel in Virginia.

The Virginia Oyster Trail

The Virginia Oyster Trail itself was launched in 2015 by Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe. The trail offers visitors a way to enjoy the glorious Atlantic coastline of the state whilst discovering outdoor adventure, crafts and culture, southern cuisine, history and so much more in this fascinating corner of Virginia.

Eight Oyster Regions to Explore

Virginia's eight different oyster regions stretch from the length of Virginia's Eastern Shore, into the Chesapeake Bay, coastal rivers and down to the Lynnhaven Inlet of Virginia Beach. Waterman hauling the day's harvest from the waters are a regular site in each of these destinations, as are local restaurants serving the freshest oysters around. Visitors will discover local seafood purveyors.

Virginia Oysters - Tastes from Salty to Sweet

Much like wine, oysters take on the flavour of the area in which they are grown. The tastes of Virginia oysters are so distinctive that the Virginia Marine Products Board has created a Tasting Guide for Virginia Oysters - available free at www.VirginiaOysters.org This guide outlines the variety of flavours from salty to buttery to sweet and where visitors can find each flavor.

Oyster Festivals

Oysters are celebrated all along Virginia's Coastal Region including two major annual oyster festivals. Each October the northern end of Virginia's Eastern Shore celebrates the saltiest of oysters at the Chincoteague Oyster Festival. Oysters and seafood abound as do family games, live entertainment and small town charm. Each November, the lovely town of Urbanna, found on the Rappahannock River, throws the country's largest and longest-running oyster festival called the Urbanna Oyster Festival. The town's streets are closed to vehicle traffic and become filled with oyster booths,

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	<p>festival food, music and crafts. The festival highlight is the oyster shucking contest which draws spectators from around the world.</p> <p>Rappahannock River Oysters - Tour the Merroir At Rappahannock River Oyster Company in Topping, the staff will take visitors on a tour of the aquaculture program that is putting this family-owned company on the oyster map. These farm-raised oysters are part of the company's mission to improve the health of the Chesapeake Bay through oysters, which are a natural filter. Merroir, the restaurant and oyster tasting room, is literally feet from the water where the oysters are harvested, making for the freshest lunch or dinner one could ever imagine.</p> <p>Getting to Grips with Oysters - Activities As you travel the beautiful coastline you will have lots of opportunities to learn about and interact with oyster culture. Along the way there are historic sites and museums to provide interpretation. This is wonderful countryside to wander where you please and of an evening there are also many locally-owned lodgings in the Virginia Chesapeake Bay, Eastern Shore and Coastal Virginia regions to meet the needs of travellers. These include cosy bed & breakfasts, campsites, cabins, historic inns and boutique hotels.</p> <p>A good starting point to plan your journey is the Virginia Oyster Trail website at www.virginiaoystertrail.com And to learn more about oyster travel in Virginia, visit www.Virginia.org/oysters.</p>
Location	<p>Located midway between New York and Florida, Virginia is the gateway to the South. It is also sometimes classified in the Mid-Atlantic region. The Commonwealth is bordered by Washington, D.C., the USA capital, and Maryland to the north; the Atlantic Ocean to the east; North Carolina and Tennessee to the south; and West Virginia and Kentucky to the west.</p>
Geography	<p>The southwest of Virginia is a beautiful landscape of rolling green ridges that rise from the Atlantic Ocean and its Barrier Islands to the coastal plain and on towards the higher and higher peaks of the Appalachian Mountains.</p>
Name	<p>Named after Elizabeth I, Queen of England 1558-1603</p>
Population	<p>6.9 million</p>
Language	<p>English</p>
Currency	<p>US Dollar (the Canadian Dollar stands at 76 cents US as at October 2016)</p>
Tippling	<p>Tippling is expected: 15% where appropriate</p>
Government	<p>Democracy</p>
Documentation	<p>Passports are required</p>

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Time zone	Eastern Standard Time
Health	Fine medical facilities - but take travel insurance as medical treatment in the US can be very expensive.
Safety tips	Normal caution whilst travelling

CLIMATE	
General climate	Mild with four distinct seasons
Today's weather	24 degrees Centigrade and sunny in Virginia Beach, Virginia as October 3 rd 2016
Best time to visit	Spring and fall are especially beautiful

GETTING THERE	
Flying time	<p>Flying time: just 65 minutes from Toronto and 2 hours from Montreal</p> <p>Airports: Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport and Washington Dulles International Airport, both located in Virginia, are major gateways.</p> <p>Porter fly four times a day to Washington-Dulles directly from Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport – this is the ideal service for Northern and Eastern Virginia and I can personally recommend it from my recent experience flying Porter on my trip to explore Virginia's Oyster Trail. Go here for more details of this service: https://www.flyporter.com/Flights-To/Washington?culture=en-CA</p>
Cities	<p>All the cities of Northern Virginia – Virginia's Cultural Region – are close by and of course Washington DC itself is on the doorstep.</p> <p>Within the Eastern Shore Region, Virginia Beach is the principal centre.</p> <p>Virginia Beach Population 450,000 Located on the Atlantic Ocean at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay, Virginia Beach is included in the Hampton Roads metropolitan area. This area, known as "America's First Region", also includes the independent cities of Chesapeake, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Suffolk, as well as other smaller cities, counties, and towns of Hampton Roads.</p> <p>Virginia Beach is a resort city with kilometres of beaches and hundreds of hotels, motels, and restaurants along its oceanfront. Every year the city hosts the East Coast Surfing Championships as well as the North American Sand Soccer Championship, a beach soccer tournament. It is also home to several state parks, several long-protected beach areas, three military bases, a number of large corporations, two universities, International headquarters and numerous historic sites. Near the point where the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean meet, Cape Henry was the site of the first landing of the English colonists, who eventually settled in Jamestown, on April 26, 1607.</p>

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	<p>The city is listed in the Guinness Book of Records as having the longest pleasure beach in the world. It is located at the southern end of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel, the longest bridge-tunnel complex in the world.</p> <p>Many visitors don't realize that Virginia Beach is not just a beach; it's actually made up of several unique beach experiences, each with their own distinct personality, and a vibrant Town Centre.</p> <p>Events happen almost every weekend, but some of the most popular include the Boardwalk Art Show, Neptune Festival, the East Coast Surfing Championship and the Rock 'N' Roll Half Marathon! Virginia's most popular state park, First Landing State Park, features trails for hiking and biking, camp sites, swimming and rental sports equipment. Some of Virginia's most visited attractions are in Virginia Beach, such as the Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center, Cape Henry Lighthouses, the Association for Research & Enlightenment as well as the Ocean Breeze Waterpark.</p> <p>For the outdoor enthusiast, Virginia Beach offers sports fishing charters, SCUBA and snorkeling, surfing and sailing for the beginner with expert instruction and rental equipment. Biking along the Virginia Beach Boardwalk and Back Bay National Refuge, hiking and watching wildlife at North River Landing Natural Area, and just hanging out at oceanside make Virginia Beach a prime family vacation spot!</p>
Distances	Virginia is a 12 hour drive south of Montreal and Toronto
Trains	Virginia Railway Express www.vre.org Amtrak www.amtrak.com
Car Rental	Viaroute www.viaroute.com
Buses	Greyhound www.greyhound.com
Passes	Passes are available for many of the historical sites – see www.virginia.org for details

<p>ACCOMMODATION TYPES</p>	<p>There is every type of accommodation available on the Eastern Shore from pretty B & B's to motels to five star hotels. I can recommend the following from my recent trip to the region:</p> <p>The Tides Inn 480 King Carter Drive · Irvington, VA 22480 T: 804-438-4451 Idyllically located where the Chesapeake Bay Wine Trail meets the Virginia Oyster Trail, the Tides invites you to indulge in infinite activities, Tides-to-Table dining and unforgettable fun. http://www.tidesinn.com</p> <p>Ocean Beach Club 3401 Atlantic Ave. Virginia Beach, VA 23451</p>
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	<p>T: (757) 213-0601</p> <p>This is a stylish oceanfront hotel VA beach that towers over the north end of the iconic Virginia Beach Boardwalk. Graced with calming Caribbean design touches and a relaxed aura, Ocean Beach Club stands out among other hotels in Virginia Beach by offering the elegant extras you'd expect at a four-star resort.</p> <p>http://www.vacationrentalsvabeach.com/oceanbeachclub</p> <p>Williamsburg Lodge 310 South England Street, Williamsburg, VA 23185 T: (757) 220-7976</p> <p>Enjoy a relaxing hotel escape in the heart of the Revolutionary City. Just steps from the action, the inviting lodge boasts a world-class restaurant and convenient access to spa and golf recreation amenities. Admission ticket discounts and special daily events are also available.</p> <p>https://www.colonialwilliamsburg.com/stay/williamsburg-lodge/</p>
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LIFESTYLE GROUPS	
Kids	All the attractions here have plenty of hands-on kid's activities to keep the little ones amused. The hotels too are very child friendly, many with pools and supervised child minding facilities.
Teens	Most teens are interested in the beach and ocean activities on offer in this part of Virginia.
Romance	"Virginia is for lovers"! says it all...
Honeymoons & Weddings	Wonderful resorts and settings for weddings and honeymoons abound in Virginia. Depending upon the location of your hotel, you can watch the sun rise or set over the coastal waters of Virginia!
Zoomers	The slower pace of life in the countryside and the fascinating historical sights make this a great state to visit for Zoomer travel. Of course the cuisine and the wineries don't hurt either!

UNIQUES	
Surprising	<p>Deborah Pratt - oyster shucking champion</p> <p>It's at the Urbanna Oyster Festival where visitors can find Deborah Pratt - the fastest woman oyster shucker in the world. Pratt holds multiple world titles in oyster-shucking and continues to compete against men and women alike at contests throughout the world. Come watch her skills in Urbanna as she takes on the competition and shares oyster shucking tips with anyone who asks.</p> <p>White Boots – oysterman kit</p> <p>Sometimes called Guinea boots, Tidewater tennis shoes, Chesapeake Bay house slippers, or just sea boots (depending on the region of</p>

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	<p>Virginia) white boots are as much a symbol of oyster culture as wind-kissed cheeks and salt-chapped, calloused hands. Less expensive than other boots, easier to clean, cooler on the feet in the sun, and less likely to scuff the deck of the boat - white boots are worn by oysterman out of necessity, community and tradition.</p>
<p>History</p>	<p>Colonial Era: The Virginia Company sailed from England to try and establish the first permanent English colony in the New World. Their instructions were to settle Virginia, find gold and a water route to the Orient. The explorers landed on Jamestown Island on the banks of the James River on May 14, 1607.</p> <p>Virginia is the site of the first permanent English-speaking settlement in North America at Jamestown in 1607. Here, the English met the Powhatans, a chiefdom of Algonquian Indians who lived in central and eastern Virginia. The New World's first English women and Africans came to Jamestown in 1619, the year and place where the Western Hemisphere's first representative legislature met.</p> <p>Virginia was the largest, most populous and prosperous of the original 13 colonies.</p> <p>Virginia leaders including George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, George Mason and Patrick Henry, played a major role in the Revolutionary War-era events and in the writing of documents such as the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights.</p> <p>At Yorktown on Oct. 19, 1781, British forces under General Charles Cornwallis surrendered to the combined French and American forces serving under the command of General George Washington.</p> <p>Virginia is called the Mother of States & Mother of Presidents: Eight states were formed in whole or in part from Virginia, including Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, West Virginia, Kentucky and Pennsylvania. Virginia has produced more U.S. presidents than any other state: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, William Henry Harrison, John Tyler, Zachary Taylor and Woodrow Wilson.</p> <p>More major battles of the American Civil War were fought in Virginia from 1861 through 1865 than in any other state. Today, one-third of America's most important Civil War battlefields are in Virginia, and most are open to the public.</p>
<p>Books</p>	<p>Dr James Horne is a leading expert on early America, and author and editor of six books, including A Land As God Made It: Jamestown and the Birth of America (2005) and A Kingdom Strange: The Brief and Tragic History of the Lost Colony of Roanoke (2010).</p> <p>Lonely Planet's USA Guide is my go-to guide for all US destinations.</p>
<p>1000 Places to see before you die in</p>	<p>Shenandoah Valley – between the Allegheny Mountains and the Blue Ridge Mountains</p>

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<p>Virginia</p>	<p>Monticello – home of Thomas Jefferson Colonial Williamsburg – open-air living history museum recreating 1750-1775 end of colonial era The Inn at Little Washington The Homestead hotel</p>
<p>Must Sees</p>	<p>Jamestown On May 14th, 1607 104 male settlers arrive at the site they name “James Cittie” and establish the first permanent English settlement in North America. They have crossed the Atlantic in six months on the Godspeed, the Discovery and the Susan Constant, commanded by Captain Christopher Newport. The opening of sealed instructions from the Virginia Company reveals 13 people will form a ruling council, including Capt. John Smith who had been imprisoned for mutiny during the voyage.</p> <p>Jamestown Rediscovery began archaeological excavations on the Preservation Virginia land on April 4, 1994, at a place between the 17th century brick church tower and the James River. Within three archaeological seasons, project leader Dr. William Kelso and the Jamestown Rediscovery team had uncovered enough evidence to prove the remains of James Fort existed on dry land. Today a dozen staff members excavate, interpret, preserve, conserve, and research the site's findings. The team has mapped thousands of archaeological features such as post holes, ditches, wells, foundations, graves, and pits. More than 2 million unearthed artifacts require the curation and conservation environment provided by the state-of-the-art, on-site Rediscovery Research Center.</p> <p>Three times in recent years the findings of Jamestown Rediscovery have made Archaeology Magazine’s annual list of the 10 most important finds in the world. In 2010 Archaeology Magazine recognized the rediscovery of the footprint of the fort’s 1608 church, the first significant English church structure in North America. In 2013 the magazine acknowledged the team’s discovery of the bones of “Jane,” which are the first forensic proof of survival cannibalism in any European colony in North America. In 2015 Jamestown was selected for the identification of four prominent leaders buried in the chancel of the 1608 church and the discovery of a mysterious reliquary in one of the graves.</p> <p>Jamestown Rediscovery is part of an independent non-profit. The rest of Jamestown Island has been owned by the National Park Service since the 1930s. The “Jamestown Settlement” living history museum is on the mainland and is operated by the Commonwealth of Virginia.</p>

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SPORTS ACTIVITIES	
Golf	<p>The Old Dominion has some of the country's best classic designs and modern layouts. It has one of the world's great mountain courses (the Cascades Course at The Omni Homestead Resort) and one of the world's great golf destinations (Williamsburg, ranked No. 24 in the world by Golf Digest). Most of the great architects have worked a plot or two of Virginia soil.</p> <p>You can find the modern wonder of the Pete Dye designed Full Cry at Keswick Hall and River Course at Kingsmill Resort, or the classic touch of Robert Trent Jones at the GoldenHorseshoe Golf Club. Golf is played in Virginia's great metropolises, its wonderfully quaint small towns and its scenic rural areas. Wherever you are in the Old Dominion, it's a sure bet you're just a few miles from a great golf experience. Plus, there is plenty to do beyond the course.</p> <p>Virginia is home to the world's longest resort beach (45 kms of Virginia Beach shoreline), the world's largest shipbuilding city (Newport News), the Clam Capital of the World (Chincoteague), the Apple Capital of the World (Winchester), and Virginia is now also known as the Oyster Capital of the East Coast.</p> <p>All of this lays the framework for the most diverse menu of golf courses any state on the East Coast offers. No state can match Virginia for quality and diversity, and one needs to look no further than the top of the list of the state's 220 public courses. The Highlands Course at Primland Resort and the Cascades Course at The Homestead are two of the nation's finest mountain courses. The Jack Nicklaus Course and Arnold Palmer Course at Bay Creek Resort are two magnificent sea level courses. The Golden Horseshoe Golf Club's classic Gold Course in Williamsburg is one of the nation's finest resort courses. Laurel Hill in Lorton is one of the nation's best municipal courses. Golf magazines have ranked Williamsburg and the Virginia mountains among the 50 best golf destinations in the world.</p>
Fishing	<p>Virginia offers excellent, extremely diverse freshwater angling opportunities. Over 176,000 acres of public lakes and 50,000 kms of fishable streams provide every freshwater angler something: tidal river for largemouth bass, striped bass, blue catfish and shad; unsurpassed float fishing smallmouth bass rivers spread across the state; expansive reservoirs renowned for largemouth bass, striped bass, and crappie; numerous "close-to-home" small, family fishing lakes and ponds with great chances to land bass, sunfish, and channel catfish; and phenomenal stocked and wild trout fishing in the Blue Ridge and Allegheny mountains.</p>
Horse riding	<p>There is great trail riding in Virginia's many parks.</p>
Hiking	<p>Virginia is a hiker's paradise - whether it's a walk through coastal marshes or a rugged jaunt along the famed Appalachian Trail, Virginia</p>

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	<p>has a footpath for everyone. Trails for all abilities offer stunning views, flowing cascades, rhododendron and large hemlock trees. More details are at www.Virginia.org/outdoors .</p> <p>Virginia Beach’s Boardwalk Today's Boardwalk is nine metres wide and stretches five kilometres featuring a separate bike path, making it ideal for strolling, rollerblading and biking. Entertainment is offered nightly during the summer months and four oceanfront stages at 7th, 17th, and 24th and 31st Streets provide live musical acts. Along the boardwalk there’s a variety of quaint outdoor restaurants and vendors offering bike and surrey rentals. Nautical sculptures adorn many of the side streets which lead to Atlantic Avenue. While there, don't forget to swing by and see King Neptune – a twenty-four foot, twelve-ton bronze statue that stands at the gateway to Neptune Festival Park on 31st Street. This is perhaps one of the most popular photo opportunities in the resort area. For the people with disabilities, accessibility ramps from the boardwalk to the beach are available at every block. Located at 8th, 17th, 24th and 30th Streets are eight-foot wooden walkways that reach the water's edge. Accessible restrooms are located at 17th, 24th and 30th Streets. Handicapped parking can be found along the main thoroughfare. The Virginia Beach boardwalk has been a treasured beach hot spot for locals and tourists alike. But like a perfectly placed beach towel, the love has spread beyond our shores and throughout the country as Travel + Leisure has named the Virginia Beach Boardwalk one of America's Best Beach Boardwalks. And who could blame them? Nowhere else will you find such a perfect mix of restaurants, shops, and unforgettable beach vibes.</p>
Cycling	<p>Virginia is a destination with endless opportunities for both mountain bikers and road cyclists. From the Alleghenies to the Blue Ridge and Shenandoah Valley, Virginia is home to some of the best trails in the country for mountain biking action, and has been rated the best state in country to pedal off-road by the International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA). Die-hard road cyclists will also find what they want in Virginia, with everything from roads filled with challenging climbs through mountainous terrain to moderate trails along calm coastal flatlands.</p>
Watersports	<p>Virginia is an East Coast destination hugged by the Atlantic Ocean and is also home to the largest estuary in the United States, the Chesapeake Bay. Add in the abundance of whitewater rapids, pristine lakes and coastal rivers, and it's easy to see why Virginia is a prime watersports destination.</p> <p>Eastern Shore Splendour</p>

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	<p>Paddling enthusiasts will love will love the Eastern Shore's Virginia Seaside Water Trail. The 170 kms trail is a series of day use paddling routes that run between the Virginia National Wildlife Refuge at Cape Charles and Chincoteague Island. With 37 accessible routes ready for boaters of all abilities, the trail also includes additional segments that move through Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge and connect to Assateague National Seashore and the Assateague Canoe Trail.</p> <p>Tula Adventure Sports provides rentals, tours, lessons, and gear sales in Stand up paddleboarding, Wakeboarding, Waterskiing, Kiteboarding and Kayaking. Tubing behind the boat and private cruising tours for groups of 6 or less are also available. 2100 Marina Shores Drive, Virginia Beach, VA 23451 T:757-502-8852 http://www.virginia.org/Listings/OutdoorsAndSports/TulaAdventureSportsStandUpPaddleboardWakeboardKiteboardMore/</p>
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CULTURE	
Arts	<p>Shelling out for Oysters – Arts & Crafts Oysters inspire the artists along the Eastern Shore of Virginia. As you travel you will find galleries, retail stores and gift shops where you can buy authentic Virginia Oyster collectibles created by local artists who specifically feature the Virginia Oyster in their media. You will also discover craft and fine art studios where painters celebrate watermen and oyster subject matter as well as jewelers, sculptors and craft artisans who utilize Virginia Oyster shells in their works.</p>
Music	<p>Colonial Williamsburg The free Summer Breeze concert series celebrated its 25th year in Merchants Square July 3rd, 2016 with a special pre-Independence Day show by the United States Air Force Band, leading a lineup that combined standards with fresh new sounds. The 10 shows, sponsored by Colonial Williamsburg’s Merchants Square and Morgan Stanley Williamsburg Branch showcased genres including jazz, rock, jam, rhythm-and-blues and pop. Favourites including the Army TRADOC Band were joined this year by newcomers like Norfolk rock-and-soul sextet Major and the Monbacks.</p>
Films	<p>The popular current series “TURN: Washington’s Spies” is filmed in part at Colonial Williamsburg, which has been the backdrop to many historical dramas.</p>
Museums	<p>Barrier Island Center 7295 Young Street, Machipongo, VA. T: 757.678.5550 Located on the Eastern Shore of Virginia, just 35 kms north of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel and 17 kms south of the town of Exmore on the western side of Route 13, directly across the highway from the Machipongo Trading Company.</p>

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	<p>The mission of the Barrier Islands Center (BIC) is to preserve and perpetuate the unique culture and history of Virginia's Barrier Islands through education and the collection and interpretation of artifacts. It is a gathering place, graced by weathered porch rockers that welcome you into an art gallery and gift shop rivaling New York's finest. It is a creative educator, grounding small-town children in history and the arts while big-city kids savour a taste of country life. It is a museum that shelters yesterday's culture of the islanders and watermen, and it is a farm that follows today's best practices to cultivate the land. Yet it is, most of all, a storyteller, safeguarding the wisdom of the past for the sake of the Eastern Shore's future.</p> <p>http://www.barrierislandscenter.org</p>
<p>Festivals</p>	<p>Oysters are celebrated all along Virginia's Coastal Region including two major annual oyster festivals.</p> <p>Each October the northern end of Virginia's Eastern Shore celebrates the saltiest of oysters at the Chincoteague Oyster Festival. Oysters and seafood abound as do family games, live entertainment and small town charm.</p> <p>Each November, the lovely town of Urbanna, found on the Rappahannock River, throws the country's largest and longest-running oyster festival called the Urbanna Oyster Festival. The town's streets are closed to vehicle traffic and become filled with oyster booths, seafood dishes, music and crafts. The festival highlight is the oyster shucking contest which draws spectators from around the world.</p>

<p>ATTRACTIONS</p>	
<p>Wildlife</p>	<p>With its many parks there is a surprising amount of wildlife and birding opportunities in Virginia.</p> <p>Kayak with Dolphins Kayak Nature Tour's Dolphin Adventure in Virginia Beach allows kayakers to paddle among leaping dolphins. Departing from the north end of the Virginia Beach Oceanfront, paddlers follow the coast to a favorite dolphin playground where the Chesapeake Bay meets the Atlantic Ocean.</p> <p>http://www.virginia.org/Listings/OutdoorsAndSports/KayakNatureTours Ltd/</p>
<p>Parks</p>	<p>Virginia State Parks are consistently rated the best in the USA and have been the backdrop for perfect family vacations for more than 75 years. Visitors will find that Virginia's 35 state parks are as diverse as the state itself, with parks found along the Atlantic Ocean and Chesapeake Bay,</p>

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	<p>on historic sites, in the Blue Ridge Mountains or just outside of major cities. Here are just a couple in the area:</p> <p>First Landing State Park On April 26, 1607, 100 English settlers landed here and established the first elective government in English America before pushing up the James River to establish Jamestown. The park offers a chance to explore a unique habitat featuring lagoons, large cypress trees and rare plants. More than 35 kms of hiking trails wind through the natural area. Climate-controlled cabins, campsites, picnic areas, boat ramps and kilometres of various trails also are available. Its Chesapeake Bay Center has aquariums and a wet lab operated by the Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Center, educational displays, historic exhibits, a camp store, an amphitheatre and a Gateways Program regional welcome center. It's off U.S. 60 at Cape Henry.</p> <p>York River State Park Known for its rare and delicate estuarine environment where freshwater and saltwater meet to create a rich habitat for marine and plant life, this park is on the York River and is designated as a Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. This pristine environment offers clues to a rich natural and cultural history. Programs, activities and visitor centre displays focus on the history, use and preservation of the York River and its marshes, as well as wildlife found in the river and the park. More than 40 kms of hiking, mountain biking and equestrian trails allow visitors to explore the marsh, river shoreline and forests. A boat ramp, fresh and saltwater fishing spots, a saltwater fishing pier, playgrounds, picnic shelters, and seasonal bike, boat, and recreational equipment rentals are available.</p>
<p>Virginia's Barrier Islands</p>	<p>Barrier islands are bodies of sand, longer than they are wide, that face the ocean on one side and a lagoon on the other. They are separated from one another by inlets.</p> <p>There are two principal types of barrier islands: those formed along Coastal plains, such as the islands on the Virginia Coast and those on river Deltas, such as the Mississippi. In all cases, the islands form on flat coasts with an abundance of sand.</p> <p>Barrier islands serve two main functions. First, they protect the coastlines from severe storm damage. Second, they harbour several habitats that are refuges for wildlife.</p> <p>Along the seaside of Virginia's Eastern Shore are a chain of uninhabited barrier islands, stretching from Assateague Island at the Maryland border, to Fisherman's Island at the foot of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel.</p> <p>These 23 shifting islands of sand, as well as a swath of marshland and</p>

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	<p>lagoons, constitute one of the longest undeveloped stretches of shoreline on the East Coast. In fact, they are a global treasure: They are the longest stretch of undeveloped barrier islands in the global temperate zone</p> <p>The United Nations designated the islands as an International Biosphere Reserve</p> <p>Virginia's Barrier Islands are a crucial natural component of the Atlantic Flyway</p>
<p>Historical Sites</p>	<p>Jamestown 1368 Colonial Pkwy, Jamestown, VA 23081 T: (757) 856-1250 http://historicjamestowne.org</p> <p>When you visit Jamestown Island, you walk in the footsteps of Captain John Smith, Pocahontas, and the men and women who settled England's first permanent colony in North America. Here is the birthplace of our democracy.</p> <p>See the Moment of Discovery – Twenty years of archaeology at the original site of James Fort continue! You can see the research as it happens and perhaps witness a moment of dramatic discovery as an artifact is unearthed.</p> <p>Tour with an Archaeologist – Explore the site of the 1607 James Fort with an archaeologist that has helped uncover the remains of this first settlement. Weekdays from April – October, archaeologists excavate at the 1607 James Fort site and offer an 11 am daily tour.</p> <p>Explore the Archaearium – In this award-winning museum, visitors learn about unique objects from James Fort and the stories they tell about life for the English and Powhatan people who met and formed a new culture in Virginia. We have found more than 2 million artifacts, and here you can see more than 1,000 of the most spectacular objects.</p> <p>Pick at the Ed Shed – This new site for interactive learning and play will make young people a part of the project.</p> <p>Participate in picking through the soil that the archaeologists are exploring; you may find something for their collection!</p> <p>Meet a Settler – Encounter Anas Todkill, one of the first settlers; or Rachel Stanton and her chicken; or Captain Bruster, who will muster you into your militia duties to help protect the fort. Living history programs and tours are offered on special weekends in the spring, summer, and fall.</p> <p>Have an Adventure – Participate in Jamestown Adventures, a popular scavenger hunt game for young people. Find the clues, solve the puzzles, and receive a special prize.</p> <p>Picnic By the James River – Enjoy lunch or a snack on the banks of the James River at the Dale House Café. Dine on sandwiches, wraps, ham biscuits, soups, BBQ, or Carrot Tree Kitchens' famous carrot cake.</p> <p>Watch the Wildlife – Walk the trails and observe bald eagles, turtles,</p>

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and many varieties of indigenous wildlife that thrive on the island. Take the Island Drive – Walk, run, bike, or drive the loop road around Jamestown Island. This three and five mile one way road through the forest and around the swamps of Jamestown is awe-inspiring in its wilderness view and majestic wildlife. Stop at Black Point and take a short walk to the sandy beach. Stop at the numerous waysides and see the

"Gallery in the Woods," a series of interpretive paintings illustrating the earliest industries attempted by the settlers.

See Glassblowers In Action – See glassblowers produce wine bottles, pitchers, candleholders and various other glass objects at the Glasshouse of 1608. Witness one of England's first industries in North America. Glassblowers use tools and methods similar to those of the 17th century.

Colonial Williamsburg

101 Visitor Center Drive, Williamsburg, VA 23185 T: (888) 965-7254
<https://www.colonialwilliamsburg.com>

Colonial Williamsburg is a living-history museum and private foundation presenting part of a historic district in the city of Williamsburg, Virginia, USA. Colonial Williamsburg's 122 ha Historic Area includes buildings from the eighteenth century (during part of which the city was the capital of Colonial Virginia), as well as 17th-century, 19th-century, Colonial Revival structures and more recent reconstructions. The Historic Area is an interpretation of a colonial American city, with exhibits of dozens of restored or re-created buildings related to its colonial and American Revolutionary War history. Colonial Williamsburg's Historic Area's combination of restoration and re-creation of parts of the colonial town's three main thoroughfares and their connecting side streets attempts to suggest the atmosphere and the circumstances of 18th-century Americans. Colonial Williamsburg's motto has been "That the future may learn from the past".

One of the largest history projects in the nation and a tourist attraction, it is part of the Historic Triangle of Virginia, which includes Jamestown and Yorktown, linked by the Colonial Parkway. The site was once used for conferences by world leaders and heads of state, including U.S. presidents.

Costumed employees work and dress as people did in the era, sometimes using colonial grammar and diction. Prominent buildings include the Raleigh Tavern, the Capitol, the Governor's Palace (all reconstructed), as well as the Courthouse, the George Wythe House, the Peyton Randolph House, the Magazine, and independently owned and functioning Bruton Parish Church (all originals). Colonial Williamsburg's portion of the Historic Area begins east of the College of

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	<p>William & Mary's College Yard. Here visitors can engage with the local community and experience firsthand the daily struggles of wartime. Explore art museums, unleash your kids' inner colonists, tee off a game of golf, or relax and unwind at the Spa. Stay at one of the official Colonial Williamsburg hotels, with a variety of opportunities to shop and dine, and you'll never want to leave.</p> <p>Become a Part of the Community at War Meet the townspeople, tradespeople, shopkeepers, political figures, women, and the enslaved who call Williamsburg home—and learn of their hopes, struggles, and fears in these uncertain times. As you explore the challenges of daily life set against the backdrop of revolution, look for the many opportunities to play your role as a citizen of the Revolutionary City.</p> <p>Experience 1775 and the Beginning of the Revolution Take part as American colonists make the life-altering choice of whether to remain loyal to the British king or to fight for a free and independent nation. Join an angry mob as it storms the Governor's Palace to demand the return of the colony's gunpowder.</p> <p>Discover the Daily Challenges and Sacrifices Find out what it was like to live in a town in the midst of revolution. What were the challenges of creating a new government against the backdrop of war? Which side would you take? Take part in the events and everyday life of Williamsburg, and meet famous patriots as well as lesser-known heroes.</p> <p>Engage in Battle in the Years 1776–1781 Get caught up in the stories of struggle and hardship. Witness the arrival of news of the Declaration of Independence and join the debate over the meaning of "All men are created equal." Be there as Benedict Arnold occupies the town and imposes martial law on its people.</p>
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OTHER ACTIVITIES	
Beaches	<p>Framed by both ocean and bayside beaches, Virginia's Coastal Virginia - Eastern Shore accommodates every beach vacationer. With the Bay's gentle waters, nature trails and more than 142 campsites as well as value hotels, this is ideal for families with small children. And for couples, boutique inns and B&Bs offer romantic and adventure getaway weekends.</p> <p>Virginia's Eastern Shore — home to three notable beaches — is connected to the mainland via the 30 kms Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel, which snakes between the Atlantic Ocean and the</p>

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	<p>Chesapeake Bay. Just north-west of the Bridge-Tunnel, Kiptopeke State Park features a 24-hour accessible fishing pier, picnic areas, hiking trails, playground and a guarded swimming beach. Known for its bird watching, Kiptopeke State Park presents the Eastern Shore Birding Festival every October. Travel a few minutes north to the unique shops and beautiful bayside community of Cape Charles. See grand, historic B&Bs, golf and marina resorts and a beach right downtown.</p> <p>Sister islands of Assateague and Chincoteague are further north in Accomack County. From the island town of Chincoteague Island, a short causeway leads into the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge and to its Atlantic Ocean beach at Assateague Island National Seashore. Chincoteague Island has been given a Traveler's Choice award by TripAdvisor as one of America's Top Islands.</p> <p>The Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge provides environmental education and recreational opportunities such as biking, fishing, hunting, wildlife observation, interpretation, and wildlife photography. It includes more than 14,000 acres of beach, dunes, marsh, and maritime forest. Assateague Island National Seashore, stretching over 60 kms from Virginia into Maryland is one of the world's best beaches for communing with nature. The only developed area on the beach is the Interpretive Center. Be on the lookout for its most famous residents — the wild ponies that gained worldwide fame in <i>Misty of Chincoteague</i>, a book written by Marguerite Henry in 1947.</p> <p>Another highlight of the island is the Assateague Lighthouse, where you can learn about the "Legacy of the Lighthouse" program offered by the Refuge staff.</p> <p>The most popular world-renown event is the annual Pony Swim & Auction, where saltwater cowboys round up the wild ponies and swim across the channel. They are then herded through town to the fairgrounds, where they are auctioned off the next day.</p>
<p>Shopping</p>	<p>One of a kind craft shops abound on the Eastern Shore of Virginia!</p> <p>Lynnhaven Mall Located in the heart of Virginia Beach and just minutes from the Oceanfront, Lynnhaven Mall offers the area's largest selection of shopping, dining and entertainment options all in one convenient location. With 180 stores, 5 anchors, 27 eateries and restaurants, an AMC 18 Theater with IMAX and 3D, the region's only Dave & Buster's, a double decker carousel and a huge children's Play Area, Lynnhaven Mall has something for everyone.</p>
<p>Markets</p>	<p>Virginia is host to many wonderful curiosity and collectible shops, from thrift stores, antique shops and auctions where you can talk to appraisers, vendors and fellow collectors.</p>

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	Abingdon Farmer's Market is a delightful gathering of local food producers and crafts people from the surrounding region. Casual and friendly, I loved this market and enjoyed a fresh breakfast and bought some boutique-style soaps.
Nightlife	Nightlife in Virginia includes ballroom dancing, theatre, concerts as well as line dancing, neighborhood pubs and karaoke. Virginia Beach in particular in this region has a booming nightlife centred on the many resorts.

CUISINE	<p>Oyster Cuisine</p> <p>Of course you will want to taste oysters during your visit and there are many opportunities to do so. Get out on the water on a waterman tour and oyster boat experience and you will be sure to be able to taste the catch as well. Wineries, breweries, distilleries and cideries dotted around the region will feature oyster tasting or Virginia Oyster pairings. You can seek out oysters at farmer's markets featuring Virginia Oysters vendors and/or tastings on a regular basis. There are also many locally-owned culinary establishments specifically featuring the Virginia Oyster as a main item on their menu. You will find restaurants, oyster bars, diners, night clubs and cafés where you can savour raw oysters or oyster dishes aplenty.</p>
Food	<p>The Commonwealth of Virginia – already well known as a top wine travel destination, is now rapidly becoming the oyster capital of the East Coast. It's the largest producer of fresh, farm-raised oysters in the US. The diverse flavour of Virginia oysters – from the saltiest in the waters of Chincoteague on Virginia's Eastern Shore, to the sweet taste of Rappahannock River oysters, and the rebirth of Lynnhaven oysters in Virginia Beach – all give visitors a lot to love about oyster travel in Virginia.</p> <p>The Virginia Oyster Trail itself was launched in 2015 by Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe. The trail offers visitors a way to enjoy the glorious Atlantic coastline of the state whilst discovering outdoor adventure, crafts and culture, southern cuisine, history and so much more in this fascinating corner of Virginia.</p> <p>Comprised of eight distinct regions, the Virginia Oyster Trail showcases the diversity of the state's waterways. A tour of the trail provides adventurous epicures lesson in these delicious molluscs, provided by the women and men on the frontline of the state's oyster resurgence. And while technology has contributed to the state's oyster come-back, traditional tools of the oyster trade remain the same — tireless work ethic, love of life on the water, a boat, overalls and the white rubber boots that are the symbol of the Virginia Oyster trade.</p> <p>Oysters can be eaten raw, steamed, grilled and fried. They can also be cooked in a stew. Raw oysters are usually served with lemon juice,</p>

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vinegar or cocktail sauce. Like fine wine, raw oysters have complex flavours. If you eat them often, you will learn to differentiate the oysters from different regions and know which ones you prefer. All oysters are eco-friendly and actively filter the water they are grown in. The oyster industry is one of the few industries that as it expands, provides tangible, increased environmental benefits. The oyster farm crops continually filter the waters of Chesapeake Bay, removing excess nutrients and providing habitat for other species. The more oysters, the cleaner the water!

Oysters to Suit Every Taste

All oysters grown on the east coast are of the same species, called *Crassostrea Virginica*. Oysters take on the flavour of the waters in which they are harvested. The salinity levels of the Chesapeake Bay and its major tributaries are ideal for sustaining great-tasting oysters.

With different coastal habitats, the flavours of Virginia oysters range from salty to buttery to sweet. Some of the creeks on the Virginia Eastern Shore are no more than a couple of kilometres apart. Yet the oysters from each area take on different nuances in flavour, texture and appearance.

Here is an oyster flavour guide to test your taste buds in each part of the region.

SEASIDE - Initial bold saltiness mellowing into a taste of sweet butter/cream at the finish.

UPPER BAY EASTERN SHORE - Classic Virginia Bay oyster flavour with balanced salt and sweet, with a savory finish.

LOWER BAY EASTERN SHORE - Salty and creamy with mellow sweetness with a quick finish.

UPPER BAY WESTERN SHORE - Sweetwater oyster with a light cream taste.

MIDDLE BAY WESTERN SHORE - Lightly salty with easily distinguished cream or butter and a pleasant slight minerality.

LOWER BAY WESTERN SHORE - Mild saltiness moving to a sweet finish.

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	<p>TIDEWATER - Salty oyster with sweetness and a smooth finish.</p> <p>TANGIER/MIDDLE CHESAPEAKE BAY - Traditional Virginia Bay Oyster flavour with a balance of salt and sweet, and a savoury butter/cream finish.</p>
<p>Wine</p>	<p>Virginia is one of the top six states wine producing wine in the US with many wineries and breweries scattered across the gorgeous countryside. Here are two wineries in the area that I can personally recommend from my recent trip (Oct 2016):</p> <p>Chatham Vineyards 9232 Chatham Road, Machipongo, VA 23405 T: 757-678-5588 Chatham Vineyards is owned and operated by the Wehner family at historic Chatham Farm which has been a working farm for four centuries. Jon Wehner is a second-generation winegrower on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. He learned about grape growing from his parents who operated Great Falls Vineyard in Great Falls, Virginia for over thirty years. He and his wife, Mills, and their three children own and operate the vineyard and winery. http://www.chathamvineyards.net</p> <p>The Dog and Oyster Vineyard 170 White Fences Drive, Irvington 22480 T: 804-438-WINE(9463) The area is very much like Bordeaux with sandy soil and a nearby estuary, Chesapeake Bay. And it is just as lovely. With over 6 acres of Vinifera and French American Hybrid vines, they offer two whites, Vidal Blanc and Chardonel, and two reds, Merlot and Chambourcin. They also offer Oyster and Wine Pairing. http://www.hopeandglory.com/field-trips/the-vineyard</p>
<p>Restaurants</p>	<p>Here are a few of my personal recommendations in Eastern Virginia...</p> <p>Merroir 784 Locklies Creek Rd, Topping, VA 23169 T: 804-758-2871 This excellent restaurant is situated on the banks of the Rappahannock River overlooking where they grow their oysters. The owners like to call Merroir a “tasting room,” just so people know to expect something different. Everything is either served raw or cooked on an outdoor grill, small-plate-style, and beautifully paired with craft brews and world-famous wines. Each menu item is singularly-focused, seasonal, and ever-changing, so there’s always a surprise in store. https://www.rroysters.com/restaurants/merroir</p> <p>Tautogs 205 23rd Street, Virginia Beach, VA 23451 T: 757) 422-0081</p>

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	<p>The Tautog's Restaurant concept was created in an effort to provide customers with a unique dining experience combining quality seafood products, with distinctive customer service in an inviting coastal area setting. It is a casual dining establishment featuring exceptional fish and seafood entrée's soups, salads, sandwiches and desserts...served by the friendliest people in town. http://www.tautogs.com</p> <p>Dockside Restaurant 3311 Shore Dr., Virginia Beach, 23451 T: (757) 481-4545 Visit this waterside restaurant by car or boat. Enjoy the unique view of the Lynnhaven Inlet and the fresh seafood specials offered each day http://www.docksideva.com</p>
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MORE INFO	
Brochures	Call 1-800-671-4195 for a range of brochures
Website	<p>State-wide website: www.virginia.org Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/VirginialsForLovers Pinterest: https://www.pinterest.com/visitvirginia/ Twitter: https://twitter.com/visitvirginia You Tube: https://www.youtube.com/user/VisitVirginia</p> <p>For Virginia's Oyster Trail: http://www.virginiaoystertrail.com/</p> <p>For Virginia Beach: http://www.visitvirginiabeach.com</p>

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES	<p>I toured Virginia's Oyster Trail and Eastern Shore in October 2016 and you can read my Travel Blog of my journey here: http://www.chrisrobinsontravelshow.ca/Blog.aspx I have also created a Pinterest board of images from my trip : http://www.pinterest.com/TravelShow</p>
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