

Driving Directions



AMERICAN DRIVING VACATIONS
PRESENTS:

Travel Southern Virginia Driving Tour 1: The Best of the South 5 Days/4 Nights

As the land of tobacco, plantations, race cars, heritage and large lakes, the major attractions of Southern Virginia include two significant plantation homes, a transformed tobacco warehouse, two lakes with a total of 1,200 miles of shoreline, two major speedways, three National Landmarks, three major museums, what some consider the most scenic highway in America, and more. Any one of the region's major attractions is worth a visit. You can visit the whole collection over a few days to gain the full impact of the best of the best in Southern Virginia. Hike, play and visit during the day, leaving time for the speedways at night. We know it's a trip you'll always remember. Try our Driving Tour to see them all.



Day One

Visit Poplar Forest, National D-Day Memorial and the Booker T. Washington National Monument. Accommodations in Bedford.

Take US-221 east from Bedford to SR-661, Bateman Bridge Rd. Turn south to Foxhall Rd and turn left. Go to entrance to Polar Forest. Return on Foxhall Rd and turn left on SR-661, Bateman Bridge Rd. Continue to junction with Thomas Jefferson Rd, SR-811 and turn left. Continue on SR-811 to juncture with US-460 and turn right. Go on US-460 to off ramp to Burk Hill Rd, Business 122 and turn right. Take first left on Overlord Circle and follow to National D-Day Memorial. Return to Burk Hill Rd, Business 122 and turn right. Continue on road across Smith Mountain Lake and go another 4.5 miles to entrance to Booker T. Washington National Monument. Return on SR-122 to Bedford.

Day One

Your first stop today, Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest was wrenched from near ruin in 1984. Jefferson used the country retreat to escape the constant guests and hospitality of Monticello. Begun in 1806, Jefferson's writings reveal his pleasure in the quality of the design of his octagonal retreat, "When finished, it will be the best dwelling house in the state, except that of Monticello; perhaps preferable to that, as more proportioned to the faculties of a private citizen." In true retreat style, it was a place where Jefferson got to play with his grandchildren, read in his study and relax in the mountain air without the trappings of a statesman.

From there, it's a short drive to the National D-Day Memorial, where you can begin to feel the might of the forces as you approach the massive granite-clad Operation Overlord Monument. Don't think for a minute that this is any ordinary monument. Strategically placed water "bullets" zing past the sculptured soldiers leaving the landing craft and more soldiers can be seen just barely reaching the top of the precipice over which they had to climb to reach their goal on Omaha Beach. For those not familiar with the battle, this is a great piece of living history.

Finishing out your day, a visit to the Booker T. Washington National Monument introduces you to this phenomenal man who overcame near impossible odds to become one of the most influential black men of his time. He learned the love of education after carrying the books of his master's daughter to school. "I had the feeling that to get into a schoolhouse and study would be about the same as getting into paradise. After working his way through Hampton University, he founded the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama in 1881. His famous autobiography, "Up From Slavery," reveals the story of a man driven to learn and to teach others the importance of education, economic



Day Two

Visit Explore Park, Virginia Museum of Natural History, and the Martinsville Speedway. Accommodations in Martinsville.

Depart Bedford on US-221 north and turn left on SR-43. Go for 10.3 miles to Blue Ridge Parkway. Peaks of Otter Visitor Center is to the right a short distance at milepost 86. Return south on Blue Ridge Parkway and go 29.3 miles from SR-43 to Explore Park.

Return south on Blue Ridge Parkway to US-220 exit ramp. Go south on US-220 to US-220 Business at Martinsville. Take US-220 Business east for 6.8 miles to Douglas Ave on right (1st street past junction with US-58). The Virginia Museum of Natural History is at corner on right at Douglas Ave.

Continue south on US-220 Business for 3.6 miles and turn left at Speedway Rd to enter Martinsville Speedway

Day Three

Visit The Crossing at the Dan, Sutherlin Mansion, American Armoured Foundation Tank Museum, and Virginia International Raceway. Accommodations in Danville. Depart Martinsville on US-58 and travel to Danville and US-29 Business. Turn right and go to second street and turn left at Craghead Rd. Go .3 miles to

prosperity and the value of hard work. After touring the Monument, it's a short drive back to Bedford and your accommodations for the evening.

Day Two

This morning, leaving Bedford, you'll be traveling on what some consider America's most scenic highway. Welcoming hundreds of thousands of visitors each year, the 459 mile long Blue Ridge Parkway is one of the premier National Scenic Byways in the United States. Built by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the depression, the highway has been meticulously maintained to allow travelers to have one of the most serene and awesome drives through unspoiled forest, punctuated every so often with a scenic overlook, where "on a clear day, you can see forever."

The drive on the Parkway takes you to Virginia's Explore Park which tells the story of the settlers who streamed down the Great Wagon Road from Philadelphia, beginning in the early 18th century. Explore Park features an authentic glimpse into the life of the Native Americans who lived in the area when the settlers began arriving, a fortified homestead typical of those commonly found on western Virginia's frontier in the 18th century and a 19th century farm, complete with farm animals, a one-room school, blacksmith shop, a working grist mill and more.

From there, it's on to the Virginia Museum of Natural History, currently undergoing a \$28 million renovation scheduled to open in January 2007. At the current facility, an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution and an agency of the Secretary of Natural Resources for the Commonwealth of Virginia, you can enjoy permanent exhibits including an Ice Age Café, Triassic Treasures, Wild about Wildflowers, Life in the Sea, Age of Dinosaurs, and Gifts to our Grand Children: Preserving Virginia's Endangered Species as well as a series of special exhibits planned for 2006.

Since you will be in Martinsville at this point, you can check into your accommodations for the evening before traveling to the Martinsville Speedway, which is marking its 59th year of operation. Founded by H. Clay Earles the year before NASCAR was formed, Martinsville Speedway began with 750 seats and is now the only original NASCAR-sanctioned track still running Nextel Cup events. Richard Petty, now a car owner, holds the track's winning record with 15 victories. The demanding layout consistently produces some of the wildest fender scrubbing and push and shove racing on the tour.

Day Three

It's only 30 miles from Martinsville to Danville, the next stop on your trip. Try to get started early enough to enjoy The Riverwalk at the Crossing of the Dan, a pedestrian trail along the Dan River. The 1889 Passenger Rail Station houses the Danville Science Center and an additional renovated Southern Railroad building, and the Community Market in the Southern Railroad Warehouse. The Butterfly Station and Garden is only one of a few butterfly greenhouses in Virginia. Enjoy Friday's at the Crossing, or one of the many other festivals and events here each year.



Danville Science Center and The Crossing at the Dan.
Go back to Main St. and turn right. Go to Sutherlin Mansion at 975 Main St.

From Sutherlin Mansion, continue north on Main St. to the AAF Tank Museum at 3401 US 29 Business.

From Tank Museum, return south on Main St. and turn left at US-58 and US-360. Travel east on US-58, US-360 to VA SR-62 or Milton Way, turn right. Follow SR-62 into Milton, North Carolina. Turn left past center of town on NC SR-1540, Racetrack Rd. Follow road to entrance to Virginia International Raceway. Return to Milton and VA SR-62 to US-58 and US-360. Turn left and return to Danville.

Day Four

Visit Berry Hill Plantation Resort, The Prizery, do Halifax Walking Tour. Accommodations in South Boston.

Depart Danville on US-58 and US-360 east towards South Boston. At South Boston turn left on US-501. Turn 1st left onto Factory St (Is Wall St on right) and turn first left onto Bruce St and go to The Crossing at the Dan.

Return to Factory St and turn right. Go to US-501 north (Broad St) and turn left. Continue on US-501 to Greens Folly Rd on left and turn left. Drive to 3105 River Rd, Berry Hill Plantation Resort.

Return on River Rd to US-501 and turn left (north). Travel to Halifax and juncture of US-501 and SR-360 (Mountain Rd) for

While in Danville, you can't miss the Sutherlin Mansion, once considered "the grandest house in Danville," Built by William Sutherlin in 1856, as a city home, the plantation allowed him to oversee the second largest tobacco factory in Virginia, which still stands at the corner of Lynn and Loyal Streets. The Mansion served as the "Last Capital of the Confederacy" when President Jefferson Davis made his way from Richmond to points south, until Lee's surrender at Appomattox in April 10. Now home to the Danville Museum of Fine Arts and History, the house has been restored to appear as it did when Jefferson Davis was in residence.

Another very interesting and unique museum, the American Armoured Foundation Tank Museum is also located in Danville, If you're a military history buff, you'll love being surrounded by over 15,000 international tank and cavalry artifacts dating from 1509 to the present; the most extensive collection of international artifacts of this type in the world. Exhibits include the "Treat Em Rough Exhibit from World War II, Seek, Strike and Destroy, Women in Uniform and Through the Eye of the Camera.

After checking into your accommodations in Danville, a visit to the Virginia International Raceway is in order. You won't recognize the VIR Raceplex as the plantation it once was, but you'll experience the same southern hospitality at the Plantation Clubhouse, a restored 1840's mansion, the Lodge, Paddock Suites, and Oak Tree Tavern, all surrounding a 3.27 mile track with two crossovers to allow simultaneous events. Opened in 1957 as one of the country's first permanent road racing locations, VIR reopened in 2000 as America's first "motorsports resort" to rave reviews. Automobile and motorcycle races have been joined by the first test site dedicated to scientific experimentation in unmanned vehicles.

Day Four

After having made your way to the South Boston area, your first stop at Berry Hill Plantation Resort will introduce you to a real southern tobacco plantation mansion. As you travel up the tree-lined drive, you'd almost expect Scarlett to slip through the massive columns and glide down the stairs to meet you. Built in 1842, this eight-columned home is the quintessential southern antebellum mansion, once the seat of one of the most successful tobacco plantations in the region. Previous owners also included Colonel Edward Carrington, who fought alongside General Nathaniel Greene in the Revolutionary War.

Nearby in South Boston, The Prizery, once a 19th century tobacco warehouse, is the most interesting and handsome of the industrial buildings in downtown South Boston. In addition to the 425 seat theater, with performances of every kind, the welcome center includes exhibits highlighting Halifax County's tobacco and river transportation heritage. A new exhibit, "The Crossing of the Dan" traces the route of Lord Cornwallis in 1781, as he led British troops from Guilford Courthouse, North Carolina, to the Dan River, in Virginia, pursuing General Nathaniel Greene and the Americans, a journey that ultimately ended at Yorktown

Before dinner at one of the fine restaurants in the area, the Mountain Road walking tour of Halifax is in order. Founded in 1776 and now considered by some to be one of the prettiest historic towns in America, Mountain Road, running through the center of Halifax is surrounded by



start of Mountain Road Walking Tour.
Return south on US-501 to South Boston.

Day Five

Visit Buggs Island Lake and Clarksville. Accommodations in Clarksville

Depart from South Boston on US-58 and travel east to Clarksville, approximately 20.5 miles.

grand Antebellum architecture, coupled with structures whose original portions date back to the Revolutionary War era. Thomas Jefferson's master builder Dabney Cosby, who constructed the University of Virginia, traveled to Halifax to build the new clerk's office in 1835 and the new county courthouse completed in 1839. Many of the gardens along Mountain Road date from the 1840's when residents began to develop attractive and compatible landscapes settings for their grand houses.

Day Five

Clarksville and Buggs Island Lake, your destination for today, is even closer to South Boston than Danville to Martinsville. The short drive will give you more time to spend on the water. With more than 50,000 acres of fresh water and 800 miles of beautiful shoreline, Buggs Island Lake "is no foolin' around lake," it's huge, delivers electric power to the entire region, is one of the best bass fishing places in the country and has great sunsets! It's also been voted the number one Crappie fishing lake in the US by "In-Fisherman" magazine. You can bring your boat to launch or rent one (with or without a guide) from one of the area's outfitters and enjoy the lake. You can also participate in every water sport imaginable or just enjoy being outdoors in nature.

After you've expended every bit of energy on the water, relax in accommodations in Clarksville this evening. Then, we wish you a safe



and pleasant journey home.

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Day Two





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Return south on US-501 to South Boston.

Day Five

Visit Buggs Island Lake and Clarksville.

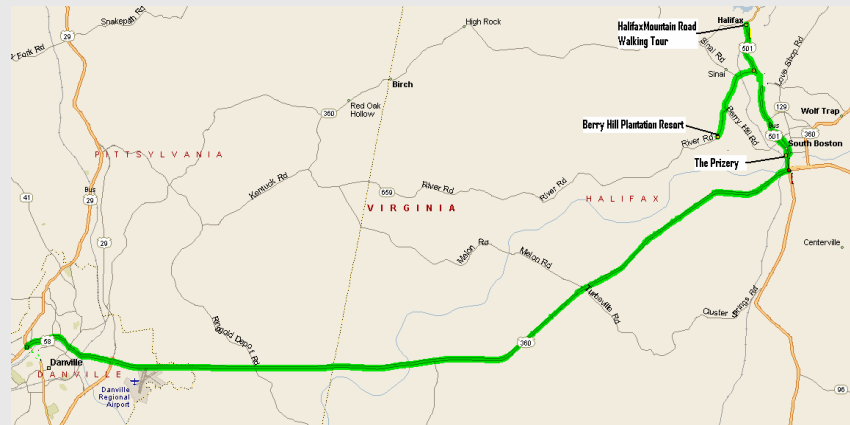
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Day Three



Day Four



Day Five

