

2026 EDITION • 250 IDEAS

Fall for the DMV

THE ULTIMATE LOCAL BUCKET LIST

FAIRFAX COUNTY, DC, NOVA, MARYLAND & BEYOND

From pumpkin walls and ghost tours to America 250 exhibitions, hometown teams, mountain drives and military-family favorites.

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real

Military

real



Event details change. Confirm dates, availability and age requirements with each venue.

Your Guide to Fall in the DMV

The ultimate fall list: 250 ideas featuring Fairfax County and surrounding areas, local favorites and carefully curated community recommendations.

01

Pick a region

Start close to home or choose a destination that fits the weather, energy level and drive time.

02

Match the numbers

Every regional opener has an approximate locator map. Its numbered pins match the numbered activities.

03

Tap the links

Each activity includes a clickable official-site button for current hours, tickets, dates and directions.

A QUICK NOTE

Fall schedules can move with weather, harvests and venue operations. Always confirm details before leaving home.

Choose your corner of the DMV

12 sections · 250 ideas · all links are clickable

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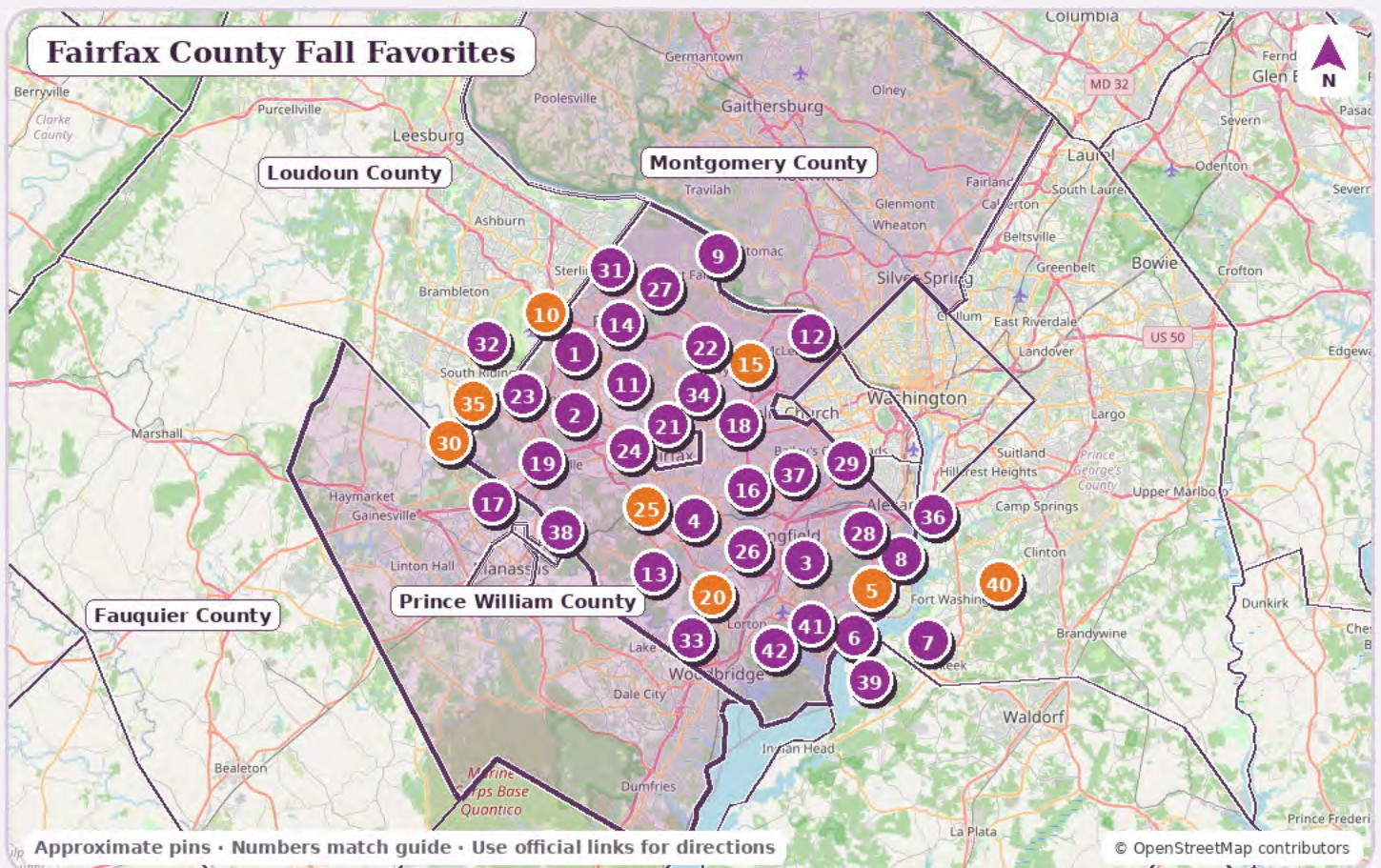
Fairfax County Fall Favorites

Classic farms, parks, history and family traditions worth the trip

PARK AUTHORITY GEMS

NINE REC CENTERS

CLASSIC FALL DAYS



1

Cox Farms Fall Festival

The huge daytime festival with slides, hayrides, animals, food and family play. September 19-November 8.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

2

Fields of Fear

Nighttime scares for older kids and teens; recommended for ages 12 and up.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

3

Nalls Produce Pumpkin Hill & Pumpkin Wall

A Julie favorite in Franconia: climb Pumpkin Hill, shop for pumpkins and take the classic fall photo at the famous wall.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

4

Burke Nursery Fall Farm Market & Pumpkin Patch

A local October tradition with pumpkins, gourds, apples, mums, photo backdrops and weekend pony rides.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

5

Mount Vernon Fall Wine Festival & Sunset Tour

October 9-11; an adult-oriented evening with Virginia wine and river views.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

6

Mount Vernon Colonial Market & Fair

Historic trades, demonstrations and shopping on September 19-20.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

7

Mount Vernon Fall Harvest Family Days

Hands-on harvest traditions and family activities October 24-25.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

8

Trick-or-Treating at Mount Vernon

A history-filled Halloween afternoon on October 31.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

9

Virginia Native American Festival

Culture, dance, crafts and education at Riverbend Park on September 12.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

10

Frying Pan Farm Harvest Festival

Farm animals, rides and harvest activities October 16-18.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

11

Halloween on the Farm

Costumes and seasonal farm fun on October 23 and 24.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

Fairfax County Fall Favorites

ACTIVITY LIST · 2 OF 4

12

Sensory-friendly trick-or-treat at Clemyjontri

An inclusive family Halloween experience on October 18.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

18

Mosaic Fall Festival

Shopping, food and family entertainment September 26-27.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

13

Ghost Town at Burke Lake Park

Family Halloween fun around the park October 24-25.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

19

Centreville Day

A community celebration with history, vendors and family activities.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

14

Reston Multicultural Festival

Global music, dance, food and community on September 19.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

20

Go Ape at South Run

Ropes courses and treetop challenges with age and height requirements.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

15

Capital One Center Celebration of the Arts

Free performances and family activities September 19-20.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

21

Fairfax County America 250 Discovery Map

Turn local parks and historic sites into a countywide family challenge.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

16

Bug Fest

A hands-on celebration of insects and nature on September 26.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

22

Picnic at a Wolf Trap concert

Bring dinner for the lawn and make the performance part of the adventure.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

17

Bull Run Wine Festival

Virginia wine and live entertainment September 26-27.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

23

Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center

See Space Shuttle Discovery, Concorde and the SR-71; admission is free, parking is paid.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

28

Walk the Huntley Meadows boardwalk

Wetlands, wildlife and golden autumn light on one of the county's most distinctive walks.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

24

Make Fairfax County Park Authority your fall headquarters

Use the county's parks, nature centers, historic sites and event calendar to build close-to-home adventures.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

29

See autumn at Green Spring Gardens

Stroll demonstration gardens, woodland paths and the historic landscape.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

25

Walk the Burke Lake loop in peak color

Pair the wooded lakeside trail with a picnic, mini golf or a seasonal family ride.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

30

Explore Ellanor C. Lawrence Park

Woodland trails, local history and nature programs from the Walney Visitor Center.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

26

Circle Lake Accotink

A convenient foliage walk with woodland, water and an easy-to-customize distance.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

31

Tour Colvin Run Mill

See a working 19th-century mill framed by fall foliage and check the seasonal program calendar.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

27

Picnic and hike at Lake Fairfax Park

Trails, open space, camping and brilliant Reston-area fall color.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

32

Visit Sully Historic Site

Pair local history and a fall walk with nearby Udvar-Hazy.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

33

Choose a Fairfax County nature center

Try Hidden Oaks, Hidden Pond, Huntley Meadows, Riverbend or Ellanor C. Lawrence for indoor-outdoor learning.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

38

Check Fairfax Rec Center drop-in schedules

Find current pool lanes, fitness classes, gym time, pickleball, ice and other drop-in options.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

34

Take the nine-Rec-Center fall challenge

One countywide network offers pools, fitness, courts, classes and all-weather family options.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

39

Plan a ONE Richmond Hwy local-business crawl

Use the Faces of ONE campaign to discover the people, shops, restaurants and destinations along Route 1.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

35

Play at Cub Run Rec Center's leisure pool

An indoor-water escape for a chilly or rainy fall day.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

40

Find the Faces of ONE public-art sculptures

Turn the Richmond Highway corridor's 10-sculpture installation into a family art hunt.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

36

Swim or skate at Mount Vernon Rec Center

Explore the newly improved community facility, including aquatics and ice activities.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

41

Tour Woodlawn & Frank Lloyd Wright's Pope-Leighey House

Tour two very different historic homes on one Richmond Highway estate; the 2026 season runs into late December.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

37

Pick a fall class from Parktakes

Search seasonal classes, camps and programs across county parks and Rec Centers.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

42

National Museum of the United States Army

A free, immersive Army-history museum beside Fort Belvoir; timed tickets are recommended.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

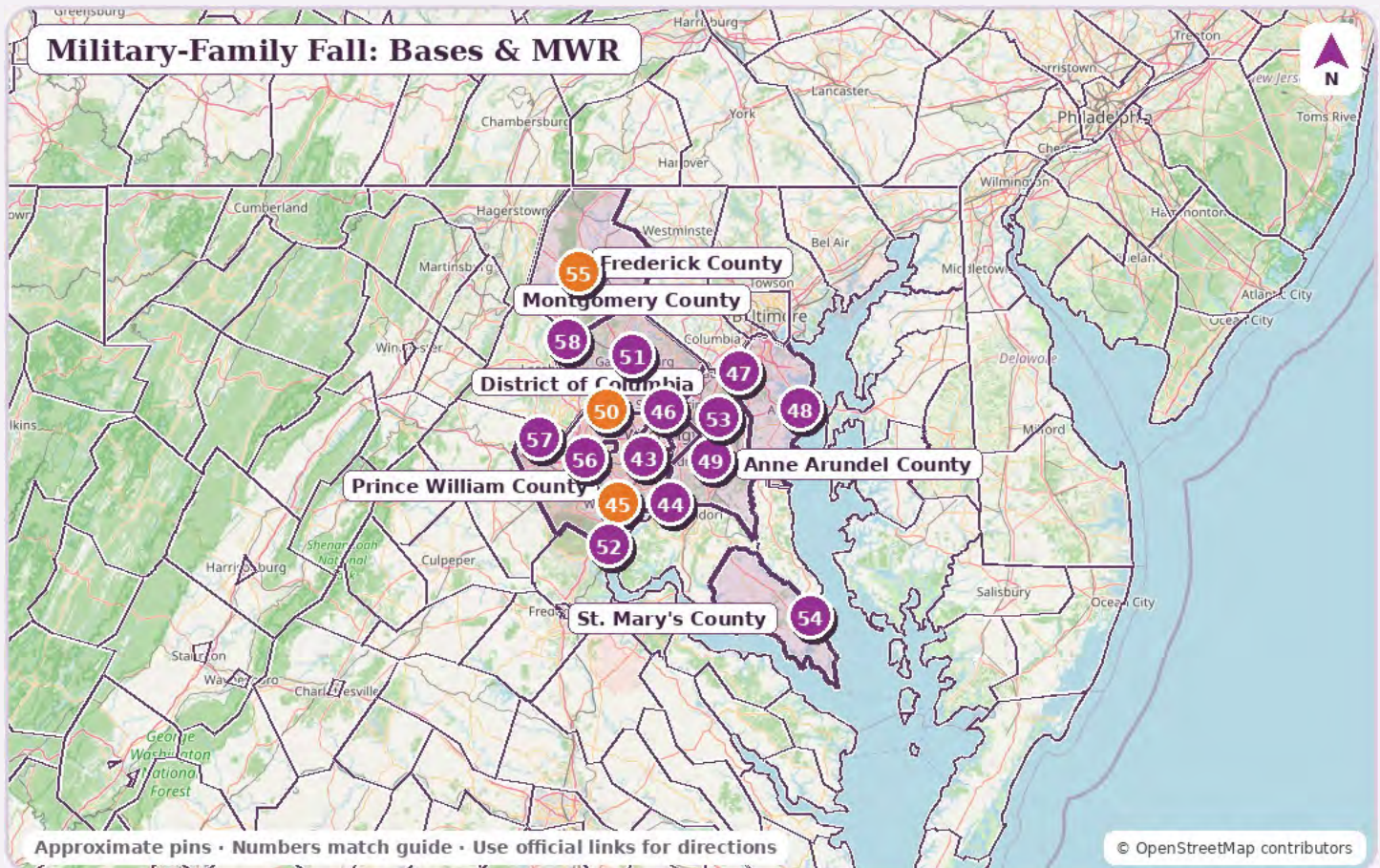
Military-Family Fall: Bases & MWR

Fort Belvoir first; eligibility and gate access vary, so confirm before visiting

MILITARY FAMILIES

MWR CALENDARS

ACCESS VARIES



43

Fort Belvoir's 28th Annual Oktoberfest

German food, music, dancing, a carnival and Volksmarch September 24-27; review public-access instructions.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

47

Explore Fort Meade MWR

Check community events, Burba Park, recreation, fitness, arts and travel for eligible patrons.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

44

Use the Fort Belvoir MWR fall calendar

Find family campouts, archery, bowling, library programs, fitness and seasonal community events.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

48

Browse NSA Annapolis MWR events

Watch for workshops, family events, recreation and Tickets & Travel opportunities near the Academy.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

45

Book a Fort Belvoir MWR fall trip

Leisure Travel Services offers discounted tickets and seasonal day trips, including an October NYC bus trip.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

49

Plan a Joint Base Andrews FSS outing

The 316th FSS calendar includes library programs, trips, clubs, recreation and family events.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

46

Check JBM-HH MWR and Leisure Travel

Look for festival trips, hiking excursions, discounted tickets and recreation at Fort Myer and Fort McNair.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

50

Check the JBAB 11th FSS calendar

Bowling, waterfront programs, trips, youth activities and dozens of community events serve eligible patrons.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

51

Use NSA Bethesda MWR Community Recreation

Find events, equipment, picnic areas, sports, aquatics and discounted local-attraction tickets.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

55

Browse Fort Detrick MWR

Look for community activities, fitness, outdoor recreation and seasonal programs in Frederick.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

52

Follow Quantico MCCA fall happenings

Search the official calendar for outdoor adventures, family programs, recreation and seasonal events.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

56

Use the Blue Star Museums list

Check free military-family museum admission before Labor Day.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

53

Explore Navy MWR Washington

Check regional Navy recreation, tickets, travel, lodging and events around the Washington Navy Yard.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

57

Search Vet Tix

Look for military-community tickets to sports, concerts and performances.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

54

Check NAS Patuxent River MWR events

Use the Fleet & Family Readiness calendar for base recreation and community programming.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

58

Use the Military Lifetime Pass

Explore National Park Service sites with free eligible-family access.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

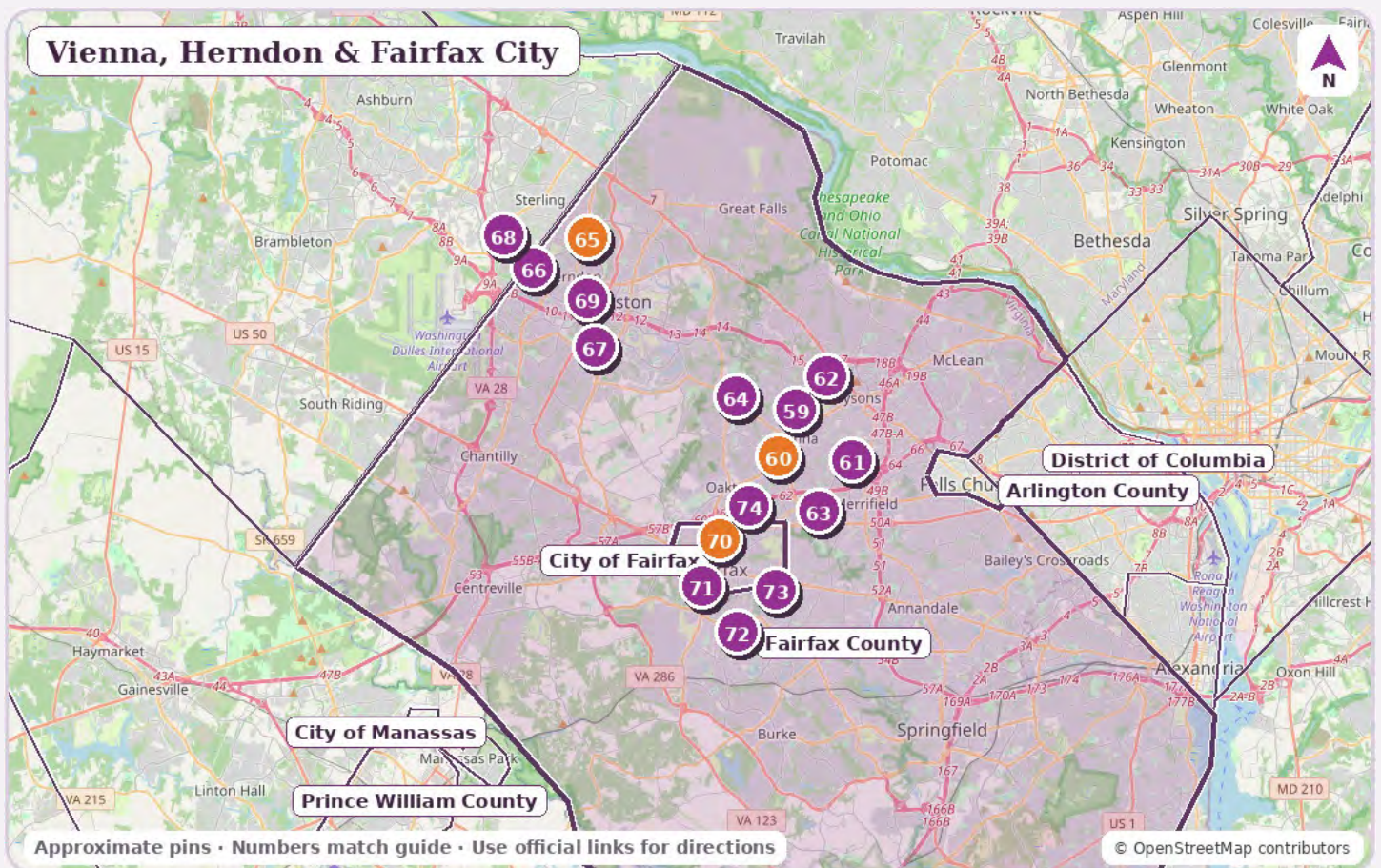
Vienna, Herndon & Fairfax City

Small-town traditions in the heart of Northern Virginia

COMMUNITY FESTIVALS

EASY EVENINGS

REPEAT VISITS



59

Vienna Big Screen on the Green

A free outdoor showing of Zootopia 2 on September 11.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

63

Vienna Theatre Company's fall mystery

See An Old-Fashioned Family Murder from October 16 through November 1.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

60

Vienna Oktoberfest

Three stages, food, beer, wine, vendors and a kids zone on October 3.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

64

Bike the W&OD Trail through Vienna

An easy fall-color ride with coffee and food stops nearby.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

61

Halloween on the Green

Free daytime Halloween fun for younger children on October 17.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

65

Herndon NatureFest

Animals, plants and hands-on nature activities on September 27.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

62

Vienna Halloween Parade

A beloved Maple Avenue tradition on October 28.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

66

Herndon Kids Halloween Costume Exchange

Trade outgrown costumes October 9-10.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

67

Herndon Homecoming Parade

The 2026 theme is Hollywood Through the Years; parade day is October 24.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

71

Rock the Block

Free live music and downtown dining on September 25.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

68

Herndon Turkey Trot 5K

A community run on November 21.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

72

Fall for the Book

A free regional literary festival October 5-10.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

69

Walk Runnymede Park

Quiet wooded trails and nature programs close to downtown Herndon.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

73

Fairfax City Fall Festival

More than 400 vendors plus entertainment and children's activities on October 10.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

70

Fairfax City Labor Day Car Show

Classic vehicles in Old Town Fairfax on September 7.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

74

Dancing on the Square

Free Thursday dance evenings in Old Town Square during September.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

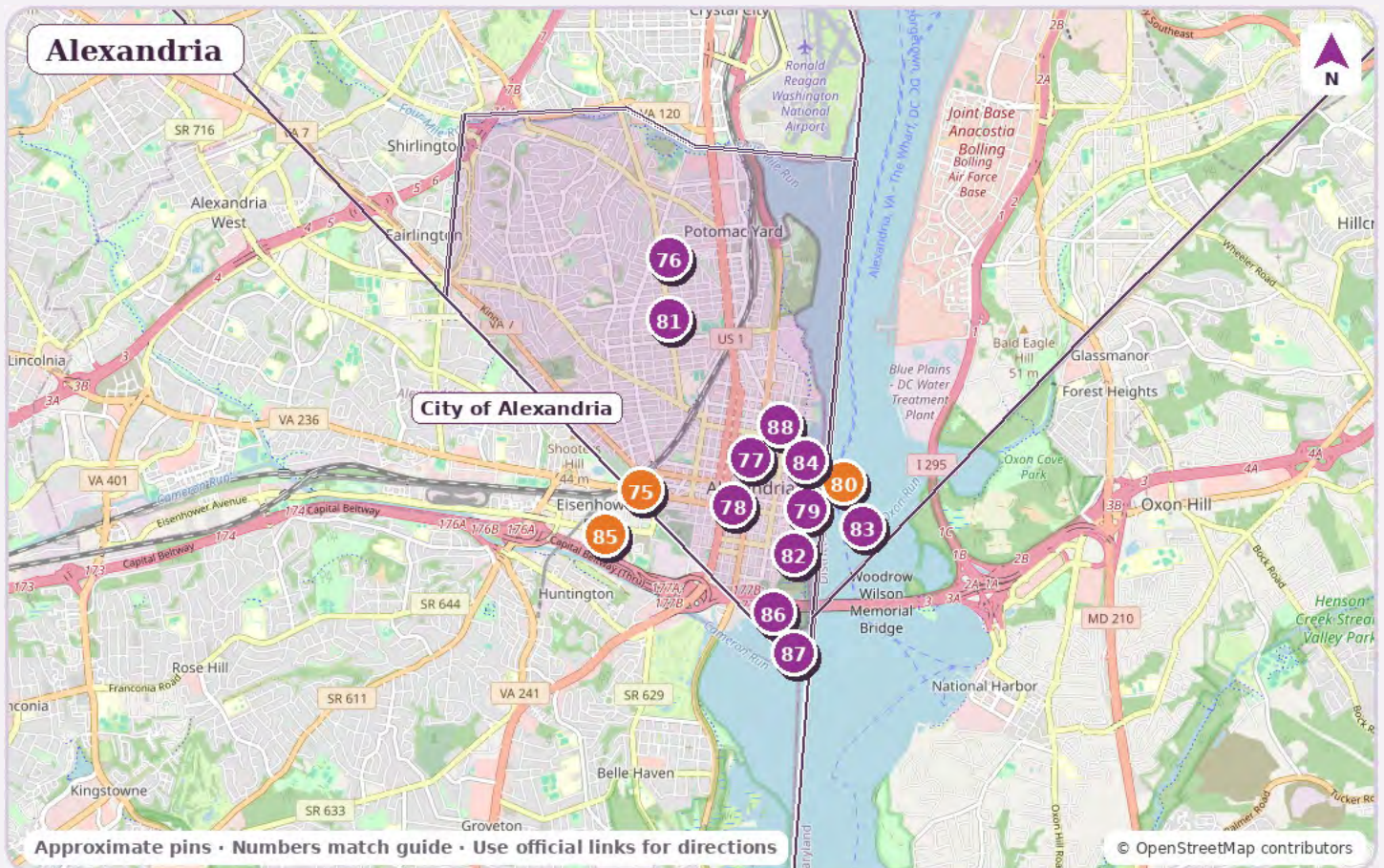
Alexandria

Cobblestones, waterfront adventures and lantern-lit history

DATE NIGHTS

GHOST STORIES

WALKABLE WEEKENDS



75

Alexandria Art Festival

September 26-27 at John Carlyle Square with juried artists and free admission.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

79

Nightly Spirits Haunted Pub Crawl

An adults-only haunted history tour through four Old Town pubs.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

76

Art on the Avenue

Del Ray's October 3 celebration of art, music, food and community.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

80

Waterfront Pirate Tour

A playful, history-forward alternative for families with younger children.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

77

Original Ghost & Graveyard Tour

A family-friendly lantern walk led by an 18th-century costumed guide.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

81

Del Ray Halloween Parade

Costumes, pets and neighborhood fun on October 26th.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

78

Phantoms of the Potomac Ghost Tour

Revolutionary War, Civil War and Old Town ghost stories after dark.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

82

Explore the Alexandria Old Town Art Festival

September 26–27, 2026, at John Carlyle Square Park.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

86

Bike the Mount Vernon Trail

Potomac views and fall color between Alexandria, Mount Vernon and Arlington.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

83

Ride the Potomac water taxi

Connect Old Town with DC, Georgetown and National Harbor by water.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

87

Explore Jones Point Park

A lighthouse, boundary marker and dramatic views beneath the Wilson Bridge.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

84

Visit the Torpedo Factory Art Center

Meet working artists inside a landmark waterfront arts center.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

88

Create an Old Town fall scavenger hunt

Look for cobblestones, alleys, colorful doors, seasonal displays and waterfront views.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

85

National Inventors Hall of Fame Museum

A small free science museum on the USPTO campus; generally a weekday visit.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

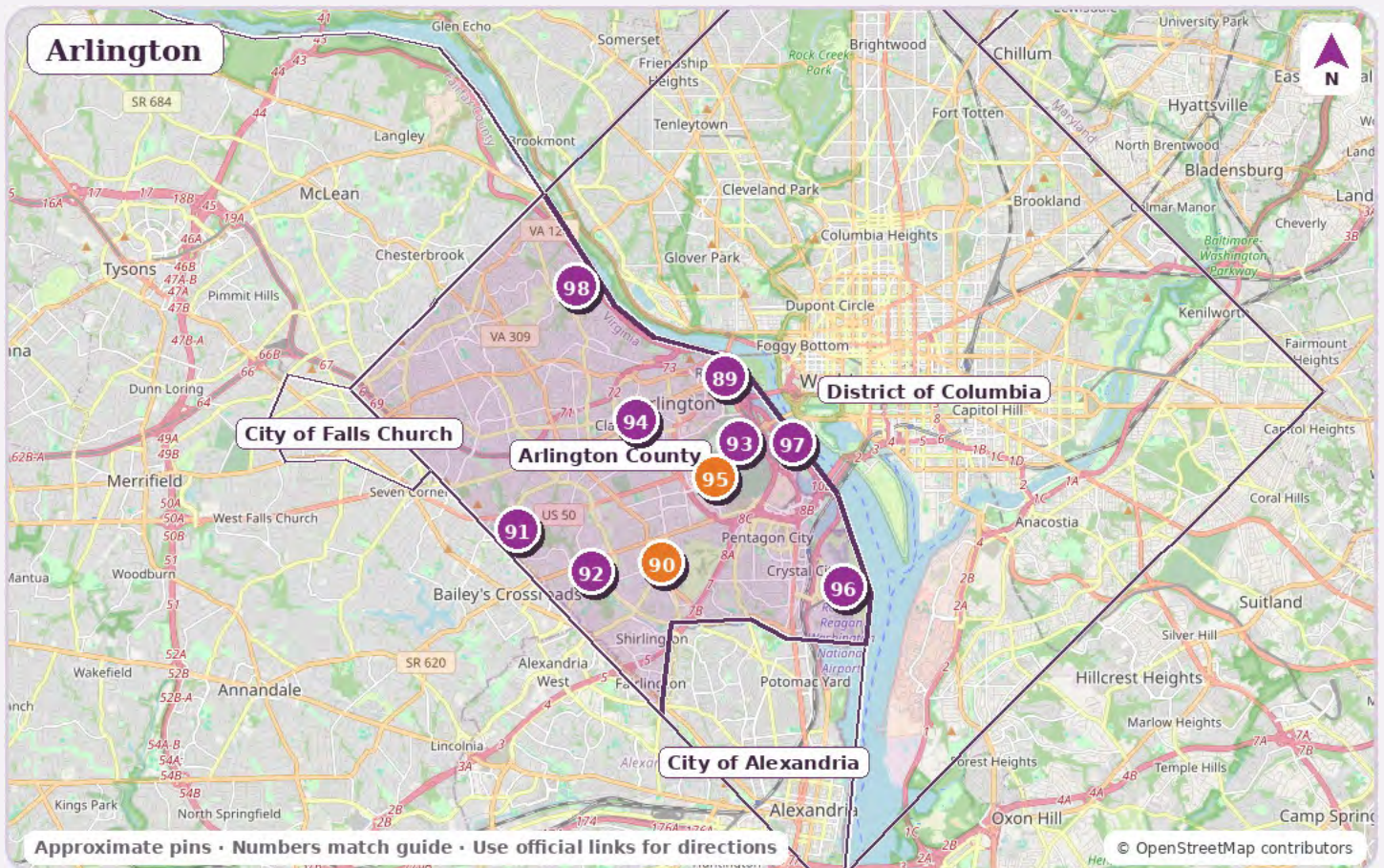
Arlington

Trails, planes, festivals and military tradition

MILITARY FAMILIES

CAR-FREE OUTINGS

QUICK ADVENTURES



89

Rosslyn Jazz Fest

A free September 12 afternoon of live jazz in Gateway Park.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

94

Clarendon Day

A major neighborhood street festival on September 26.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

90

Pike Fest

Music, food, vendors, family photos and a kids zone on October 10.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

95

Tour Arlington National Cemetery

History, remembrance and extraordinary fall trees across the grounds.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

91

Fall Heritage Festival

Living history and family activities around the Walker Log House on October 10.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

96

Watch airplanes at Gravelly Point

Stand beneath arriving aircraft for one of the area's biggest thrills.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

92

Pumpkin Walk

An illuminated family walk on October 17.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

97

Bike the Mount Vernon Trail

Ride between Rosslyn, Gravelly Point and Alexandria beside the Potomac.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

93

Marine Corps Marathon weekend

Run, volunteer or cheer during the marathon, 10K and kids events.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

98

Hike Potomac Overlook

Close-to-home trails, nature programs and autumn foliage.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

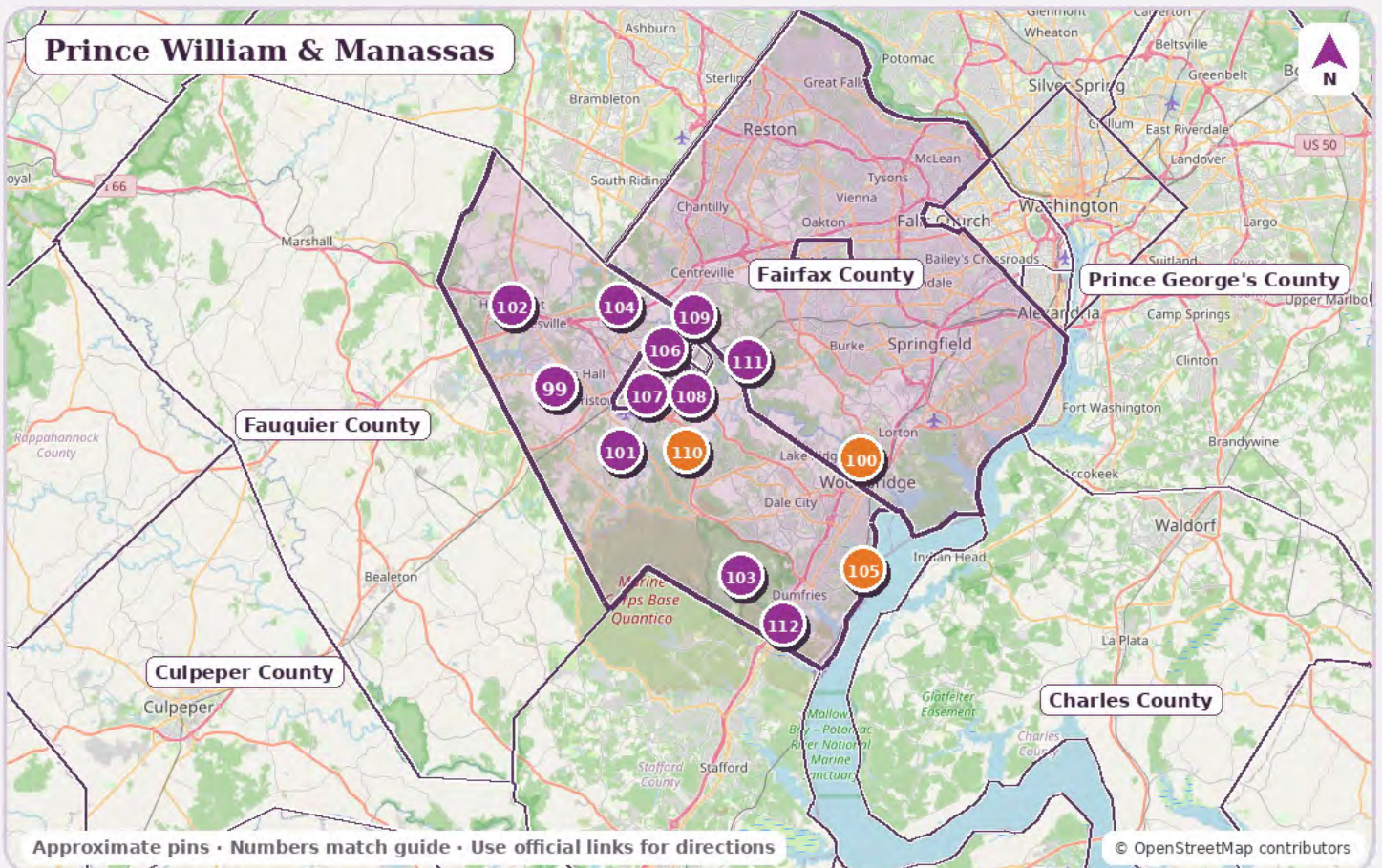
Prince William & Manassas

Farm fields, battlefields and energetic downtown festivals

HISTORY LOVERS

PUMPKIN DAYS

OUTDOOR FAMILIES



99

Fall Festival at Leopold's Preserve

A free family conservation festival with hikes and rescue animals on September 19.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

103

Prince William Forest Park

Camp, hike or bike beneath one of Northern Virginia's largest tree canopies.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

100

Occoquan Fall Arts & Crafts Show

Hundreds of artisans, demonstrations, music and river views September 26-27.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

104

Manassas National Battlefield Park

History and open-country foliage on miles of walking trails.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

101

Yankey Farms Pumpkin Patch

Field-grown pumpkins, corn maze, hayride, cow train, animals and play.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

105

Leesylvania State Park

Potomac shoreline, wooded trails and historic sites.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

102

Haymarket Day

A parade, vendors, music and kids zone on October 17.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

106

First Fridays in Manassas

A September First Friday celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month all month long.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

110

Pumpkin Palooza

A pumpkin-themed First Friday on October 9.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

107

Manassas Latino Festival

Free music, dance, food and family activities on September 26.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

111

Old Town Manassas Fall-O-Ween

Family trick-or-treating and Halloween fun on October 31.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

108

Northern Virginia Thai Street Food & Culture Festival

Street food and cultural performances on select fall Sundays.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

112

National Museum of the Marine Corps

A free, dramatic museum beside Quantico with immersive galleries and a family-friendly trail.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

109

Manassas Fall Jubilee

More than 100 booths, music and food on October 3.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

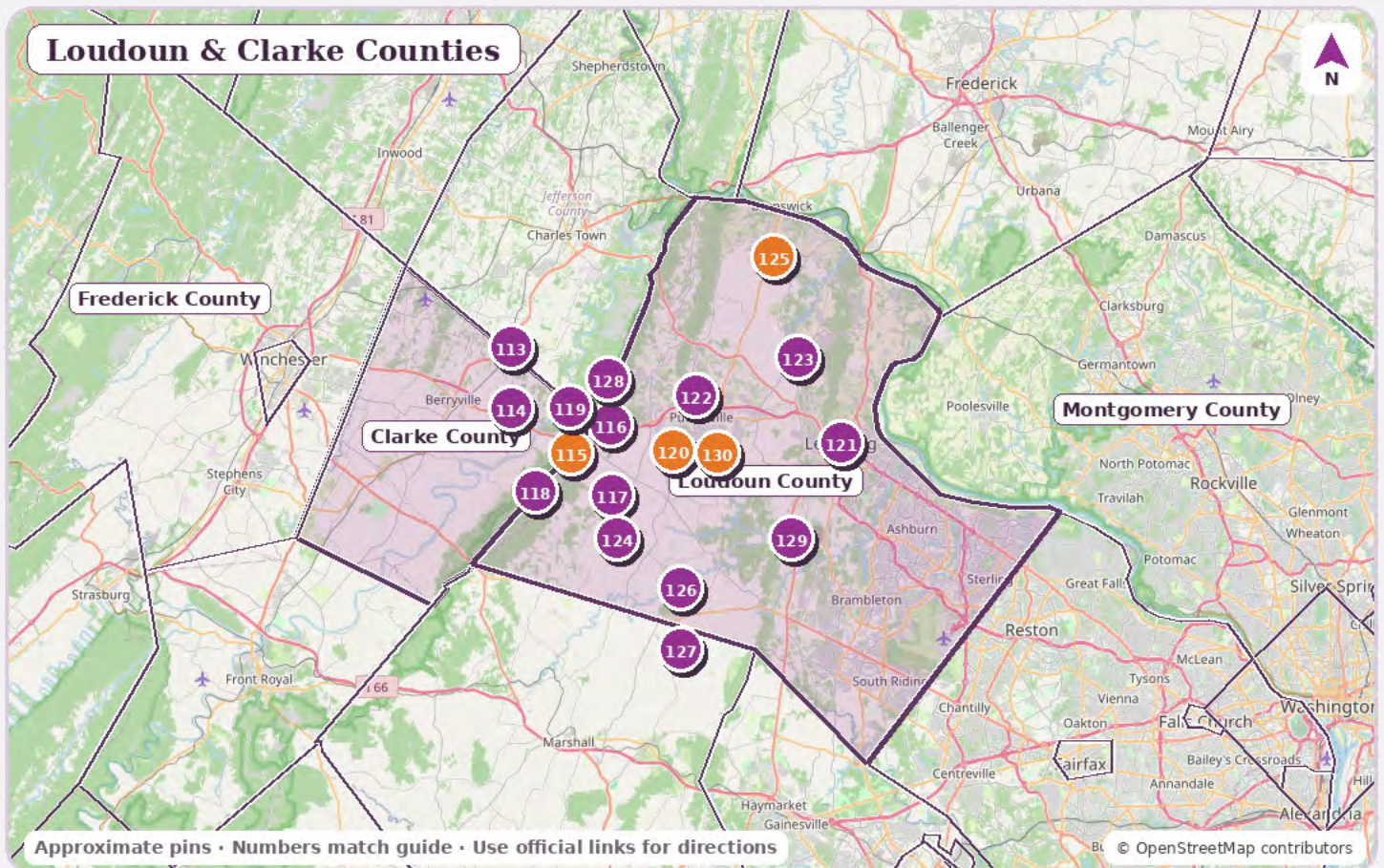
Loudoun & Clarke Counties

Local favorites from farms and fairs to Blue Ridge views

LEAF PEEPING

FARM DAYS

GROWN-UP STOPS



113

Wayside Farm Fun's 10-acre corn maze

An enormous Berryville maze plus hay mountain, slides and play areas.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

118

Bluemont Vineyard

Wine and sweeping Loudoun Valley views above the farm.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

114

Pick your own pumpkin at Wayside Farm

Choose from an eight-acre field and stay for pig races and farm fun.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

119

Dirt Farm Brewing

Farm-raised beer and a mountainside patio overlooking Loudoun.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

115

Bear Chase Brewing Company

Beer, food, live music, firepits and panoramic Blue Ridge views.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

120

Henway Hard Cider

The cider stop in a full Great Country Farms-Bluemont-Dirt Farm day.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

116

Bear's Den Overlook

A short family-friendly Appalachian Trail hike with a western-facing view.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

121

Leesburg Car Show

More than 150 vehicles downtown on October 3; supports Academies of Loudoun.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

117

Great Country Farms

Pick-your-own crops, farm play and seasonal family festivals.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

122

Loudoun Fall Farm Tour

A free self-guided tour of farms and producers October 17-18.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

127

Middleburg Film Festival

Four days of award-season films October 15-18.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

123

Waterford Fair

Juried crafts, historic homes, living history, music and the Flower Barn October 2-4.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

128

Hike Raven Rocks

A longer, rocky climb to sweeping views near the West Virginia line.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

124

Bluemont Fair

Local artisans, music, heritage displays and family fun September 19-20.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

129

Tour Oatlands

Historic house, gardens and grounds that glow in fall.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

125

Lovettsville Oktoberfest

German food, music and community celebration on September 26.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

130

Build a Loudoun fall driving loop

Combine historic roads, farm stands, wineries, breweries, cider and foliage.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

126

Middleburg Oktoberfest

Biergartens, German food, live music and games on September 19.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

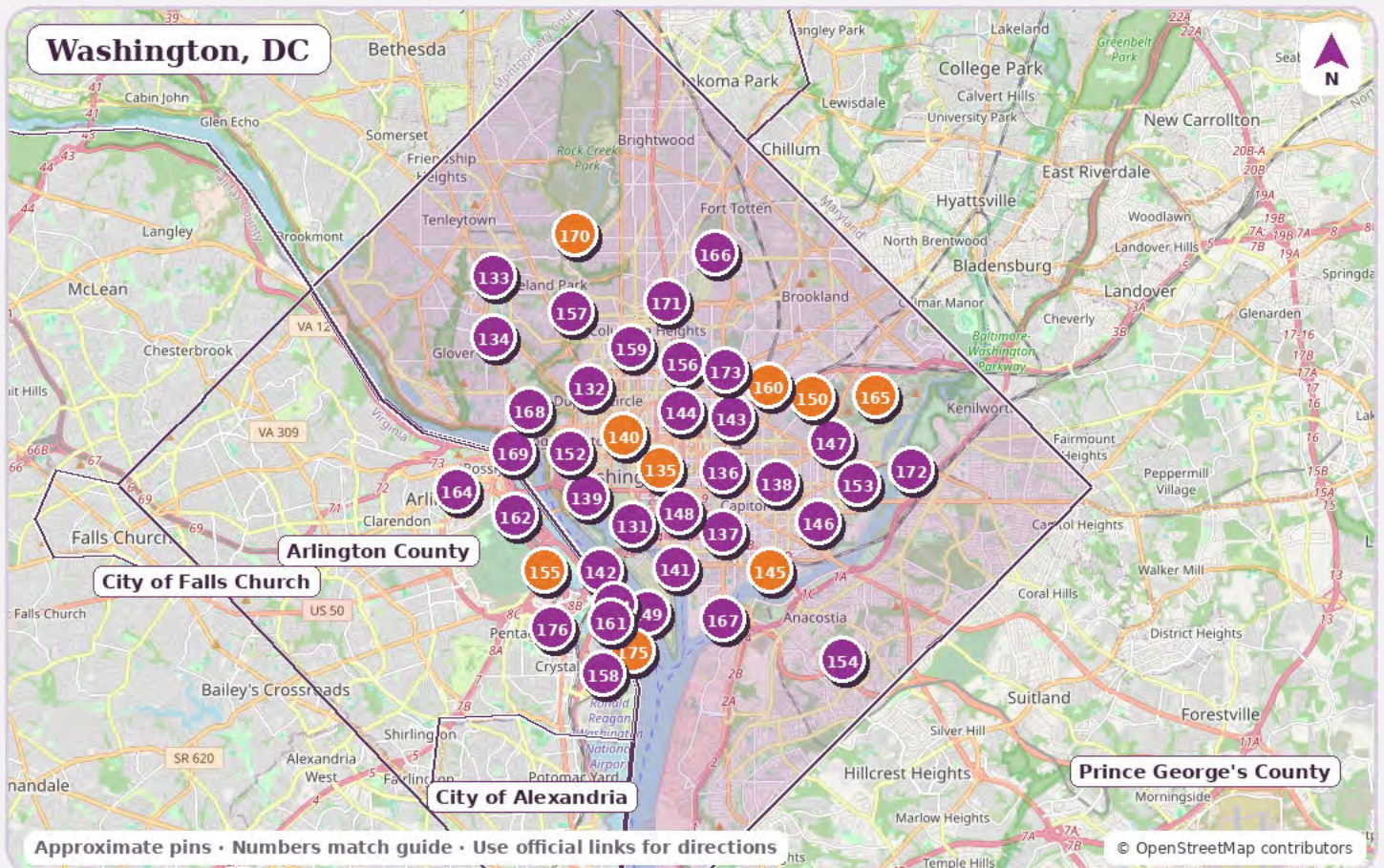
Washington, DC

Free museums, iconic landmarks and neighborhood festivals

FIRST WEEKENDS

RAINY DAYS

NEW-TO-DC FAMILIES



131

Watch money being made at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing

A free weekday tour with an only-in-DC view of currency production.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

137

Explore the Capitol Dome for a unique experience

Very limited access through congressional offices. Plan ahead and contact your congressional representative.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

132

Celebrate Latino culture at Fiesta DC

September 26–27, 2026, with food, music, dancing, artisans and the Parade of Nations..

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

138

Tour the Library of Congress

The Great Hall and Main Reading Room overlook are unforgettable.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

133

Tour Washington National Cathedral

Architecture, gardens, stained glass, gargoyles and panoramic city views.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

139

Ride to the top of the Washington Monument

Reserve timed tickets for a bird's-eye view of the city.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

134

See and help build the LEGO Cathedral

A massive crowd-built model planned to contain more than 500,000 bricks.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

140

Request a White House tour

Plan well ahead through a member of Congress.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

135

See a performance and tour Ford's Theatre

Combine live theater with one of Washington's most important historic sites.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

141

National Museum of African American History and Culture

Powerful history, culture and art; free timed passes are required.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

136

Tour the U.S. Capitol

Reserve a public tour and leave time for the exhibitions downstairs.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

142

National Museum of American History

The Star-Spangled Banner, First Ladies, popular culture and America 250.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

143

National Museum of Natural History

Dinosaurs, the Hope Diamond, ocean life and human origins.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

149

National Museum of Asian Art - Sackler Gallery

A connected but distinct gallery with rotating Asian art exhibitions.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

144

National Museum of the American Indian

Native history and culture plus one of the Mall's best museum cafes.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

150

Smithsonian American Art Museum

American art in a beautiful shared building with a covered courtyard.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

145

National Air and Space Museum

Flight and space icons; free timed passes are currently required.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

151

National Portrait Gallery

Meet notable Americans through portraiture and biography.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

146

Hirshhorn Museum

Modern and contemporary art in one of the Mall's most distinctive buildings.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

152

Renwick Gallery

Small, creative and ideal for contemporary craft lovers.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

147

National Museum of African Art

African art spanning centuries, connected underground near the Castle.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

153

National Postal Museum

An overlooked family favorite beside Union Station.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

148

National Museum of Asian Art - Freer Gallery

Asian and American art, including the jewel-like Peacock Room.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

154

Anacostia Community Museum

Community history, culture and stories rooted in DC neighborhoods.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

155

Arts and Industries Building

Special programs rather than a permanent museum; check current access. * Closes September 7th.*

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

161

National Children's Museum

Hands-on STEAM play for younger families near the Mall.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

156

Smithsonian Castle

The Smithsonian's original building; check renovation and access updates. * Closes September 7th.*

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

162

Take the iconic Albert Einstein Memorial photo

Sit beside Einstein for a quintessential family picture.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

157

Smithsonian's National Zoo

A free Smithsonian outing with timed entry passes required.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

163

Find the giant blue rooster

Hahn/Cock stands on the National Gallery's East Building roof terrace.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

158

International Spy Museum

Immersive espionage history and interactive undercover missions.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

164

Walk Theodore Roosevelt Island

A wooded island trail that feels far removed from the city.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

159

Planet Word

A highly interactive language museum that captivates older children and teens.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

165

Explore the U.S. National Arboretum

Fall color, bonsai, gardens and the atmospheric Capitol Columns.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

160

National Building Museum

Not what you expect - plus one of DC's best museum gift shops.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

166

Tour President Lincoln's Cottage

See where Lincoln developed the Emancipation Proclamation.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

172

Attend the H Street Festival

Music, food, vendors and one of DC's biggest neighborhood celebrations, taking place on September 19.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

167

Ride scooters around the National Mall

A flexible way to cover monuments with older kids and teens.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

173

Celebrate Adams Morgan Day

A free neighborhood festival with music, culture and family activities on September 13.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

168

Kayak or paddleboard on the Potomac

Enjoy Georgetown, Key Bridge and monument views from the water.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

174

Take a free WalkingTown DC tour

Explore architecture, history and neighborhoods with local guides.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

169

Take a guided bike or Segway-style tour

A fun overview for newcomers who want the stories behind the landmarks.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

175

Attend the DC State Fair

Local growing, baking, making and wonderfully quirky contests on September 6.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

170

Go leaf peeping in Rock Creek Park

Hike, picnic or drive through a ribbon of fall color in the city.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

176

Hear live music during DC JazzFest

Multiple venues culminate in a lively waterfront weekend, September 5-6.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

171

Experience Art All Night

Neighborhood art, performances and late-night creative energy, September 11-12.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

Chesapeake traditions, Navy spirit and family farm days

HISTORY BUFFS



177

Maryland Renaissance Festival

Jousting, performances, costumes and feasting on weekends through October 25.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

183

Annapolis Powerboat Show

Climb aboard boats and explore the transformed downtown harbor. October 8-11.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

178

Find the Great Annapolis Pumpkins

Giant pumpkin installations turn downtown into a seasonal photo hunt.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

184

Annapolis Sailboat Show

One of the world's signature in-water sailboat shows. October 15-18.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

179

Take an Annapolis ghost tour

Colonial legends and haunted history on cobblestone streets after dark.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

185

Maryland Corn Maze

Eight themed acres plus farm-yard play in Gambrills.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

180

Tour the U.S. Naval Academy

Walk the Yard and learn about Navy tradition and midshipman life.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

186

Annapolis Pride Parade & Festival

Saturday, October 3, 2026
Celebrate at the family-friendly Annapolis Pride Parade & Festival.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

181

Visit the Naval Academy Museum and chapel

Ship models, naval history and John Paul Jones' crypt.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

187

Greenstreet Gardens Fall Festival

Corn maze, hayrides, jumping pillow, slides and seasonal play in Lothian.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

182

Attend a Navy football game

A spirited military-family fall day at Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

188

Kinder Farm Park

Farm animals, trails, playgrounds and fall color.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

194

Take a Watermark cruise or walking tour

See Annapolis from the harbor or explore its history on foot.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

189

Quiet Waters Park

Wooded trails, gardens, water views and generous picnic space.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

195

Walk Main Street, City Dock and Ego Alley

Boats, shops, treats and people-watching in the heart of Annapolis.

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190

Sandy Point State Park

Walk the beach beneath dramatic Chesapeake Bay Bridge views.

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196

Sail aboard the historic skipjack Wilma Lee

Cruises run through October 31st.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

191

Annapolis Maritime Museum & Park

Discover the city's maritime history, oyster industry and Chesapeake Bay ecology.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

197

Fort George G. Meade Museum

Army history from World War I to today; verify access and current hours.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

192

Historic London Town and Gardens

Colonial history, archaeological sites and waterfront gardens.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

198

National Cryptologic Museum

Codes, ciphers, Enigma machines and intelligence history near Fort Meade.

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193

Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum

Maryland African American history in downtown Annapolis.

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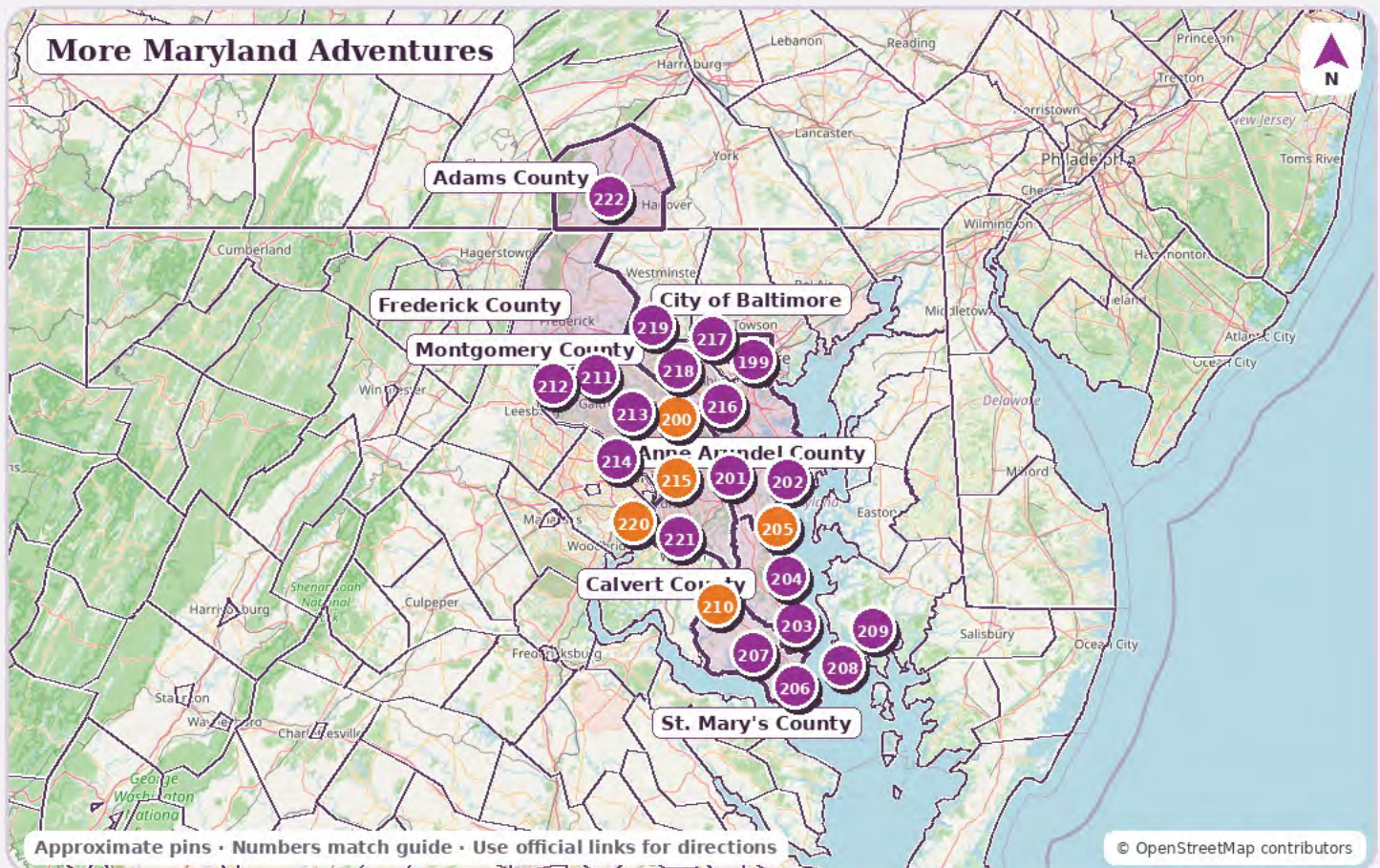
More Maryland Adventures

Fossils, farms, museums and unexpected day trips

DAY TRIPS

FOSSIL HUNTERS

INDOOR-OUTDOOR MIXES



199

National Aquarium

A full Baltimore day with sharks, dolphins, rainforest habitats and harbor views.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

205

Search the shell line at Breezy Point

Easy beach access for a gentler fossil-hunting outing.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

200

College Park Aviation Museum

Explore aviation history at the College Park Aviation Museum.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

206

Historic St. Mary's City

Living history at Maryland's original capital, founded in 1634.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

201

Wizard of Oz playground

Follow the yellow brick road through Watkins Regional Park.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

207

Patuxent River Naval Air Museum

Test-pilot history and static aircraft, including a Blue Angel.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

202

Smithsonian Environmental Research Center

Free waterfront trails, forest habitats and environmental science in Edgewater.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

208

Calvert Marine Museum

Otters, rays, fossils, boats and a lighthouse in Solomons.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

203

Shark-tooth hunt at Calvert Cliffs

A woodland hike leads to a fossil-rich Chesapeake beach.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

209

Annmarie Sculpture Garden

Art in the woods plus family programs and seasonal events.

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204

Fossil hunt at Flag Ponds

A family hike to a broad beach known for shells and shark teeth.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

210

Navy Recreation Center Solomons

Camping, cabins, fishing and recreation for eligible military patrons.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

211

Butler's Orchard Pumpkin Festival

Hayrides, maze, farm animals, play and pumpkins in Germantown.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

217

Historic Ellicott City haunted history tour

Climb the hills and hear eerie stories from a 250-year-old town.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

212

Hike Sugarloaf Mountain

Short climbs and overlooks with some of central Maryland's best fall color.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

218

Clark's Elioak Farm pumpkin patch

Farm animals, storybook attractions and a family pumpkin patch. Open September 19-November 8.

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213

Walk Lake Needwood

Lakeside trails, boating and woodland foliage in Rock Creek Regional Park.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

219

Pick apples and pumpkins at Larriland Farm

A classic Howard County pick-your-own day.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

214

Agricultural History Farm Park Harvest Festival

Farm demonstrations, crafts and harvest traditions on October 3 in Derwood.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

220

Tour the C&O Canal

Narrated walking tour of Georgetown's C&O Canal with a chance to board the canal boat.

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215

College Park Day

Free music, activities and museum entry on October 3.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

221

Ride the Capital Wheel

Potomac and skyline views from National Harbor.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

216

Ghost tour at Savage Mill

Seasonal stories inside a historic textile mill complex.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

222

Visit Gettysburg

Battlefield history, foliage and a full day-trip atmosphere.

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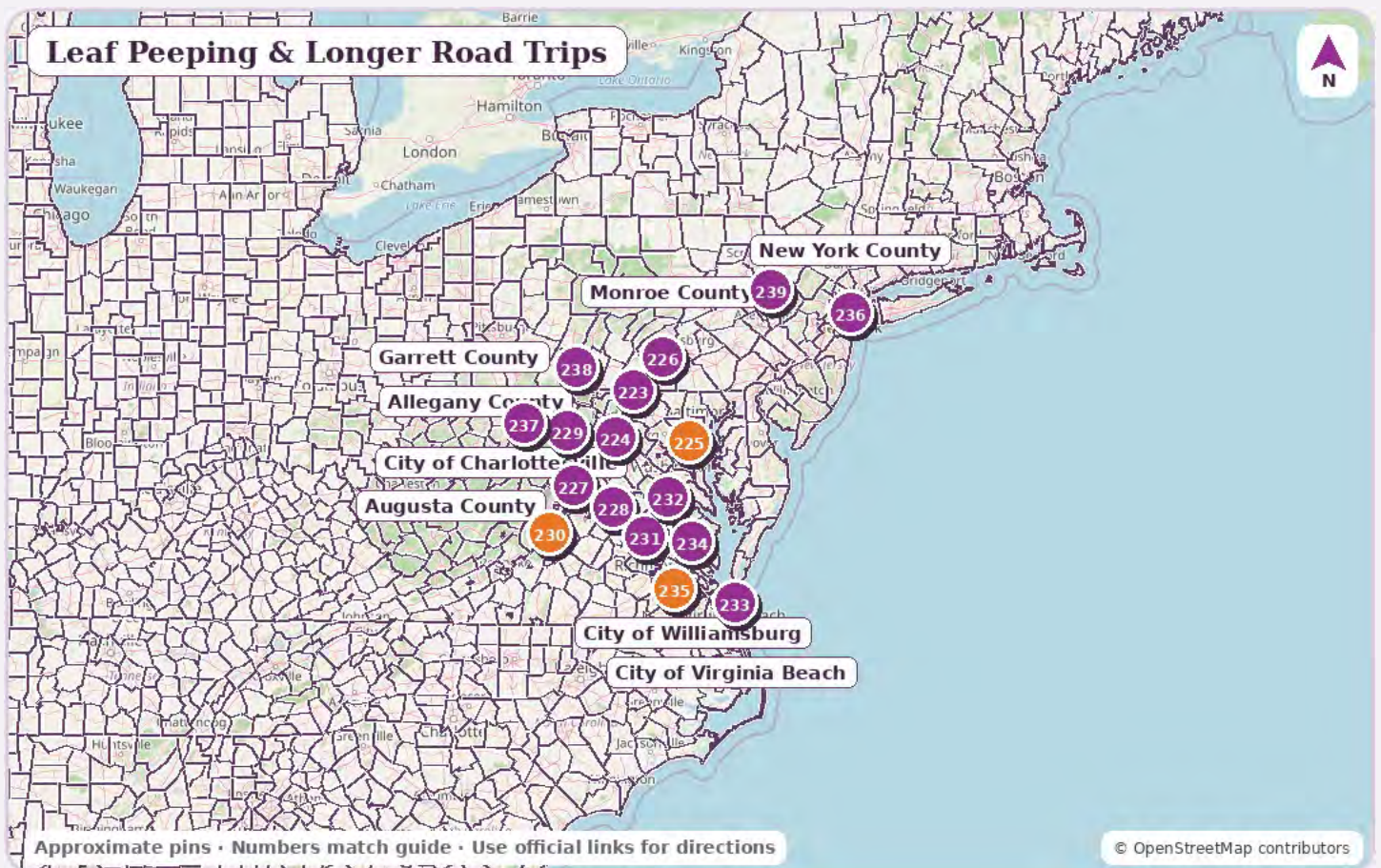
Leaf Peeping & Longer Road Trips

When the best fall day means leaving the Beltway behind

LONG WEEKENDS

PEAK COLOR

MEMORY-MAKING DRIVES



223

Explore Harpers Ferry National Historical Park

Walk historic streets where Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia meet.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

228

Drive Skyline Drive

Choose a short section or all 105 miles and stop at overlooks.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

224

Zipline or climb with River Riders

Ropes courses and adventure activities near Harpers Ferry.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

229

Hike to a Shenandoah waterfall

Try Dark Hollow Falls, Rose River Falls or another trail matched to your group.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

225

Tube the Shenandoah River

An early-fall option while water and air temperatures remain comfortable.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

230

Continue onto the Blue Ridge Parkway

Extend the leaf-peeping drive south from Shenandoah.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

226

Harpers Ferry WaterPark

An inflatable quarry course best treated as an early-season bonus.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

231

Tour Monticello

Pair Jefferson's mountaintop home with a Charlottesville day.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

227

Tour Luray Caverns

An all-weather underground adventure in the Shenandoah Valley.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

232

Explore Fredericksburg

Bookstores, an old-time diner, river walks and layered history.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

236

Take the train to New York City

An ambitious but easy car-free weekend from Union Station.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

233

Take a fall Virginia Beach weekend

Cooler beach walks, festivals and fewer summer crowds.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

237

Deep Creek Lake and Autumn Glory

Western Maryland foliage and one of the state's signature fall festivals. October 7-11.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

234

Visit Water Country USA

A warm-weather bonus before the water park closes for the season on September 20.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

238

Western Maryland Scenic Railroad

Ride through mountain color from Cumberland.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

235

Busch Gardens Howl-O-Scream

Haunted houses and nighttime scares for older kids and adults. September 11-November 1.

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239

Drive north to the Pocono Mountains

A longer weekend for waterfalls, foliage and mountain towns.

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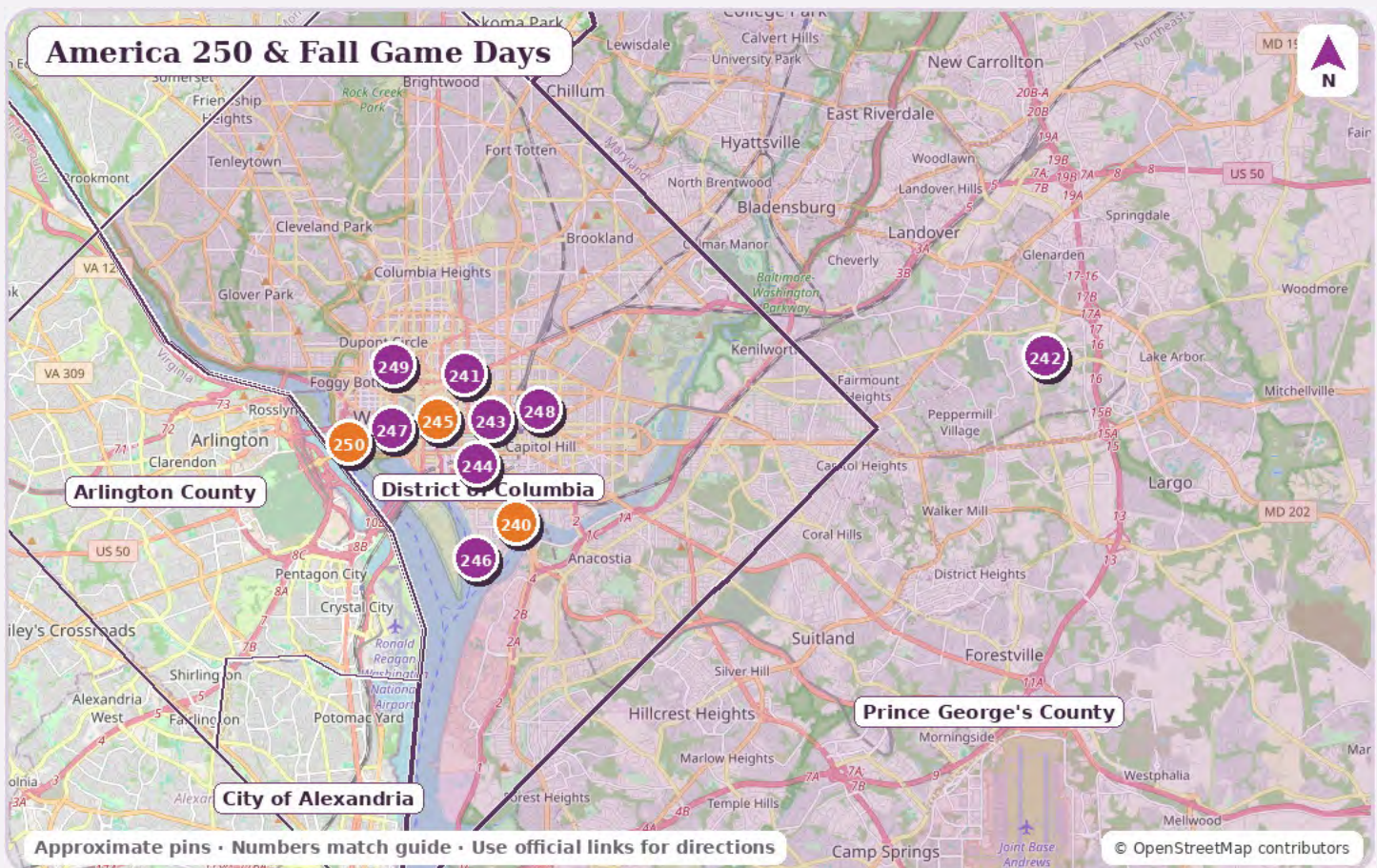
America 250 & Fall Game Days

Once-in-a-generation exhibits, hometown teams and late-fall traditions

AMERICA 250

GAME DAYS

RAINY-DAY HISTORY



240

Washington Nationals game

Catch a late-season game before baseball gives way to football.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

246

Washington Spirit match at Audi Field

Cheer on DC's professional women's soccer team during its September and October home stretch.

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241

Washington Wizards game

An indoor sports night when fall weather turns cold or wet.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

247

In Pursuit of Life, Liberty & Happiness

The Smithsonian's signature America 250 exhibition fills three floors with 250 objects through the end of 2026.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

242

Washington Commanders game

Make a full fall Sunday of football, food and friends.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

248

Free and Independent at the National Archives

A free America 250 exhibition about the Declaration, its signers and its preservation, open through July 5, 2027.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

243

Georgetown Hoyas basketball game

College basketball adds energy as late fall arrives.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

249

America250 exhibit at the White House Visitor Center

An immersive, public exhibition exploring the American story and the nation's 250th anniversary.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

244

Ice skate at the National Gallery Sculpture Garden

A late-fall and winter favorite once the rink opens.

[OFFICIAL SITE ↗](#)

250

Catch the VA250 Mobile Museum Experience

Check the official tour calendar for the traveling, hands-on Virginia history museum and Northern Virginia stops.

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245

Washington Capitals game

Hockey returns in October, with the home opener at Capital One Arena on October 7.

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Love where you live. Know where to explore.

Whether you are new to the DMV or ready for your next chapter here, I would love to be your local resource.

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Always confirm details directly with the venue before your visit.

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DC

The Washington Monument Framed by Autumn Leaves

Will-o'-wisp · CC BY-SA 4.0

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ALEXANDRIA

Waterfront, Old Town Alexandria, Virginia (14496602112)

Ken Lund from Reno, Nevada, USA · CC BY-SA 2.0

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ARLINGTON

Fall colors at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia on October 27, 2025 - 50

Arlington National Cemetery · Public domain

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FAIRFAX

Autumn Reflections at George Washington's Gristmill (37975308991)

Rob Shenk from Great Falls, VA, USA · CC BY-SA 2.0

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LOCAL CITIES

2015-12-08 12 33 16 Weeping Willows with autumn foliage next to a pond along Woodland Park Road in McNair, Fairfax County...

Famartin · CC BY-SA 4.0

[VIEW SOURCE ↗](#)

PRINCE WILLIAM

Bull Run at Manassas National Battlefield Park 03

Sj2z · CC BY-SA 3.0

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LOUDOUN

Bears den 1

Strawser · CC BY-SA 3.0

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ANNAPOLIS

ANNAPOLIS WATERFRONT - NARA - 546788

Jim Pickerell · Public domain

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MARYLAND

Flag Ponds and Calvert Cliffs MD1

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ROAD TRIPS

Skyline Drive Near Naked Creek autumn color, October 13

ShenandoahNPS · Public domain

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BONUS

Pumpkin Picking (Unsplash)

Bonnie Kittle bonniekdesign · CC0

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MILITARY

M-SHORAD Stryker

Christopher Kaufmann · Public domain

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