

Nanticoke Heritage Byway

The First State's First Region



4 Days/3 Nights

Gateway City: Baltimore, Maryland



In 1608, English explorer Captain John Smith became the first known person to map the waterways of southwest Delaware and meet the Kuskarawaoks, the original name of the Nanticoke Indians, “people of the tidewater,” who had lived here for generations. After a clash when Smith’s party startled the Native Americans, Smith worked to establish trade relations with this very successful group of hunters, fisherman, and farmers. The Nanticoke River became a critical water route in the region and one of the most important trade and shipbuilding centers on the Eastern seaboard. When the railroad arrived in 1856, towns along the river gained access to Baltimore and Philadelphia. The history of this timeless region, appearing in many places as it did to the first English explorers, can be discovered along the nearly 40-mile Nanticoke Heritage Byway, that still gently meanders through the lush agricultural landscapes, natural beauty, and historic architecture, on a scenic journey through the evolution of history and culture in rural Delaware. Walk in the steps of the early explorers, traders, ship builders and farmers, as you explore the First State’s first region.



Touring the Byway

We recommend starting your journey in Baltimore, before a very short trip to Annapolis, where you will be introduced to the early maritime heritage of the coastal region at the Annapolis Maritime Museum and Park, and Historic London Town, before staying at the Historic Inns of Annapolis.

On Day Two, head for Seaford, Delaware, at the beginning of the Byway, where you can tour the Ross Mansion and Plantation, the Seaford Museum and Seaford Train Station. Stay at the Hampton Inn in Seaford.

On Day Three, you can drive one of the loops of the Byway, passing Invest, the former DuPont plant, enjoy Woodland Park, take the Woodland Ferry across the river and stroll the Chapel Branch Nature Trail on the other side. From there, it's a short trip to Philips Landing State Park, where John Smith met the Nanticoke Tribe. A bit further on, you'll reach Bethel, once a bustling shipbuilding town, where you can tour the Bethel Maritime Museum, before heading back to Seaford for the evening.

Day Four takes you back south to Laurel, where you can tour the Cook House Museum, the Laurel Heritage Museum, Old Christ Church, and swing over to Trap Pond State Park, before heading to historic Lewes, to visit the Historic Shipcarpenters Campus before catching the Cape May-Lewes Ferry to New Jersey.

From there, if you're traveling another Delaware Scenic Byway, we wish you safe passage or a safe and pleasant journey home,

DAY ONE



Annapolis

Annapolis was designed to be grand. Instead of laying out a grid pattern, the city was constructed around a baroque plan used in the capitals of Europe. Circles with radiating streets created a focal point for important buildings, that still stand proudly today. Originally Providence and Anne Arundel's Town, the city did not become Annapolis until the Maryland capital was moved from St. Mary's City. Queen Anne's royal badge, with a crown over the entwined thistle of Scotland and Tudor rose of England, is still depicted on the Annapolis flag. As the town prospered, wealthy merchants and planters worked to duplicate the amenities they had enjoyed in England and built mansions worthy of any in the world. Today, Annapolis has more of these original 18th century structures standing than any other city in the United States.



Historic Main Street

Start your visit strolling through the historic 18th-century core historic district, a remarkable place, surrounded by four centuries of lovingly preserved architecture. Yet, Annapolis has the energy of a contemporary city, with Midshipman from the Naval Academy, shops and restaurants of every size and description, and bustling streets. There are dozens of restaurants to enjoy downtown, plus art, historic landmarks and historic landmarks.

Annapolis Maritime Museum and Park

The historic McNasby Oyster Company, the last oyster packing plant in Annapolis serves as the home of the Annapolis Maritime Museum. With a direct view of the Chesapeake Bay, the campus includes the exhibits center, three transient piers, an adjacent beachside park with wooden boat exhibits and kayak launch point, a research library and a rotating, maritime-themed art gallery.

723 Second Street, Annapolis, MD 21403 10AM-3PM. Adults \$7

Historic London Town

Before there was Annapolis, over three hundred years ago, the area was a colonial tobacco port town, bustling with ships, ferries, and commercial trade goods. Then it all disappeared, to be reconstructed today surrounding the 1760 William Brown House, with scenic river views, 10 acres of woodland and ornamental gardens.

839 Londontown Road, Edgewater, MD 21037 410-222-1919, W-Sun 10AM-4PM





Destination Distinctive Accommodations

Historic Inns of Annapolis, 58 State Circle, Annapolis, MD 21401, 410-263-2641

Historic hotel in three different buildings: The Maryland Inn, Governor Calvert House and Robert Johnson House, right on the center of everything.

Destination Distinctive Dining

Reynolds Tavern, 7 Church Circle, Annapolis, MD 21401, 410-295-9555

Galway Bay, 63 Maryland Avenue, Annapolis, MD 21401, 410-263-8333 Historic Irish pub in a cobblestone alley.

Iron Rooster, 12 Market Space, Annapolis, MD 21401, 410-990-1600 Breakfast all day.

Lewnes' Steakhouse, 410 Fourth Street, Annapolis, MD 21401, 410-263-1617

Maryland classics and seafood, plus steak.

DAY TWO

Seaford

The first record of settlement here was "Martin's Hundred" granted in 1672. Yet roads in the area were not recorded until 1720, which speaks to the importance of the river in early transportation. The area was originally primarily agricultural and tobacco plantations, benefiting from the agricultural innovations brought by William Henry Harrison Ross, the then Governor of Delaware in the 1850s. With the availability of ore in the region, it was also a very busy bog iron processing area. Like so many other towns in southern Delaware, the Civil War brought divisions. After the war ended, the town received its charter.





Ross Mansion and Plantation

This rare complete Victorian mansion dating from 1860 has been lovingly restored and authentically furnished as it was in the period when William Henry Harrison Ross lived in the home. The property includes the only documented log slave quarters in Delaware, a granary, stable, smokehouse, corn cribs, and a Honeymoon Cottage built from a pattern book. Ross was an extremely popular governor who brought train service to Delaware and other innovations, but when the Civil War broke out, Ross supported the Confederacy because he was a slave holder and was forced to flee to England. His mansion stands as a reminder of his pre-Civil War life.

23669 Ross Station Road, Seaford, DE 19973, 302-628-9500, Sat 1PM-4PM, First and Second Sun 1PM-4PM, Appointments: 302-628-9828, Adults \$7



Seaford Museum

Filled with history of interesting characters, here you can meet Patty Cannon, the greatest murderess in American history, who ran a gang of 60 people that was larger than the Bonnie and Clyde gang, who stole more than Jesse James and survived longer than Al Capone. Coming from an influential family, she was perhaps responsible for more enslaved people being captured and sold to slave traders in the South. Here you can also learn more about Governor Ross and his wife Elizabeth. Exhibits illustrate the history of the region with thousands of local artifacts beginning with the Nanticoke Indians and continuing through agriculture, shipbuilding, canning, poultry, railroads and more. There is also a gallery with changing exhibits featuring special topics.

203 High Street, Seaford, DE 19973, 302-628-9828, F, 1PM-4PM

Seaford Train Station

The Seaford Station Complex includes the 1905 Seaford Railroad Station, Seaford Freight Station, the 1890 Nanticoke River moveable railroad bridge and mainline railroad tracks.



Destination Accommodations

Hampton Inn Seaford, 22871 Sussex Highway, Seaford, DE 19973, 302-629-4500, Comfortable accommodations with breakfast included.

Destination Distinctive Dining

Smith's Café, 22939 Sussex Highway, Seaford, DE 19973, 302-990-5711 Third generation family-owned cafe serving home style meals and seafood.

C and C's Country Kitchen, 304 High Street, Seaford, DE 19973, 302-629-3030 Quaint little restaurant.

Every Fiber Coffee Company, 306 High Street, Seaford, DE 19973 302-629-6822

Café Milano, 800 South Market Street, Seaford, DE 19973, 302-629-9403, Italian and pizza, lunch and dinner.

DAY THREE

Invista (former DuPont Plant)

The Seaford Plant which produced the world's first nylon in 1938 is located south of Seaford, on DuPont Road, bordered by the Nanticoke River to the east and the Norfolk Southern Railroad to the north. It is currently not open.

25876 DuPont Road, Seaford, DE 19973

Woodland Park

Stretch your legs on a very short, easy walk through Woodland Park, a former golf course with six quiet, beautiful trails, two ponds and a historic schoolhouse.

27800 Woodland Road, Seaford, DE 19973

Woodland Ferry

Cross the Nanticoke River on the Woodland Ferry which has been operating since 1734, that now transports vehicles and passengers between Seaford and Laurel.

Daily year-round with service from 7AM-6:30PM, except for Thursday morning. There is no fee to cross. Look for signs on the way to the ferry to make sure it's open.

RR 3, Box 111, Seaford, DE 19973, 302-629-7742



Chapel Branch Nature Trail

When you cross the river, enjoy this easy 2.8-mile loop trail.

470-514 Woodland Road, Seaford, DE 19973, 302-327-8847

Philips Landing State Park

It is believed that it was here at the confluence of the Nanticoke River and Broad Creek was the place that Captain John Smith met the Nanticoke Tribe in 1608.

The wooded areas and walking trails in the surrounding Phillips Landing Recreation Area allow visitors to experience a taste of the isolated natural beauty that Smith encountered.

Philips Landing Road, Route 496, Laurel, DE 19956





Bethel

This entire quaint village of Federal and Victorian homes is on the National Register of Historic Places. Founded in the late 1700s when Kendall Lewis constructed a dock on the north bank of the Broad Creek near Laurel, Bethel was a prosperous shipbuilding community into the 1800's, with many homes built by ship carpenters for sea captains of the period. Stroll down old Main Street to see the lovely views from these grand old residences located on Broad Creek.

Four stores opened in the 1840s to meet the needs of the residents who settled in the area as it quickly became an important location for the construction of large schooners. A substantial amount of shipping developed between Bethel, Baltimore, and other areas of the Chesapeake Bay. Old Wesley Church was constructed in 1855 and a post office arrived in 1880. The Bethel Store dates from 1900.

Bethel Maritime Museum/Bethel Historical Society

Exhibits here illustrate the seafaring history of Bethel, through ship building tools, ship models, maritime artifacts, stories, photographs, and other artifacts related to the ship building heritage of Bethel.

312 First Street, Bethel, DE 19931, 302-858-3840, First Sunday of the month,
1PM-4PM



DAY FOUR



Laurel

Incorporated two hundred years after it was founded, Laurel was considered one of the wealthiest towns in the state, with eleven general stores, seven grocery stores, five millinery, three clothing, three drug stores, two furniture stores, one carriage factory, one sawmill, two blacksmith shops, two wheelwright shops, two butcher shops, two shoe shops, two barber shops, two hotels, five physicians, one dentist, and three churches. In the summer of 1899, an overturned lighted kerosene lamp caused an entire section of town to burn. Over the years, five residents from Laurel served as Governor of Delaware and today, it is home to more historic buildings than any town in Delaware with 800 on the National Register of Historic Places.

Cook House Museum

The highlight of collections at the Cook House Museum is the collection of Albert Waller photographs, the earliest of which date to 1898. They document the entire history of the region during the first half of the 20th century, illustrating lifestyle changes in transportation, architecture, dress styles, and work habits. Showing the advent of the motorcar, telephone, electricity, and work-saving devices, the panorama spans Laurel from horse and buggy days, to the big band days of the 1940's, the dark days of World War II, and the post war boom. When viewed as a whole, the Waller collection gives viewers a time travel look into the everyday lives of their grandparents and great grandparents.

502 East Fourth Street, Laurel, DE 19956, 302-875-1344, First Sunday of each month, 1PM-4PM



Laurel Heritage Museum

Located in the old Laurel Train Station, the museum features an extensive collection of historical documents and objects from the Delaware Public Archives and the University of Delaware.

215 Mechanic Street, Laurel, DE 19956, 19956, 302-875-2820



Destination Distinctive Dining

Laurel Coffee Shop, 215 East Market Street, Laurel, DE 19956, 302-875-5299 Donuts, breakfast sandwiches, bagels.

Abbott's on Broad Creek, 111 Delaware Avenue, Laurel, DE 19956 302-280-6172 Grill with big town taste and small town nice.

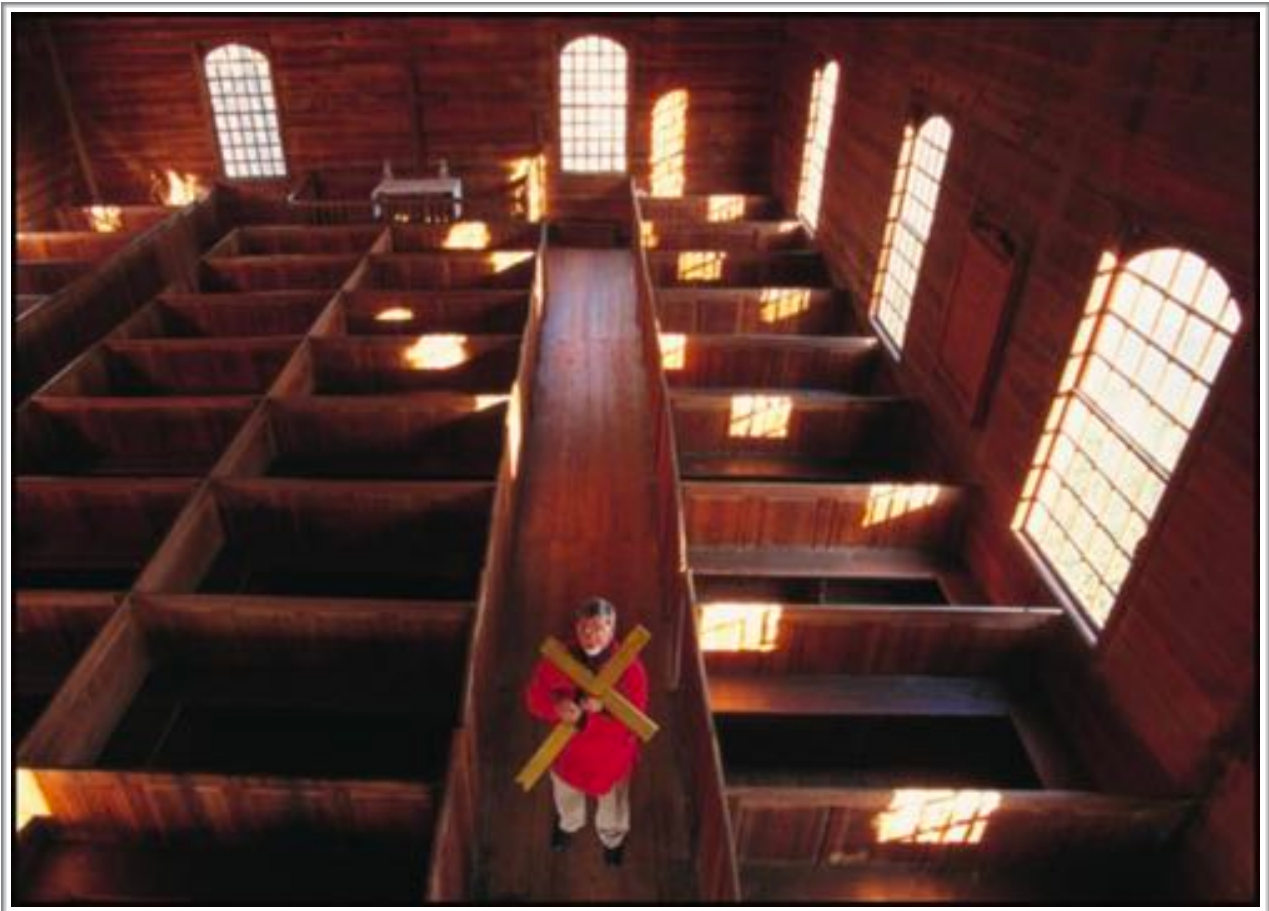
Destination Distinctive Retail

This-N-That Country Store, 32450 Bi State Boulevard, Laurel, DE 19956, 302-841-5188

Old Christ Church

Constructed in 1772, this historic church is one of the few remaining unaltered wooden structures of its age and type in the United States. The paneled walls, a barrel-vaulted ceiling, and wood box pews that are evocative of pre-Revolutionary days, when meeting places such as this were the community centers of rural colonial America. Guided tours are offered on a scheduled basis.

Chipman's Pond Road and Christ Church Road, Laurel, DE 19956, 302-403-4310



Trap Pond State Park

Once used as an industrial logging pond starting in the late 1700s, Trap Pond is home to the northern-most, naturally occurring, stand of Baldcypress trees in the United States. Guided tours of the cypress swamp, numerous cemeteries and an 1800s church tell the history of the area and there are more than 12 miles of hiking trails. The Baldcypress Nature Center which offers exhibits and interpretive programs about the park's natural and cultural history.

33587 Baldcypress Lane, Laurel, DE 19956, 302-875-5153





Lewes

It is amazing from its early history, that Lewes ever became a town. Originally named Zwaandael by Dutch settlers in 1631, and were wiped out in 1632, the land was later deeded to a group of Mennonites by the City of Amsterdam to keep from being captured by Maryland. They settled in 1663, and in 1664, the British who had captured Dutch holdings in New York, ordered the settlement razed. The Dutch regrouped by 1673, but in 1682, the Delaware colonies were given to William Penn. He renamed it Lewes. After the British bombarded the town in the War of 1812, Lewes was finally incorporated in 1818. Since Delaware was a border state, but not part of the Confederacy, Lewes became an important stop on the Underground Railroad, where safe houses were identified with a single candle in the top window of the house. Fort Miles was built during World War II to protect local factories and oil refineries. Today, Historic Lewes is a very peaceful, quaint, historic place.



Historic Shipcarpenter Campus

9 historic buildings highlight Lewes's relationship to the sea and illustrate the three centuries since its founding. The Campus includes the 1720 Hiram Rodney Burton House, the only building on its original site, the 1785 Burton-Ingram House, illustrating fine Federal period architecture and original furnishings, the 1740 Rabbit's Ferry House which illustrates life in rural southern Delaware, the 1800 Thompson Country Store, the 1790 Ellegood House another Sussex County farmhouse and Blacksmith Shop, the 1850 Doctor's Office, and 1898 Midway School #178.

110 Shipcarpenter Street, Lewes, DE 19958 10AM-4PM Tu-Sat, Free

Cape May-Lewes Ferry

You can add a final adventure to your trip departing Lewes on the Ferry to Cape May, New Jersey. As you cross the Delaware Bay, enjoy historic lighthouses, scenic harbors, unique shorebirds and maybe even your own dolphin escort! The Cape May-Lewes Ferry terminal is conveniently located in Lewes right next to Cape Henlopen State Park. At the end of US Highway 9 at the waters edge.

