

Planning Guide - A Town at the Crossroads of History

Plan your perfect stay with the help of our Gordonsville Itineraries! Whether you are planning a weekend getaway, enjoying fine spirits or just traveling to see the sights, Gordonsville and the surrounding region have the experiences you are looking for.



Getting Away

Leave work or home behind and enjoy a relaxing getaway. The Central Piedmont's beautiful scenery, cozy B&B's, wineries, antique shops, art galleries and gourmet restaurants are just the thing. No need to get on a plane; it's a short drive away. Stay at one of our area B&B's. There are many inns within 20 miles of Gordonsville. Visit the Inns at Montpelier www.innsatmontpelier.com for reservations at one of the inns located in the surrounding area.

Seasonal Events

April



April is in full bloom with Historic Garden Week: visit www.vagardenweek.org for tours and locations. The flowers are in bloom and the gardens are spectacular! Each spring visitors are welcomed to over 250 of Virginia's most beautiful gardens, homes and historic landmarks during "America's Largest Open House." This 8-day statewide event provides visitors a unique opportunity to see unforgettable gardens at the peak of Virginia's springtime color.

Gordonsville on Main: The best of Virginia in One Town! Established in 2023, [Gordonsville on Main](#) is a collective effort across local businesses and individuals to promote commerce and community on Main Street in Gordonsville, Virginia.

Formerly Main Street Events, *Gordonsville on Main* hosts Outdoor Markets for local artisans to sell their ware and First Friday's throughout the year, in addition to helping our local businesses promote their initiatives.

May



May brings Rodeo Days: Looking for something unique? The second Saturday of the month from May to September, Oakland Heights Farm hosts the BLM Bull and Rodeo Co. Professional bull Riding. There's music, mutton busting, ladies barrel racing and thrilling bucking bull riding. Bring the family and enjoy rodeo days. For more information you may visit www.oaklandheightsfarm.com

Strawberry Festival at Liberty Mills: Just minutes away on VA 231 North is Liberty Mills Farm where strawberry picking is ripe for fun beginning in May. Please check this [link](#) for further details. Make plans today for your farm-tastic adventure!



Summer days: Savor the long summer days in Gordonsville. Enjoy a day at our pool or sit under the shade and picnic at our park. The Town of Gordonsville is home to the only public swimming pool in Orange County: Dix Memorial Pool is located in Verling Park at the corner of Market and Allen Streets near downtown Gordonsville. The pool offers a wonderful summertime recreational activity for both adults and children. For more information on swimming lessons and open swim, please visit [Open Swim](#).

September

September also brings Virginia's Largest Corn

Maze to Liberty Mills: Just minutes away on VA 231 North is Virginia's Largest Corn Maze with the maze divided into four (4) separate trails. No maps here to guide you, you are on your own! The maze is usually open from mid-September to early November. Please check this [link](#) for further details. Make plans today for your farm-tastic adventure!



Montpelier's Constitution Day: Visit Montpelier, which is located 12 minutes from Gordonsville. Constitution Day brings the Liberty Horse Parade, live music, mansion tours, activities for the children, balloon rides and fireworks. Visit www.Montpelier.org.

October

The 1st Saturday in October brings Gordonsville's Fried Chicken Festival:

Stop by and see why Gordonsville is the "Fried Chicken Capital of the World". Artisans, food, wine and entertainment all make up this annual tradition. On January 1, 1840, the arrival of the iron horse changed Gordonsville forever, contributing to its growth and importance as a prime rail junction. With the introduction of the rail service, enterprising African American women started a tradition that was to label Gordonsville as the "Fried Chicken Capital of the World." In those days, passenger trains did not have dining cars. Instead they were greeted by "Waiter Carriers", who later became known as "Chicken Vendors." The women balanced platters of fried chicken on their heads and served passengers through the open rail coach windows.



Year-Round Night Tours at the Exchange Hotel and Civil War Museum:

Have you ever wondered what happens after the museum closes? Take a candlelight tour of the museum, reliving the history; enjoy hearing some of the stories of its dark past, including its proposed paranormal activity. People have reported seeing orbs of light traveling from room to room, heard footsteps on the stairs, heard and seen doors opening and closing on their own, heard the one-legged soldier making his way down the halls as his wooden peg taps the creaky wooden

floors. Doctors and soldiers are seen in the hotel and on the grounds as well. Come visit the 2nd most haunted location in Virginia!

Fall Follies and Festivals: The leaves turn and the Piedmont and Blue Ridge are alive with colors. Witness as local farms and Main Street communities transform into family playgrounds for fall festivals. Click on the picture to see where the fall festivals are by region.



November



Annual Veteran's Day Parade: The second Saturday of November offers an opportunity to honor Veterans from throughout Central Virginia in the Gordonsville [Annual Veteran's Parade](#). Come and feel the patriotism, and be sure to bring your family to enjoy the

pageantry and to instill the values of respect and honor that has made this country great.

December

Holiday Magic: Feel the magic of the holidays in Gordonsville from our Windows on Main Street to our Memorial Tree Lighting. Enjoy Sundays with Santa at the historic Exchange Hotel and Civil War Museum, as well their Christmas Open House. Get into the holiday spirit as South Main Street comes alive with window displays. Each business along Main Street decorates their window(s) in a particularly festive manner. During this fun family activity, there will be treats in the shops and holiday shopping galore! The lighting of



the Memorial Christmas tree on the lawn of Town Hall officially begins the Christmas holiday season in the Town of Gordonsville. The lights on the tree are in memory of loved ones who are no longer with us during the holiday season. The event features carols, reading from classic favorites, dance performances and a visit from Santa Claus.

Downtown Merchant Explorer



Listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register and on the National Register of Historic Places. Experience the unique [shops](#) of Historic Downtown Gordonsville. Can't make up your mind? Why not visit them all?

A Walking Tour of the Downtown Gordonsville Historic District:

Start Your Tour at the Exchange Hotel and Civil War Museum – which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Once a tavern in the 1840's; then a Railroad Grand Hotel in the 1860's; a Receiving Hospital during the Civil War; and after the Civil War, a Freedmen's Bureau. Enjoy the complete history from the beginning to the current day.



Then off to see the Old Freight Depot. Visit the Emporium – site of the Old Mill. Walk the Historic District and imagine what it was like 150 years ago. Visit the Historic Churches. See the wonderfully preserved homes that date back to the turn of the 20th century. See if you can find the marker at the site of the original Gordon Inn.



Fresh Farm Markets: Buy Fresh, Buy Local.



Market at Grelen: Just minutes from Gordonsville on VA 231 North. Dine at their café, visit the Garden Shop, enjoy Pick Your Own Farm Market or spend time hiking Grelen Trails. For more, click <http://www.themarketatgrelen.com/>.

Liberty Mills Farm: Just up the road on VA 231. Home of Virginia's largest Corn Maze. Visit www.libertymillsfarm.com. Make plans today for your farm-tastic adventure! Farm fresh picking, flowers, produce. A great day of fresh air, family fun and amazing scenery awaits.



Darnell's Garden Patch: Just up the road on US Rt.15N straight to Orange, Va. Visit the farmer's market and garden center for a wide variety of locally-grown produce and plants.

The Arts are Alive!

Gordonsville, Barboursville, Orange and surrounding areas are alive with fine arts and offer many exciting pallet temptations.

Four County Players: Located 6 minutes from downtown Gordonsville on Route 33 West. Four County Players is Central Virginia's longest continuously operating community theater. Located in the small village of Barboursville, the theater is the cultural hub for the community, serving as both an artistic and educational center. Four County Players is well-known for its masterful musicals, hilarious comedies, and thought-provoking dramas.
<http://fourcp.org/SitePages/about.aspx>



Brushwood's School of Dance: Located in downtown Gordonsville and established in 1975, Brushwood's School of Dance has performed at many local and regional events. Click on the link to find their current performing event schedule.
<http://www.brushwoodsschoolofdance.com>

Area Fine Arts

The Arts Center in Orange: Located minutes away in downtown Orange. Visit the large gallery and gallery shop, classrooms, and The Orange Studio. The gallery provides exhibit space to display the work of emerging artists in eight shows annually. Virginia artists stock the gallery shop with fine contemporary art, pottery, sculpture, fiber art, glassware, metalwork and jewelry.

<https://www.artscenterinorange.com/>

The Arts Center In Orange



Annie Gould Gallery: Established in 2017 by artist Annie Gould, the gallery features work from local artists as well as art from around the country. This unique [art gallery](#) is located downtown in historic Gordonsville, Virginia, which has become a vibrant destination for shopping, dining and sightseeing.

<https://anniegouldgallery.com/>

Nichols Gallery: Only 6 minutes west of downtown Gordonsville in the historic village of Barboursville. The gallery annex is housed in the old Barboursville Estes-Sparks Hotel. Since opening, Nichols Gallery Annex has exhibited the work of over 50 artists from the mid-Atlantic region. For news on exhibitions and shows, click on the link <http://www.frednichols.com/annex/exhibitions.html>



Sun's Traces Gallery: 6 minutes from downtown Gordonsville. Sun's Traces Gallery features ceramic work created by Paula Brown-Steadly who also creates stunning one-of-a-kind equine pieces. The gallery also represents more American Craft Artisans. Sun's Traces is located in the village of Barboursville, Virginia near the Blue Ridge Mountains and Virginia wine country.

<http://www.sunstraces.com/>

Scenic Byways



Shenandoah National Park and Sky Line Drive are a short drive away. [Facility Opening/Closing Schedule](#). Shenandoah National Park is 105 miles long stretching from Front Royal, Virginia to the Waynesboro-Charlottesville area. Skyline Drive is the scenic roadway that takes you through the park. There are four entrances (and exits) from the park. Start by finding your best route to the park in [Directions](#). Then, find out what there is to see ([Places to Go](#)) and do ([Things to Do](#)) once you're here. From planning your hike to Shenandoah's highest peak, to checking on evening entertainment, the only thing you can't plan is where to see that bear or deer - that will have to be a surprise!

The historic 105-mile Skyline Drive, a National Scenic Byway, traverses Shenandoah National Park, a beautiful, historic national treasure. The mountain top highway winds its way north-south through Shenandoah's nearly 200,000 acres along the spine of Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains. Shenandoah National Park varies in width from less than one mile to about thirteen miles, so that views from peaks and overlooks will captivate and delight. There are 75 scenic overlooks that offer stunning views of the Shenandoah Valley to the west or the rolling piedmont to the east. While you are gazing out at the views, keep a close eye on the road too, as deer, black bear, wild turkey, and a host of other woodland animals call Shenandoah home and regularly cross Skyline Drive in their daily travels. Roadside wildflowers put on a show all year long. In early spring, you can see trillium peeking through the grass. June's display of azaleas is spectacular, and cardinal flower, black-eyed susans, and goldenrod keep the color coming right into fall.



Golfing

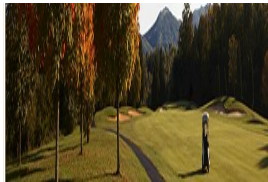
Up for a challenge? There are several excellent courses in the area.



Meadows Farms: Located in Locust Grove, Virginia, Meadows Farms is unique and offers an unforgettable round of golf. The longest hole in the United States, according to the Guinness Book of World Records, is 841 yards. Then there's the waterfall hole and you even get to drive your card through on the way up to the green. Finally, there's the baseball hole, which resembles a baseball field. The snack bar is open. Have fun!

www.meadowsfarms.com

Spring Creek: Spring Creek Golf Club is a nationally recognized golf course located only 13 minutes from Gordonsville. Bent grass fairways, beautiful greens and the natural contour of the land help make Spring Creek a unique, exceptional golfing experience. Recently, Golf Digest rated Spring Creek #55 on its 2015-2016 America's 100 Greatest Public Course. www.springcreekgolfclub.com



Meadowcreek: Located just 20 minutes from Gordonsville, Meadow Creek is in the heart of the City of Charlottesville. Named one of the "Best Places to Play" by *Golf Digest* magazine, this 155-acre Charlottesville golf course will challenge your game. They offer a full line of services, including their Meadowcreek Grill.

www.meadowcreekgolf.org

The Highlands Golf Park: Just wanting to hit the driving range? The Highlands Golf Park is nestled in the beautiful, lush rolling hills of Virginia just 16 minutes from Gordonsville. Whether you're a seasoned golfer looking to better your form, or a shy beginner wanting to pick up a club this golf range allows people to practice any shot, under any condition, at virtually any time.

www.highlandsgolfpark.com



Just Wanting to Take a Walk in the Park



Preddy Creek Trail Park is only 13 miles from Gordonsville on Burnley Station Road. The park offers 571 total acres and is open all year. There are 10 miles of trails for hiking, running, mountain biking and horseback riding along gently rolling trails. If you are into Mountain Biking, check out their newly added Advanced Mountain Bike Trail. Click [here](#) for the Preddy Creek Trail Map.

Rafting and Reeling

Kayaking and fishing are all within easy distance from Gordonsville.

Rapidan River Kayak Company is the original company offering guided tours on the Rapidan River. They are located near the town of Orange in central Virginia on the picturesque Rapidan River and specialize in kayak tours for individuals, couples, and small groups, guided by highly qualified instructors. Their featured tour requires approximately 3 hours and they furnish kayaks, paddles, and life vests. [More Info and Pricing](#)



Fishing at Lake Orange or Rose River

Lake Orange: Lake Orange is located a few miles east of the city of Orange and an 11 mile trip from downtown Gordonsville. This is a 124-acre public fishing lake surrounded by gently rolling farmland and hardwood forests. Access to the lake is off of the main lake peninsula on the western side where the boat ramp, concession, fishing pier, parking lot, picnic facilities and plenty of great shoreline access can be found. Directional signs for Lake Orange are posted along the roadways. An Access Permit is required (see link), unless you possess a valid Virginia hunting, freshwater fishing license or a current Virginia boat registration. [Learn more about the Access Permit.](#)

Rose River: Looking for Western Style Fly Fishing for trophy trout? Come visit Rose River Farm. This is strictly catch and release. Rods are limited each day to ensure the best quality experience. They also offer private and group fly fishing lessons. Located 7 miles west of Madison, Virginia and a 27 mile drive from downtown Gordonsville. Visit their website for more information and reservations. <http://www.roseriverfarm.com/index.html>



Horses, Planes, Sky Diving and Hot Air



Skydive Orange: - Ready to experience the thrill of freefall? Check out Skydive Orange for a truly unique experience. Skydive Orange, located just minutes north of Gordonsville, features the largest tandem skydiving center near Northern Virginia, Washington D.C. and Maryland. Visit their website to select your skydive reservation. Want to make your memory last forever? Let one of their professional videographers capture your experience. <http://www.skydiveorange.com/>

Nobel Aviation Tours: Want to see the sights from an altitude? Nobel Aviation Tours, located minutes north of Gordonsville at the Orange County Airport waits. They offer sightseeing, flight instruction and airplane rentals. Aerial sightseeing includes Lake Anna, Area Civil War battlefields and aerial photography. Make your appointment today! <http://www.flynobleaviation.com/>



Horseback Riding: At Oakland Heights Farm. They offer guided trail rides that take you thru the southwest mountains at the foot of the Blue Ridge. Located only 4 miles from downtown Gordonsville, you will ride through not only the beautiful countryside, but over camping and battle grounds of the Civil War. Enjoy a day in the country. Guided Trail Rides are offered at the farm seven days a week at 10:00am and 1:00pm for anyone six years old and older and are scheduled by appointment. Visit their website for more information.

<http://www.oaklandheightsfarm.com/index.html>

Orange Hot Air Balloon Rides: At Virginia Balloon Rides, located only 12 minutes from downtown Gordonsville. Ascending in a hot air balloon and cruising over the picturesque landscape of Virginia is indeed the thrill of a lifetime. Virginia Balloon Rides has beautiful hot air balloons with experienced pilots serving Orange, VA that are ready to share the experience with you right now! Visit Virginia Balloon Rides for more information.



Camping

Camping in Virginia can be back-to-basics primitive or well-developed tent sites. There are several excellent camping areas within driving distance from downtown Gordonsville. You can pick from State Parks, Developed Campsites, Primitive, Canoe-in Sites and National Parks. Visit the websites to learn more and to find sites within range. **Click on each of the following:** [More Campsites - State Parks](#), [National Parks](#), [KOA Camps](#), [More Family Favorites/](#)



Wining, Dining, Coffee and Sweet Treats



An epicurean's delight and what a better way to tour Gordonsville and the surrounding area! Food choices abound and there is something for everyone's taste! Our area offers locally grown produce served in the finest restaurants to award-winning wines. There are classic, family-owned diners to four-star experiences known the world over. Thomas Jefferson's lifelong passion was to produce wine in Virginia to rival the finest vintages of Europe. His dream lives on today in the exceptional vineyards and wineries of the Piedmont. What are you hungry or thirsty for? Whatever it is, you'll find it here!

Dining Guide: Hungry for BBQ? If so, the BBQ Exchange is located at the southern end of the Town of Gordonsville. Restaurant Pomme offers exquisite French Cuisine and is located in the heart of Historic Downtown Gordonsville. Inwood has good old fashioned country cooking. Fabio's brings wonderful Italian dining. Can't wait? Pomme-to-Go and Stone Fire Kitchen are very good gourmet type food choices. A few minutes away is the Palladio Restaurant located at the Barbourville Vineyard.

Wining Regions and Wine Trails Guide: There are over 20 vineyards within easy driving distance from Gordonsville. Honah Lee is only 4 miles away; Horton is 5 miles; Barbourville is 6 miles; Keswick is 7 miles; while Burnley is 7 miles and Chestnut Oak is 12 miles <http://www.virginiawine.org/regions/> for more information and/or <http://www.virginia.org/winetrails/>.

Cideries: Looking for something other than wine? Try Virginia's Cider. Castle Hill Cider is only 7 minutes away from Gordonsville. The Charlottesville area and the Afton Mountain area offer excellent choices and are within driving distance of Gordonsville.

Coffee, Cappuccino and Tea: The area has many interesting and unique places to visit. Krecek Kakes in Downtown Gordonsville; stop by the Orange County Coffee Rosters in Orange or come in to The Light Well coffee and kitchen in Orange to name a few.

Sweet Treats: Sweet tooth got you? Gordonsville has Krecek Kakes, the Purple Cow and Tastee Freez.

Manors, Museums, Montpelier, Monticello and Monroe

Exploring Museums: Observe what's on display at our Exchange Hotel and Civil War Museum; visit the James Madison Museum; visit Montpelier; stop in at Monticello or visit Ellwood Manor.



Exchange Hotel and Civil War Museum: Located in the heart of Historic Gordonsville. This beautiful structure was built as a railroad hotel in 1860. Before the Civil War, The Exchange Hotel, with its high ceiling parlors and grand veranda, welcomed passengers from two rail lines: the Virginia Central Railroad and the Orange Alexandria Railroad. During the war soldiers, supplies and the wounded were transported on these railroads to Gordonsville. The hotel became The Receiving Hospital, which provided care for 70,000 soldiers, Confederate and Union. During the reconstruction period, this hospital served newly freed

slaves as a Freedman's Bureau Hospital. The museum presents several re-enactments year round. Please visit the museum website to see current happenings. **Website:** <http://www.hgiexchange.org>

James Madison Museum: Located 9 miles north in Orange, Virginia. Discover the nation's first museum to fully commemorate James Madison, the fourth U.S. President and "Father of the Constitution". Located in Madison's hometown, the museum promotes awareness of rural culture, along with Madison's far-reaching contributions to both agrarian economies and American history. Come and see for yourself why Thomas Jefferson called James Madison "the best farmer in the world." Visit their website at: <http://www.thejamesmadisonmuseum.org/>



Ash Lawn-Highland: Located just 22 minutes from downtown Gordonsville just south of Charlottesville, Virginia. Ash Lawn-Highland is 2.5 miles west from Jefferson's Monticello and is the home of James Monroe. Monroe selected this area because of his friendship with Jefferson. His first guests were James and Dolley Madison. Today, Ash Lawn-Highland is both an historic site

and an events venue, continuing Monroe's tradition of welcoming friends, neighbors, dignitaries, and visitors from around the globe. The house tour offers a compelling glimpse into a period of growth in U.S. history, in a setting full of abundant charm. Nestled against a ridge, Monroe's Highland is a landscape of rolling hills, pastures, and woodland, providing an unequalled backdrop of beauty and history for meetings, weddings, parties of all kinds, picnics, and living history interpretations in the restored plantation core. Visit www.Ashlawnhighland.org for detailed information on their operating hours.



Montpelier: Travel just a short 15 minute drive from downtown Gordonsville to Montpelier, located between Somerset and Orange on Route 20, to meet James Madison, the Father of the Constitution and intellectual force behind the new republic, and Dolley Madison, his charming wife and astute political partner — the woman who inspired the title "First Lady." The estate's gardens, old-growth Landmark Forest, and walking trails are open to visitors year round at no cost. See the latest progress of the "Presidential Detective Story," an extensive research project aimed at recovering the Madison's furnishings and decor lost more than 160 years ago. Visit their website or call for more information about In-Depth Tours, Private Experiences, Archaeology Expeditions, Walking Tours, African American History, Civil War History, Constitution Day, and other Special Events. Archaeology tours offered every Thursday, April – October. Visit <http://www.montpelier.org/visit/hours> for detailed information and operating hours.

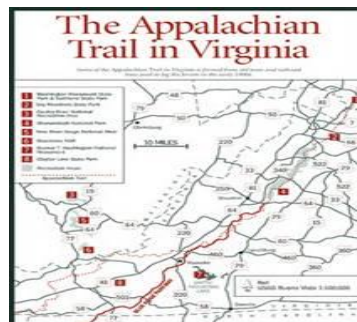
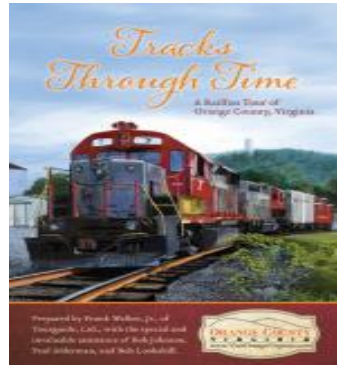
Monticello: Located just 22 minutes from downtown Gordonsville just south of Charlottesville, Virginia. Monticello is the masterpiece of Thomas Jefferson—designed and redesigned and built and rebuilt for more than forty years—and its gardens were a botanic showpiece, a source of food, and an experimental laboratory of ornamental and useful plants from around the world. Guided tours of the house are offered daily throughout the year; outdoor gardens and plantation tours are offered daily April-October. Visit www.monticello.org for detailed information on Monticello's operating hours.



Ellwood Manor: Located 26 miles from downtown Gordonsville, Ellwood Manor offers a special time for all. Visit the beautiful grounds, family cemetery where Gen. "Stonewall" Jackson's arm was buried and historic Ellwood Manor, a National Park Service property. The house served as a Confederate hospital after the Battle of Chancellorsville (1863) and as Gen. G.K. Warren's headquarters during the Battle of the Wilderness (1864). [Plan your visit.](#)

Trails, Tours and By-Ways

So much to enjoy as you travel and visit these locations. Please click on each of the individual pictures to take you to their websites for further information.



How to Get Here: A Town at the Crossroads of History!



Gordonsville is approximately 18 miles northeast of Charlottesville; 41 miles west of Fredericksburg; 54 miles northwest of Richmond; 93 miles southwest of our Nation's Capital; 51 miles east of Harrisonburg and just moments away from Barboursville, Horton and Honah Lee Vineyards.