



Places to visit for a day or a weekend...

Chesapeake Bay

English Now!

Why You Should Go

The Chesapeake Bay is 200 miles long and is bordered by both Maryland and Virginia. The bay has enormous ecological, economic, historic, and cultural significance for the United States. If you enjoy fishing, boating, hiking, water sports, picnicking, bird-watching, or relaxation, the Chesapeake Bay is a great place to visit. You will also find hundreds of historic sites, museums, and parks to visit along the bay. There are many worthwhile Chesapeake Bay locations that are an easy drive from the Washington, D.C. area. Many of the following destinations are even accessible for a well-planned day trip away.

Smith Island

This five by three mile island is only accessible by ferry from Crisfield, MD. Smith Island is named for Captain John Smith who explored the Chesapeake almost 350 years ago. However, the island's history goes much farther back to prehistoric times. While you are visiting, you can explore the Smith Island museum and taste the famous Smith Island Layer Cake, Maryland's state dessert.

Chestertown

Chestertown is a small town on Maryland's Eastern Shore. It is home to the reconstructed schooner *Sultana*, a ship used by the British Royal Navy to patrol the Chesapeake Bay before the American Revolution. In May, Chestertown holds a Tea Party Festival to reenact a protest held by American colonists in 1774.

Tilghman Island

This island is easily accessible by drawbridge and is home to the famous Tilghman Watermen's Museum. Here you can learn about the maritime traditions of the watermen, boatmen who catch fish and shellfish in the Chesapeake Bay and who have played a vital part in Maryland's history.

Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge

This refuge covers 25,000 acres of Bay area on the Eastern Shore. Here you can see the bay's estuarine marshland ecosystem and over 250 species of birds! The refuge can be explored on walking trails or by boat.

Chesapeake City

Chesapeake City is at the northern end of the Bay, where the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal connect. Here you can watch ships and tugboats pass through the center of the city on their way to Delaware and New York as they have done for hundreds of years. You can visit the C&D Canal

Museum to learn about the history of the waterway and its importance to the economic importance of the bay.

Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum

Throughout its history, the bay has been traveled by a variety of ships, canoes, and other watercraft. The Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum is home to many of these boats. Skipjacks, log canoes, and draketail oyster boats can all be viewed and explored at the museum. You can also visit the 1879 Hooper Strait Lighthouse. It even includes a working shipyard where you can see boats being built! The museum is located in St. Michaels on Maryland's Eastern Shore.

Cambridge

From Cambridge, MD, you can take a ride on the skipjack *Nathan of Dorchester*, a traditional Chesapeake Bay fishing boat. You can also visit J.M. Clayton Company, the world's oldest working crab house. Cambridge is also a great place to visit if you are interested in the US Civil War. It played an important part in the Underground Railroad and Harriet Tubman was born nearby.

Calvert Cliffs

Calvert Cliffs are about an hour and a half south of Bethesda on the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay. The area was covered by a warm shallow sea that receded about 10-20 million years ago leaving amazing fossils to be found along the beach and cliffs. The remains of ancient sharks, whales, and birds have been found here. You can take a hike along the park's many trails, swim at the beach, and hunt for fossils along the way!

Solomons Island

Solomons Island is a beautiful location only 15 minutes further south from Calvert Cliffs. It has many seafood restaurants, gift shops, a boardwalk, and a sculpture garden for guests to explore. It is also home to the Calvert Marine Museum where you can explore a former lighthouse and an estuarine biology gallery with river otters, skates, and rays.

St. Mary's City

In St. Mary's City, you can experience what life was like in 17th-century Maryland in the state's first British colony and Maryland's first capital. In this outdoor museum, costumed interpreters bring history to life in re-created structures in the town center, the Brick Chapel of 1667, the State House of 1676, a Woodland Indian hamlet, a tall ship, and a tobacco plantation. You can also learn about the archaeological work that is still being done to uncover more about Maryland's past.

Getting There. All of the above recommended locations are accessible by car. If you have a smartphone, we recommend the Chesapeake Explorer App to help you plan your visits. You can download it here for free: <http://chesapeakeexplorerapp.com/>

Where to Stay. There are many chain hotels in the Chesapeake Bay area. One favorite of travelers is Hampton Inn Suites; rooms with two double beds usually cost around \$100-125/night and include breakfast. These hotels have pools too.

For More Information. Please let Paul or Kirstie know if you are traveling to the Chesapeake Bay. We would love to hear about your plans, and we would love to hear how your trip goes, after you return, so that we can share what you learn with other students.