

view of the capital—before accepting a commission in the Confederate army when Virginia seceded from the Union. Federal forces crossed the Potomac and seized Arlington soon after, and in 1864 a Union general decided the best way to punish Lee would be to bury Union dead literally in his backyard. Some 16,000 Union soldiers were laid to rest here, and after the war the estate and 200 surrounding acres were set aside for a national cemetery.

In addition to Arlington House, filled with antiques and reproductions nearly to its 12-foot ceilings, the most visited destination at Arlington (and the most visited grave in



The Tomb of the Unknowns has been guarded continuously since July 2, 1937. Being chosen to serve as a sentinel at the tomb is one of the highest honors a soldier can receive.

America) is the grave site of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy. Adorned with an eternal flame and a low marble wall inscribed with quotations from his famous “Ask not” speech, it is located near the graves of his brother Robert F. Kennedy and wife, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis. Past the massive white marble Memorial Amphitheater, the Tomb of the Unknowns holds the bodies of unidentified soldiers from WWI, WWII, and the Korean War, guarded by soldiers from the U.S. Third Infantry in a reverent display of 21 faultless steps and 21-second pauses, back and forth, over and over, symbolizing the 21-gun national salute, among the nation’s greatest honors.

Dozens of other famous grave sites and memorials are dispersed throughout Arlington, from the Civil War Unknowns to the Space Shuttle Challenger Memorial. Just outside the northern boundary of the cemetery is the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial, the largest cast bronze statue in the world, which re-creates Joe Rosenthal’s famous image of U.S. Marines raising the flag over Iwo Jima during WWII.

WHERE: directly across Arlington Memorial Bridge from the Lincoln Memorial to the end of Memorial Ave. Tel 877-907-8585; arlingtoncemetery.org. **ARLINGTON HOUSE:** Tel 703-235-1530; nps.gov/arho. **BEST TIMES:** Memorial Day (late May) and Veterans Day (Nov 11) for public services at the Memorial Amphitheater.

Driving Virginia’s Beauty Road

BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY

Virginia

The Blue Ridge Parkway is a 469-mile moving postcard that unfolds meadows, forests, and seemingly endless mountain views into one long masterpiece. It’s one of America’s most beautiful scenic routes, running

north from just outside the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (see p. 464) across the North Carolina border and through the

Blue Ridge Mountains, and connecting up with Shenandoah National Park’s Skyline Drive (see p. 252) at Waynesboro. Virginia’s 217-mile

section, especially the 114 miles from Waynesboro to Roanoke, is the most delightful part, lined with national forests and mountain-top views that are nothing short of sublime.

Heading south from Shenandoah National Park, the Humpback Rocks Visitor Center offers a self-guided trail through a reconstructed 19th-century farmstead, and a steep 1-mile trail to the top of Humpback Rocks, with its stunning 360-degree view of the mountains. Shortly after it hits its lowest point (649 feet) crossing the James River, the Parkway climbs to its highest point in Virginia (3,950 feet), just before the Peaks of Otter at milepost 86. Here you'll find another visitors center and the year-round Peaks of Otter Lodge, overlooking Abbott Lake. Trails lead to a 1930s farm and the pinnacle of Sharp Top (3,875 feet). South of Roanoke is Mabry Mill, one of the most popular and most photographed stops on the Parkway. The early 20th-century mill still offers fresh-ground cornmeal and flour for sale. The Chateau Morrisette Winery has been making wine here since 1980, and their Our Dog Blue, a semisweet mix of riesling and Vidal, is one of the state's most popular wines. An inviting restaurant serves regional dishes such as bacon-wrapped trout and shrimp and grits, on the patio with sweeping views.



The Blue Ridge Mountains stretch from Georgia to Pennsylvania, with countless beautiful vistas along the way.

WHERE: runs from Waynesboro south to Great Smoky Mountains National Park, NC. Tel 828-298-0398; nps.gov/blri. *When:* road open year-round; most facilities other than Peaks of Otter closed Oct–May. **PEAKS OF OTTER LODGE:** Tel 866-387-9905 or 540-586-1081; peaksofotter.com. *Cost:* from \$109 (off-peak), from \$119 (peak). **CHATEAU MORRISSETTE WINERY:** Tel 540-593-2865; thedogs.com. *Cost:* dinner \$35. **BEST TIMES:** spring for blooming azaleas and rhododendrons; late July and Aug for Chateau Morrisette's Black Dog Music Festival concerts; fall for glorious foliage.

The Great Beyond

THE STEVEN F. UDVAR-HAZY CENTER

Chantilly, Virginia

From the day it opened in 1976, the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum on D.C.'s National Mall was already too small, able to display only 10 percent of its total collection (see p. 261). Luckily, the

Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center opened in 2003, named for the Hungary-born businessman who donated \$65 million to the project and big

enough to allow display of some of its biggest birds in open hangarlike settings.

The main Boeing Aviation Hangar, ten