

The Presidents Tour

Fredericksburg, VA

George Washington influenced not only Fredericksburg's history, but also the new nation he helped form. Washington is not the only president with ties to the Fredericksburg region. Follow in the footsteps of these leaders and trace the course of early US history.





Stop 1

Ferry Farm — Located on the banks of the Rappahannock River is the site of George Washington's boyhood home where he, his sister Betty, and brothers Samuel, John and Charles grew up. His family moved to Ferry Farm when he was 6, and he lived there until the age of 22. According to legend, young George chopped his father's cherry tree here. At the age of 11, George inherited the farm upon his father's death, and his mother, Mary Ball Washington, lived here until 1772 when George bought a house in Fredericksburg for her. At Ferry Farm today, archaeologists have unearthed Indian artifacts dating back 10,000 years, early 18th-century home sites and Civil War artifacts. Built using the same construction methods used during the time of Washington, the replica of his boyhood home is a very good example of early American architecture. There is also a garden featuring plants that would have been grown during the Washington's residence. **Allow 60 minutes.**

Stop 2

Hugh Mercer Apothecary Shop — George Washington befriended Mercer, an expatriate Scotsman, during the French and Indian War. It was at Washington's suggestion he began his medical practice in Fredericksburg, where Mercer's patients included the Washington family, until he joined the Continental Army in 1776. He died heroically at the Battle of Princeton. **Allow 45 minutes.**

Stop 3

Rising Sun Tavern — Built by Charles Washington as his home in 1760, the building was later operated as a tavern and served as the social center of town. Although the tavern lost its liquor license in 1823, the tavern wench today can serve an enjoyable shot of living history. Evening candlelight tours are available. **Allow 45 minutes.**

Stop 4

Mary Washington House — Purchased by Washington for his mother in 1772, this home is a simple frame house where she spent her last 17 years. Her English-style garden has been restored and the house contains some of her prized personal possessions as well as many fine period pieces. **Allow 45 minutes.**

Stop 5

Historic Kenmore — is the elegant historic Georgian-style brick mansion of George Washington's sister, Betty, and her patriot husband, Colonel Fielding Lewis. The mansion is known for its ornate plasterwork ceilings and the Aesop's fable theme in the dining room overmantel is said to have been suggested by Washington himself. A reproduction of 1700's wall to wall carpet shows a vibrant color scheme, similar to what would have been the original floor covering. **Allow 60 minutes.**

Stop 6

Mary Washington Monument and Meditation Rock — The monument marks the grave of Mary Washington. Work on the monument started in 1789, but remained unfinished for many years. In 1893, the Daughters of the American Revolution started a fundraising campaign to finish the monument. It was completed and dedicated in 1894. The nearby "Meditation Rock" was a place where Mary Washington frequently went to pray and meditate during the last 17 years of her life when she lived in Fredericksburg.



James Monroe Museum



Mary Washington Monument

Stop 7

Jefferson Religious Freedom Monument – In recognition of Thomas Jefferson’s drafting of the Virginia statute of religious freedom which was adopted by the Virginia General Assembly in December 1785.

The statute, which later inspired the First Amendment to the US Constitution, established the idea that people should not be persecuted for their religious beliefs.

Stop 8

James Monroe Museum – This museum contains a remarkable collection of the personal possessions, furnishings, and papers of our nation’s fifth President. **Allow 45 minutes**

Stop 9

Lincoln Steps – From these steps, originally located on the side of the National Bank building a block away, Lincoln addressed soldiers and citizens of Fredericksburg on May 23, 1862.

Optional Stops: The Lewis Store was operated by George Washington’s brother-in-law, Fielding Lewis and is now the home of the Historic Fredericksburg Foundation, Inc. Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4, A.F.& A.M, is one of the oldest Masonic lodges in Virginia and counted George Washington as one of its members. Special arrangements must be made in advance to tour both of these facilities.

Presidential Food & Drink

During your tour, feed your hunger in places with presidential connections:

- **Foodie** (upscale Southern): located in the old National Bank building, which was the original location of the Lincoln Steps
- **Goolrick’s** (oldest operating soda fountain): a frequent stop of presidents and presidential candidates. Check out the photos of those who have stopped in while sipping on a milkshake
- **Biliken’s** (BBQ): located in a building called “The Chimneys”, this was briefly the childhood home of Ellen Lewis Herndon, future first lady and wife of President Chester Arthur
- **A. Smith Bowman Distillery** (Spirits): Sample award-winning bourbons and gins from the oldest operating distillery in Virginia. The extended Bowman family tree includes the families of Presidents James Madison, John Adams, John Quincy Adams and James Buchanan. The free one-hour tour run every hour and require advanced registration.

About Fredericksburg, Virginia

Fredericksburg, Virginia tells America's story - from 1608 when Captain John Smith sailed up the Rappahannock River to George Washington's childhood and adolescence to John DeBaptiste, a free Black man fighting in the Revolutionary War to the Civil War with four major battles and where 10,000 enslaved people crossed the river to freedom, to Reconstruction and the fight for Civil Rights and social justice. The region is filled with historic sites and compelling stories, a phenomenal food and drink scene and is all easily accessible just off the interstate.

Location

Fredericksburg, VA is located fifty miles south of Washington, D.C. on Interstate 95, midway between Washington, D.C. and Richmond, Virginia.



Mileage From Major Cities to Fredericksburg

Albany.....	437
Baltimore.....	106
Boston.....	529
Charleston, WV.....	309
Cleveland.....	427
Detroit.....	577
Montreal.....	655
Newport.....	472
New York City.....	290
Philadelphia.....	210
Pittsburgh.....	295
Toronto.....	592
Washington, DC.....	50
Wilmington, DE.....	178

Services

Itinerary Planning / Confirm reservations at historic sites, with guide service /
Referrals for dining and lodging / Access to on-line Videos / Brochures



City of Fredericksburg, Virginia