

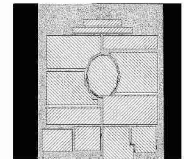
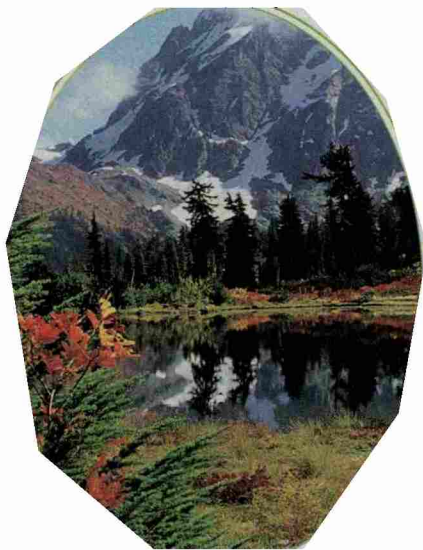
# VIRGINIA

*Segway tours of historic Richmond and wine trails,  
 the Song of the Mountains and succulent island oysters*

**W**To get a real introduction to the South, be sure to spend a day or two in historic Richmond, Virginia's capital since 1780. At the Museum of the Confederacy, the American Civil War Center at Historic Tredegar and the National Battlefield Park (all covered under the Civil War Pass) you

can almost hear the crack of muskets and the boom of cannons. The Edgar Allen Poe Museum peers inside the mind of one of America's more eccentric writers. The Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden has more than 40 acres of spectacular gardens. Explore on foot or, for a unique experience, see the city on a guided Segway tour lasting between two and two-and-a-half hours (all tours start with a 15-minute lesson).

When it comes time to leave the capital, consider taking Captain John Smith's Trail ([virginia.org/johnsmithtrail](http://virginia.org/johnsmithtrail)) that follows in the path of America's most famous colonist as he explored Virginia between 1607 and 1609. Tracing the banks of the James River, the driving route takes you from the falls in Richmond to Smithfield and Newport News, then back to Richmond again, linking more than 35 points of interest along the way, including historic towns, plantations, parks and museums. For those who can't do it all, the trail is divided into three easily manageable loops — the Upper Oxbow, Middle Cypress and the Lower Oyster.



☞ The state slogan — “Virginia Is for Lovers” — might refer to the passion for life that lies around every bend in the road, but it has a special resonance for wine lovers. Some 143 wineries are scattered through 15 distinctive regions across the state, from Appalachia in the west to Chesapeake on the Eastern Shore. October, officially dubbed “Virginia Wine Month,” is the perfect time to take your

*Below:* Photos: istockphoto.com (except far right)

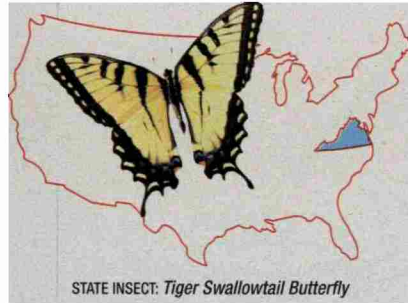
taste buds on a tour. But the official site ([virginia.org/wine](http://virginia.org/wine)) lists other events taking place throughout the year, ranging from movies among the vines to the Thomas Jefferson Wine Festival (November 21) at Poplar Forest ([poplarforest.org](http://poplarforest.org)), the third president’s home after he retired from politics. Take a house tour, then enjoy a glass of wine from one of the wineries on the Bedford Wine Trail.

Another incentive to make the trip in the fall is the state’s legendary foliage show that lights up the forest from late September to mid-October. You can get a front-row seat driving through Appalachia, the Blue Ridge Highlands and along Skyline Drive. Hikers can shoulder their daypacks along the Appalachian Trail and the ridges of Shenandoah National Park. Golfers can tee off at more than 400 courses ([virginiagolf.com](http://virginiagolf.com)), ranging from the Virginia Beach National to the championship course at Bryce Resort ([bryceresort.com](http://bryceresort.com)) in the heart of Shenandoah County. And, for a bird’s-eye view of the changing leaves, you can take Bryce’s chair lift to the peak, then glide down 3,000 feet of zip lines that cut across the still-grassy ski hill and through the forest up to 65 feet above the ground.



☞ The hills really are alive with music. It’s hard to stop your toes tapping at Donk’s Theater, Virginia’s Lil’ Ole Opry, in Mathews County, where lively country music fills the senses every other Saturday night. At the historic Lincoln Theatre in Marion ([thelincoln.org](http://thelincoln.org)), the “Song of the Mountains” series brings out the big names of Bluegrass through the fall and winter. Among the 200 festivals that cram the fall calendar are some that mix wine and music. Listen to the fiddles sing while sipping a glass of robust red at the Norton and Bluegrass Festival (October 3 and 4) in the middle of Chrysalis Vineyards, just outside the village of Middleburg in Loudon County.

*Above:* An autumnal mountain vista in Virginia.



**LOCAL KNOWLEDGE**

Those who live for the succulent slide of a brine-fresh oyster should head over to the Eastern Shore and the Chincoteague Island Oyster Festival, held this year on October 10. The \$35 entry fee (advance sales only) buys you all the oysters you can eat.



**DID YOU KNOW?**

The Grand Canyon might be the nation's headliner when it comes to gaping holes in the earth, but Virginia has another one that is, in its own way, just as gorge-ous. In the leafy heart of 4,500-acre Breaks Interstate Park ([breakspark.com](http://breakspark.com)), golden eagles soar above the deepest gorge east of the Mississippi River.



**TRUE FLAVOR**

If fall had to choose a seasonal drink, it would have to be hard cider, crushed from recently harvested apples and emboldened by natural fermentation. Virginia is home to two of the nation's finest family-owned cideries — Albemarle CiderWorks and Foggy Ridge Cider — both open for tours and tastings.

