

Below is the proposed itinerary for the trip. As is true on any adventure travel trip, plans for any specific day may be modified due to weather considerations, unforeseen circumstances, new opportunities, and group interests.

DAY 1

Arr Dulles Airport, transfer to hostel, hike historic Maryland Heights Trail

If you're flying in, we'll pick you up at 12:30pm at the Washington-Dulles Airport (IAD). If you're driving, plan to meet us at the Harpers Ferry Hostel at 2:00pm. We'll settle in and then go out for our first hike. The Maryland Heights hike is a 3.1 out and back to a gorgeous overlook with spectacular views of the confluence of the Shenandoah and Potomac Rivers and fascinating Civil War history. Our hike follows a worn military road, leftover from the Civil War, that steeply winds its way up the mountain and turns onto a wooded path leading down to the cliffs. Alternatively, if you prefer something that is flatter but no less scenic, an out and back hike on the C&O canal towpath is a delightful option. If you cannot get to the hostel by 2:00 pm, plan to join us for dinner at the hostel at 6:30 pm and an evening of relaxation and games.

DAY 2

Canoe down Shenandoah River, zipline at nearby park

After a hearty and relaxed breakfast we head to the Shenandoah River above Harpers Ferry for some delightful canoeing. This lovely Class I waterway for paddlers offers ripples and ledges, interspersed with flatwater sections that afford relaxation. Winding its way through the scenic Shenandoah Valley, nestled between the rolling Blue Ridge Mountains, the river is home to heron and osprey, and deer sometimes break through the thickets to drink at the water's edge. If you have never paddled before, no worries - you will get the instruction you need to have a fun and safe day. And if that weren't thrills enough, we'll try a nearby zipline. If you have wanted to give ziplining a try, this is a perfect place to start.

We'll end the day with another hearty dinner back at the hostel.

DAY 3

Bike the C&O Canal Towpath, dinner in Harpers Ferry

The C&O Canal Towpath stretches for 185 miles from Washington DC to Cumberland, Maryland. Running parallel to the Potomac River, the path is both flat and tree-shaded, and can be navigated on either fat tire or regular tire bikes (although fat tire is preferable). We will cycle about 8 miles to a campsite where we stop for lunch. Those wanting more cycling can continue up the towpath to the town of Shepardstown, WV (about 40 miles total). Others may choose to visit the town of Harpers Ferry (we can lock our bikes up and walk in), or return to the hostel to have some time to relax, go for a walk, or enjoy a quiet moment to read. Tonight we'll go out to dinner at a nearby local restaurant.

DAY 4

Walk/drive to Harpers Ferry, tour by local guide, lunch and depart to airport

This morning we will walk along the towpath into the Harpers Ferry Lower Town Historic District, which sits on the point of land where the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers converge. George Washington convinced the Federal Government to build an Armory & Arsenal here and this, plus its geographic location, has determined much of the town's history. This is also the site of John Brown's ill-fated raid of October 16, 17, and 18, 1859. Several park exhibits and museums occupy restored 19th century buildings in the Lower Town today. To get the most from our visit, our local tour guide will tell us the fascinating history of this unique town. We will then return to the hostel for our final farewell lunch and end our weekend together by 1:30 pm. Those who are flying can plan flights out of IAD for anytime after 4pm.

