

Chesapeake Country's Bountiful Harvest: Working the Land

Life in Chesapeake Country is inseparable from the Chesapeake Bay. People have worked the region's natural resources, the land and water, from the first settlement in the early 1600's and continue to do so today. Though the technology has changed, farmers and watermen continue to serve an important role in the economic engine of Chesapeake Country. A trip through Chesapeake Country on this itinerary will reconnect visitors with where their food comes from and how it is produced. You will see working family farms along the way and glimpse into a profession very few Americans experience today.

To supplement this experience, we recommend stopping at the Chesapeake Exploration Center for an introduction to the region. Pick up the "*Upper Shore Harvest Directory*" there at the visitor's center for more details on agricultural destinations to visit while you're here!

Byway Etiquette:

Some etiquette to remember on this tour. Please respect the privacy of the farmers. Do not drive down farm lanes unless there is a place of business open to the public. Remember that the Amish do not approve of having their picture taken. Do not block farm lanes. Do not climb on fences, gates, or equipment. Do not stray into private lands. Please keep everyone safe by giving farm equipment sufficient distance, be patient until the equipment can move to the shoulder of the road or wait until it is appropriate to pass and do so safely.

Portions of this itinerary could be done in a day, however this experience in Chesapeake Country should be done over the course of an extended weekend or family vacation (in season of course!) This is truly an authentic Chesapeake experience!

Bountiful Harvest: Working the Land.

The Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway is known as the traditional 'farm-to-market' road. It is the route that farmers have taken their harvest to market for generations. There are approximately 1200 farm families on more than 350,000 acres in the region. While the majority of what you will see are acres and acres of corn, soybeans, wheat, and barley, many of our region's farmers have diversified. U-pick produce operations, nursery and greenhouse, organic dairy, vineyards, and community supported agriculture to name just a few 'alternative' crops to the traditional grain operations. Your dollars spent on local agricultural products assist in the preservation of our rural landscape. In turn, you will be rewarded by the fresh taste and high quality of our Chesapeake harvest.

Chesapeake Exploration Center, 425 Piney Narrows Road, Chester, MD.

Begin your 'Chesapeake Country Working the Land Tour' at the Chesapeake Exploration Center. Learn about how tobacco, then known as 'stink week', paid for the construction of the early colonies. Revisit how agriculture and the bay are intricately tied together making Chesapeake Country a unique region.

Suggested time spent: 1 hour

Return to Route 18, crossing the Kent Narrows drawbridge, and continue East on Route 18.

Lowery's Produce, 1908 Main Street, Chester, MD.

This farm sells homegrown sweet corn, tomatoes, cantaloupe, watermelon, peaches, and other local produce. The fall season brings pumpkins, mums, apples, and cider. Summer hours 9 AM to 7 PM, Fall hours 10 AM to 6 PM.

Suggested time spent: 30 minutes

Mileage: 2 miles

Estimated drive time: 5 minutes

Continue on Route 18 East toward Grasonville.

Wildflower Nursery, 4024 Main Street, Grasonville, MD

This is a fully stocked nursery with trees, shrubs, perennials, annuals, herbs, mulch, and ornamental grasses. Garden gifts and holiday items including Christmas trees, poinsettias, fresh wreaths and roping in season. Open Monday – Friday 8 AM to 5 PM; Sundays 10 AM to 4 PM.

Suggested time spent: 30 minutes

Mileage: 3.5 miles

Estimated drive time: 5 minutes

Continue on Route 18 East, merging then crossing Route 301 so as to stay on Route 18 through Queenstown. Continue on Route 18 East. Turn left onto Dulin Clark Road and right into the grounds of the 4H Park.

Queen Anne’s Museum of Eastern Shore Life, 126 Dulin Clark Road, Centreville, MD

The museum is a collection of Americana ranging from American Indian artifacts to antique farm equipment. The museum is dedicated to collecting, preserving, and displaying artifacts that focus on the Eastern Shore rural life experience. Open April to October, Saturdays & Sundays, 1 PM to 4 PM or by appointment.

Suggested time spent: 1 hour

Mileage: 8 miles

Estimated drive time: 15 minutes

Continue East on Route 18 to Route 213. Turn left onto Route 213 North.

Centreville Farmers’ Market, 101 Lawyers Row, Centreville, MD

Beginning in May, the farmers’ market is open every Wednesday and Saturday, 9 AM to 1 PM selling locally grown produce.

Suggested time spent: 30 minutes

Mileage: 3.5 miles

Estimated drive time: 10 minutes

Continue North on Route 213 to Chestertown. Turn left onto Cross Street at the first traffic light.

Kent County Visitor Center, 122 N. Cross Street, Chestertown.

Upon arriving in Chestertown, the seat of Kent County, stop in the visitor’s center and pick up a copy of the “*Farm & Country Tour*”. This self-guided driving tour will bring you throughout Kent County and give you a snapshot of a variety of different farms. 66% of Kent County’s land area is agricultural. Agriculture accounts for significant economic output making it Kent County’s largest industry. While you’re there, pick up a guide to “*Chesapeake Farms Agricultural and Wildlife Management Demonstration Area*”. You’ll be needing it later on!

Suggested time spent: 15 minutes

Mileage: 16 miles

Estimated drive time: 25 minutes.

Stroll down to Park Row from the visitor center.

Chestertown Farmer's Market, Park Row, next to Chestertown's Fountain Park.

Fresh, local produce, baked goods, locally-made cheese from local dairies, and local soaps and salves. Saturdays, April through December, 8 AM to Noon.

Suggested time spent: 30 to 60 minutes

Mileage: 0.1 miles from visitor center

Estimated walking time: 2 minutes.

Return to your car. Turn right onto Cross Street, then Right onto High Street in downtown Chestertown. Continue North on High Street until it becomes Route 20 West.

Redman Farms & Flower Moon Soaps, 8192 Bakers Lane, Chestertown, MD

Sells fruits, vegetables, fresh-cut flowers, annuals, perennials, pumpkins, and honey at the farm stand. U-pick strawberries in season also available. Flower Moon Soaps sells home-made soaps, moisturizing creams, healing salves infused with botanical ingredients selected from their herb garden, bath and shower gels, tea blends for the tub or Jacuzzi, exfoliating bath salts, bath and body oils, lotion, and skin butters. Open April – October. Also sells at the Chestertown Farmer's Market.

www.flowermoonsoaps.com

Suggested time spent: 30-45 minutes

Mileage: 3 miles

Estimated drive time: 5 minutes.

Continue South on Bakers Lane. Turn right onto Ricauds Branch Road. After approximately 2 miles, turn left onto Remington Drive. This begins your driving tour of Chesapeake Farms.

Chesapeake Farms, 7319 Remington Drive, Chestertown, MD

All 3,300 acres of Chesapeake Farms are devoted to the development, evaluation, and demonstration of advanced agricultural practices and wildlife management techniques, which are designed to be environmentally sound, productive, economically viable, and socially acceptable. Pull out your guide leaflet and follow the 16 stops on the self-guided tour. At the stops, and along the route, watch for labeled plants and features of special interest. <http://www.dupont.com/ag/chesapeakefarms/tour.html>

Suggested time spent: 1 - 2 hours

Mileage: 3 miles

Estimated drive time: 5 minutes.

Return to Ricauds Branch Road, turn left on to Ricauds Branch Road, then left onto Route 20. Go ½ mile and turn right onto Reeses Corner Road, which becomes Swan Creek Road.

Chesapeake Homemade Ice Cream, 6631 Swan Creek Road, Rock Hall, MD

Chesapeake Homemade Ice Cream, LLC operating in Rock Hall center, creates unique frozen desserts, including traditional premium American ice creams, Italian water ices, sorbets, and gelatos (Italian ice creams). Products use locally grown peaches, pears, apples, strawberries, blackberries, and melons. They are the largest frozen dessert production facility in Kent County. All dairy products are made from the milk of Kent County cows! Their products are available in Rock Hall at Chessie's Restaurant, Bayside Foods, Bay Leaf Gourmet, and the Mainstay. As well as at Up the River Cafe in Millington.

Suggested time spent: 20 minutes

Mileage: 7 miles

Estimated drive time: 12 minutes

Return to Route 20 and turn left onto Route 20, returning to Chestertown. Turn left onto Route 291, then left onto Route 213 North. Follow Route 213 North through rolling farmland. Remember to give right of way to any farm equipment you encounter on the road!

Horizon Organic, 11471 Augustine Herman Highway (Route 213), Kennedyville, MD

This large dairy operation milks over 500 cows per day. Dairy manager, Greg Heidemann is quoted on their national website saying "The best thing about farming organically is that it makes you be a dairyman again." While this is a private farm, some of their herd and their operation can be seen along the byway.

Suggested time spent: 10 minutes (private farm)

Mileage: 20 miles

Estimated drive time: 34 minutes

Continue north on Route 213, turn left onto Route 448/Kennedyville Road, Turner's Creek Road.

Kent Museum, 13675 Turners Creek Road, Kennedyville, MD

A collection representing the rural heritage of agriculture and domestic life in Kent County. A variety of farm equipment including antique wagons, tractors, reapers, threshers, and other artifacts are preserved at the Kent Museum. Historic sites to visit include the Stavely family grave of a son who fought in the Revolutionary War and a Tockwogh Indian Village area visited by Captain John Smith in 1608. Open Saturdays, 12-3 and by appointment.

Suggested time spent: 1 hour

Mileage: 5 miles

Estimated drive time: 10 minutes

Return to Route 213 North to Galena. Turn Right at the Light and go about 1 mile South of Galena down Route 313. Turn Left into Turner's Unlimited.

Turner's Unlimited, 31395 Jim Davis Road, Galena, MD

This farm has diversified into greenhouse operations selling bedding plants, cut flowers, perennials, interior plants, mulch, stone, hay, and straw. A lovely gift shop is also open Monday through Friday 8 AM to 5 PM, Saturdays 9 AM to 5 PM, and Sundays 10 AM to 4 PM.

Suggested time spent: 30 minutes to 1 hour.

Mileage: 10 miles

Estimated drive time: 19 minutes.

Return to Route 213 North to Galena. Go straight at the light and Continue north on Route 213.

Colchester Farm, 31285 Georgetown Cemetery Road, Georgetown, MD

A non-profit, community-supported agriculture, which is also a Maryland Century Farm. What does that mean? At least 1 descendent of the pre-1884 owners must still live on and/or farm the land, the farm must retain 10 of its original acres, and the property must turn a profit of at least \$2,500 annually. Colchester Farms conducts on farm research on sustainability, and host groups interested in learning about sustainable agriculture. CSA's work by members buying 'shares' of the harvest prior to the growing season. When produce is ready for harvest, the members receive weekly deliveries of fresh produce.

www.colchesterfarm.org

Suggested time spent: 30 – 45 minutes.

Mileage: 1.5 miles

Estimated drive time: 3 minutes.

Continue north on Route 213 until just south of Cecilton. Note Amish products sign on left.

Amish Products, Route 213 South of Cecilton.

Sells eggs, hand-made picnic tables, and wishing wells. Closed Sundays. No photography please.

Suggested time spent: 15-30 minutes

Mileage: 3 miles

Estimated drive time: 8 minutes

Continue north on Route 213 through Cecilton.

V & M Priapi, Inc., 5996 Augustine Herman Highway, Cecilton, MD

Sells fresh flowers, vegetables, plants, herbs, seasonal wreaths, and Asian pears. Open Monday through Friday 8 AM to 5:30 PM, Saturdays and Sundays March through December 10 AM to 3 PM.

www.priapigardens.com

Suggested time spent: 30-45 minutes.

Mileage: 1 mile

Estimated drive time: 2 minutes

Continue on Route 213 North.

Nickerson Meats, 3034 Augustine Herman Highway, Chesapeake City, MD

Sells locally grown beef. Tel: 410-885-5280

Suggested time spent: 15 minutes

Mileage: 7 miles

Estimated drive time: 10 minutes