

Discover Shenandoah

50 Wedding Weekend Activities on Virginia's Blue Ridge Whisky Wine Loop

Explore Small Towns

- **Front Royal** – Many people know Front Royal as the town they pass through enroute to Virginia's world-famous Skyline Drive. But it's also got plenty of quirky buys you'll only find in small mountain town shops: wind chimes and tarot cards, climbing gear, kilns and potters' wheels, architectural salvage. Front Royal Brewing Company is the entertainment anchor of Main Street, and a diverse culinary scene attests to the emotional pull of the region for the immigrants who came and stayed: Thai, Mexican, Chinese, Caribbean, and Italian complement the local burgers and BBQ.
- **Luray** – Families have been drawn to Luray for decades for its famous caverns, and now a new generation heads to its small downtown for craft beer tastings at Hawksbill Brewing Co., antiquing, local handcrafts, and shopping for vinyl (records, that is).
- Gathering Grounds is the coffee heart of the community, and the new Valley Cork or the Speakeasy at Mimslyn Inn is where everyone heads for drinks or dinner. Find maps and advice at the [Visitor's Center](#), housed in a restored train depot, and open daily.
- **Sperryville** – The tiniest of towns, Sperryville and its adorable Main Street boast a surprising number of exceptional stops for the culinarily inclined. Conveniently spaced among the art boutiques are a brewery (Hopkins Ordinary Ale Works), distillery (Copper Fox Distillery), and upscale pizza place (Rappahannock Pizza Kitchen) – brilliant! It's a short walk from one to the other, so you can easily park and wander.

Get Active

- **Hike the King** – Tell your friends you walked the famous [Appalachian Trail](#) (or A.T.) – the longest hiking-only trail in the world, and part of the [Triple Crown of long-distance hikes](#). Choose a [short route](#), or go the distance with an [8-mile hike](#) that starts with breakfast at Skyland Lodge and ends with lunch at Big Meadows Lodge. Local experts Karen and Ralph Riddle [recommend these hikes](#) to their guests at [Shadow Mountain Escape](#).
- **Go High** – [This 3.5 hour hike](#) to the top of Hawksbill Mountain takes you over the highest peak in the region.
- **Hit the Links** – Enjoy a round of mountain golf – at seriously reasonable prices – at [Caverns Country Club](#).
- **Take a Walk** – a true hidden gem, with convenient entry and footbridge locations off Luray's Main Street, [the Luray-Hawksbill Greenway](#) is a designated Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail and Bird Sanctuary. The Greenway follows Hawksbill Creek along a two-mile paved walking and biking loop.
- **Get Wet** – [Lake Arrowhead Recreation Park](#) is 34 beautiful acres of stocked, stream-fed water with paddle boat and canoe rentals, a sandy beach, summer swimming, and picnic spots.
- **Climb a Rock** – [Book a Rock Climbing Class](#) at Skyland Resort for an introduction to some of the best climbing in the eastern U.S. Classes available April through October on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.
- **Ride a Horse** – Skip the usual bachelor party melee and take the guys on a one or 2 1/2 hour [horseback trips](#) leaving from Skyland Stables (mile 42.5 on Skyline Drive). Pony rides are available, too, for the ring bearers.
- **Hike a Vineyard** – Never thought of wine tasting as an active adventure? Think again! [Chester Gap Cellars](#) has a one-mile hiking trail that winds through the forest and vineyards leading to a spring fed waterfall. [Wisteria Farm & Vineyard](#) invites guests to wander their vineyard trails on a short stroll to a creek, and [DuCard Vineyards](#) welcomes exploration of their vineyard and stream (and they're only a few minutes from two popular park trails – White Oak Canyon and Falls and Old Rag Mountain).

Just for Fun

- **Luray Caverns** – Take a [cavern tour](#) and hear the stalactites “sing.” Included in the Cavern admission fee are two other must-do's: The [Car & Carriage Caravan Museum](#), where you can ogle some vintage beauties, including a 1897 Mercedes-Benz, 1908 Baker Electric, and 1925 Rolls Royce owned by silent film star, Rudolph Valentino; and the [Luray Valley Museum](#), a seven-acre re-creation of a 19th-century farming community.
- **Test Your Trivia Chops** – Griffin Tavern hosts Trivia Night every Thursday from 7:30 – 9. [Click here for event info](#)

- **Basket Making Workshop** – Looking for special baskets for your flower girls? Big Meadows Lodge does a White Oak Basket Making class every Thursday from 10 – 3 (June through October). [See event link here.](#)
- **Wine & Bocce** – With a glass of Gadino Cellar’s Pinot Grigio or Nebbioli in hand, have your crew challenge the winning team on Gadino’s authentic Bocce courts.
- **Whisky Tours & Tastings** – Taste some local spirits at Copper Fox Distillery’s free distillery tours on the half hour, Sunday from 1 – 5 pm. (Arrange group tours in advance.) Tours also available at Dida’s Distillery and River Hill Distillery!
- **Virginia Wine, Beer & Cider tastings** – Two lodges in Shenandoah National Park host tastings once or twice a month though the fall. 4:30PM, \$20/person includes snacks and wine glass. [h](#)
- **The Tavern Shops** – If the posh Inn at Little Washington is too dear for your dining or lodging budget, your guests can at least peruse the Inn’s curated selection of gifts and gadgets next door.

Libation Journeys

- **Take the Whisky Wine Shuttle** – Let the pros do the driving as you trek to two wineries and a distillery. A guide shares stories about the park and region; picnic-style-lunch included. Mondays and Thursdays through the fall, departing from Skyland Lodge. (Reservations required.)
- **Wine Driving Tour (North)** – DIY tour of the Loop’s northern-most vineyards, featuring three wineries that couldn’t be more different, style-wise: Chester Gap Cellars (intimate; vast views), Rappahannock Cellars (upscale rustic; vast wines), Desert Rose Winery (think Western ranch with refined wine instead of cowboy shots).
- **Wine Driving Tour (Central)** – DIY tour of the Loop’s centrally-located wineries, each with a different winemaking style: Quievremont Winery goes for classic Bordeaux-style blends, and Gadino Cellars leans more Italiano.
- **Wine Driving Tour (South)** – DIY tour of the three wineries anchoring the southern portion of the Loop, where you’re very likely to taste with the winemaker (Sharp Rock Vineyards), want to linger on the patio (DuCard Vineyard), or rub elbows with lots of farm critters (Wisteria Farm & Vineyard).
- **Craft Beer Driving Tour** – Hitting the Loop’s three breweries is the perfect Loop tour, starting at the top of Skyline Drive (Front Royal Brewing Company), then straddling the mountain south to Hawksbill Brewing Company and Hopkins Ordinary Ale Works. (Hopkins opens at 3 Friday – Sunday, so save them for last. Also open Wednesday 4-7.)
- **Spirits Driving Tour** – Plan your three-distillery tour so you’ll be at Copper Fox around noon (and next door at Rappahannock Pizza Kitchen for lunch, yum). Dida’s Distillery is north (co-located with Rappahannock Cellars), and River Hill Distillery is a half-hour west, over the mountain.

VIP Experiences

- **Luxe Lunch or Dinner** – Thank your bridal party with a fête they won’t forget ensconced in one of the private spaces at the world-class Inn at Little Washington – either the [Claiborne House](#) or [Ballroom](#).
- **The Kitchen Table** – Each night, the Inn at Little Washington reserves two 6-seat tables on either side of the grand fireplace in what’s been called the most beautiful kitchen in the world. Splurge on this ultimate culinary experience for your closest comrades.
- **Intimate Dinner** – Book well ahead for a [table at Foster Harris House](#); this tiny, renowned hideaway hosts only 10 guests per night for a six-course, prix-fixe gourmet dinner (Thursday- Saturday).
- **Private Pairing Party** – Contact [DuCard Vineyards](#) about booking their fun, unpretentious Gourmet Wood & Wine Pairing event program for 10-20 guests in their barrel room, which is hosted by their in-house chef whose food pairings often come from her own garden.

Dining

- **Porch Views** – From late spring through fall, enjoy Luray’s spectacular mountain view over breakfast, lunch or dinner on the front porch of the town’s grand old lady, the [Mimslyn Inn](#).
- **Breakfast Break** – Home-baked scones and an espresso bar make Gathering Grounds Pâtisserie & Café in Luray a day-starter for locals; daily lunch and a changing menu of specials for weekend supper until 8 on Fridays & Saturdays, too.
- **Hometown Hero** – Girls love a good diner as much as boys after a big night out. [Hawksbill Diner](#) in Stanley is the place for morning-after bachelorette rejuvenation.

- **Pizza & Wine** – Have some culinary experts in your group? Try the creative pizzas and curated wine selections at [Rappahannock Pizza Kitchen](#) in Sperryville: it's not your uncle's pizza pies.
- **Sunday Brunch** – After the big event, a late brunch is just the thing. Head to Griffin Tavern's three cozy dining rooms in Flint Hill, and a brunch that's right-timed for late risers: 10:30 – 3.
- **Winery Picnics** – All of the wineries on the Loop welcome picnics. Pick up some sandwiches on your way, buy a bottle there, and relax on a porch, patio, deck, or field with Blue Ridge views.
- **Beer and a Burger, Plus** – Brewing is just one activity at which [Front Royal Brewing Co](#) excels; they also have a full menu that includes fish & chips and steak frites, entertainment on weekend evenings, and even Sunday brunch.
- **Wine and a Board** – Head to [The Valley Cork](#) in Luray for cheese & charcuterie boards packed with flavorful goodness, flat breads and rice bowls. Go for happy hour, or stay for dinner.

Relax

- **Spa Day** – [The Spa at Mimslyn Inn](#) soothes those pre-wedding jitters with massage, reflexology, aromatherapy foot scrubs – even energy healing. Couples massage available, too.
- **Happy Hour** – Tap your favorite at one of these friendly happy hour spots: Hopkins Ordinary Ale Works, Hawksbill Brewing, or Front Royal Brewing Co, or try a Virginia wine flight at The Valley Cork.
- **Picnic Afternoon** – Point your guests to some of the Loop's top picnic spots. Gather supplies at [Fairview Grocery](#) in Luray or the [Sperryville Corner Store and Provisions](#) and then head to the picnic tables at the creek at [Wisteria Farm & Vineyard](#), or a [park overlook](#) on Skyline Drive.
- **Seated Wine Tasting** – Planning is stressful! If you're too tuckered to stand at the tasting bar, [DuCard Vineyards](#) will bring the tasting to you.
- **Star Gazing** – Bring a blanket and a beverage and enjoy the peace and starry night skies in the grassy meadow at Mile 51 on Skyline Drive, just a mile from Big Meadows Lodge. Check the Park's calendar for [monthly evening astronomy events](#).
- **Enjoy a Meditative Stroll** – Take a quiet, 1-mile walk around Luray's [Lake Arrowhead](#).
- **Love to Drive?** – In Shenandoah National Park, you can cross the Appalachian Trail more than 30 times without getting out of your car. Between the Front Royal entrance and Thornton Gap entrance are 30 miles of twists, turns, wildlife, and views. Or take a shorter trip by starting at Thornton's Gap and head south 11 miles to Skyland Resort. Grab a local beer at [Skyland's Mountain Tap Room](#).

Music

Enjoy some lively music on the Loop at these spots, listed roughly north to south.

- **Front Royal Brewing Co**, Front Royal, Friday & Saturday starting at 8.
- **Rappahannock Cellars**, Huntly, Sunday from 2-5.
- **Griffin Tavern**, Flint Hill, Friday & Saturday starting at 8.
- **Mimslyn Inn**, Luray, Thursday & Friday starting at 8 the Speakeasy.
- **Skyland Resort, Skyline Drive**, [Shenandoah Valley Cloggers](#), Tuesdays from 7:30-8:30 (seasonal).
- **Big Meadows Lodge** [New Market Taproom](#), Skyline Drive, 30's & '40s music, Sundays from 4-7 (seasonal).
- **DuCard Vineyards**, Etlan, Saturday from 2-5.

Tip: For weekly updates on live music in the area, check [DiscoverShenandoah.com](#)