

A night sky filled with stars, with a mountain range illuminated by warm, golden light. The mountains are rugged and rocky, with some trees visible on the slopes. The foreground shows the silhouettes of bare trees.

# WEST VIRGINIA

VACATION GUIDE

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*almost heaven*

# NORTHERN PANHANDLE

## CULTURAL TREASURES & FUN FINDS

Though communities like Wheeling were once industrial hubs, the Northern Panhandle now bustles with cultural activity. Take a two-day trip to uncover what these historic sites, homes and theaters, architectural gems and other unique locales have to offer.



Palace of Gold

## Day 1

Begin your journey in New Martinsville, where the **Lincoln Theater**, originally opened in 1920, has been beautifully restored. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, today it operates as a community theater and hosts traveling and local performances.

Head north to Moundsville, where a handful of places show off the historic and unexpected. If you can handle a little spookiness, book one of the daily tours at the former **West Virginia Penitentiary** to learn about daily life for both inmates and guards, and perhaps even experience a bit of the paranormal in this Gothic-style fortress.

Across the street, the **Grave Creek Mound Archaeological Complex** is one of the largest and most famous burial mounds built by the Adena people more than 2,000 years ago. Standing at 62 feet high, it's an impressive reminder of the effort undertaken by this prehistoric culture, and the adjacent **Delf Norona Museum** provides insight on its construction, as well as interpretative exhibits.

Save room for dessert—**Quality Bake Shoppe** offers pies, cookies and donuts like the Mad Dog, filled with vanilla, chocolate or peanut-butter cream.

Make a final stop in Moundsville at the historic **Strand Theatre** to catch a movie, performance or concert. Though its grand opening was in 1920, an extensive renovation over the last couple of decades has spruced things up to their original glory, allowing surrounding communities to enjoy the arts.

Just up the road in Glen Dale is the **Cockayne Farmstead**, a veritable time capsule of rural American life in the

1800s. The 1850s farmhouse and its assortment of more than 3,000 artifacts tell the story of the prominent Cockayne family as early settlers to the area during an age of rapid economic development.

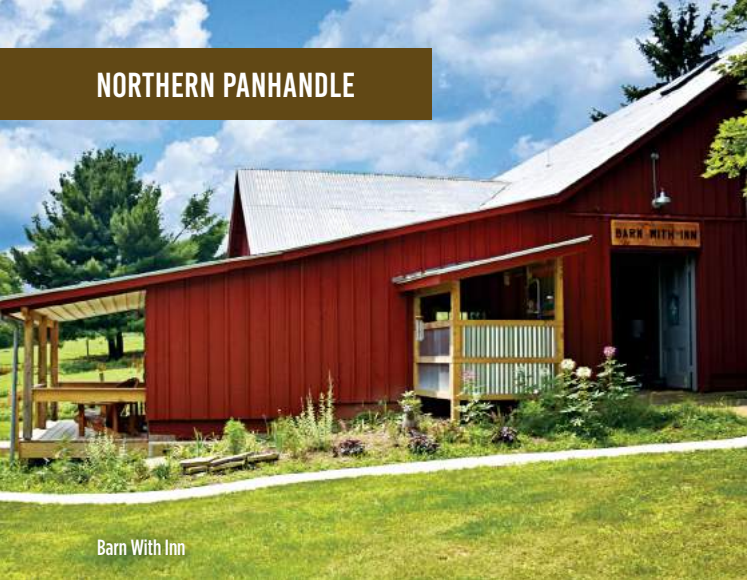
Take a turn eastward to the community of New Vrindaban, home of what may be the most surprising attraction in the Northern Panhandle: the **Palace of Gold**. Brilliant stained-glass windows, ornate marble hallways, lush gardens and, of course, a glittering exterior make for a visual treat as “America’s Taj Mahal,” originally built for the founder of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

As night falls, make your way to Wheeling for an overnight stay, which will be your base for the next day’s adventures. Choose from one of several area hotels or tuck in at **Oglebay Resort**.

## Day 2

Rise and shine in “the Friendly City,” where you can explore much of it on foot. Using the **Wheeling Heritage Trails**—13 miles of former railroad beds converted into paved walking and biking routes—as a guide, begin your walking tour at **West Virginia Independence Hall**, the state’s official birthplace. Now a museum and National Historic Landmark, you can tour meticulously restored period rooms and browse interpretive and interactive displays, including a rare collection of Civil War battle flags.

Also downtown is a pair of historic venues: the **Capitol Theatre** and **Victoria Theater**. The former brims with glamour and is home to the world-class Wheeling Symphony Orchestra, as well as Broadway shows, concerts and movies, while the latter is the oldest operating theater in the state.



Barn With Inn



Fostoria Glass Museum

At lunchtime, stop into **Figaretti's Restaurant** for old-school Italian that's been around since the 1940s. Fuel up with a hearty meatball or sausage sandwich, homemade gnocchi or stuffed shells.

Proceed north into the Victorian Old Town District to catch a glimpse of the grand Victorian-era homes that are a hallmark of Wheeling. One of the most notable is the **Eckhart House**, a three-story, Queen Anne-style town home with well-preserved original architectural features. Book a one-hour historic guided tour of the home, or make reservations for afternoon tea.

Next, you'll want to hop back in the car to pay a visit to the **Oglebay Institute**, a collection of six venues dedicated to creative, cultural and nature-oriented pursuits. Highlights include the **Stifel Fine Arts Center**, which is housed in the historic Edemar Mansion and offers rotating art exhibitions and events throughout the year; nature classes and workshops at the **Schrader Environmental Education Center**; stagings of hit plays at **Towngate Theatre**; and the **Museums of the Oglebay Institute's** popular live

glassmaking demonstrations at the Glass Museum or the Mansion Museum's holiday events.

Lastly, depart Wheeling for one last peek at a National Historic Landmark, the **Alexander Campbell Mansion** in Bethany. Here, you'll find the 19th-century home of a renowned educator and religious leader who founded Bethany College. Original wallpaper from 1840 and some of the furniture still remain, as well as his hexagonal brick study building, a schoolroom and the family's cemetery.

Leaving Wheeling, head up to Weirton and spend some time at **Mountaineer Casino Racetrack & Resort**. Not into gaming? Watch horse races, take in live entertainment or relax at The Spa at Mountaineer.

When you've gotten as far north as you can go and still be in West Virginia, you'll find a few colorful surprises waiting for you. In Newell, pick up some bright Fiesta dinnerware at the **Homer Laughlin China Company**. A few miles away, stop and see the **World's Largest Teapot** in Chester. This tribute to area pottery stands 14 feet tall.

## MEET THE MAKERS, BY THE NUMBERS

Artisans have been attracted to this part of West Virginia for decades, and the tradition of handcrafting one-of-a-kind wares continues today. Here's a look at some of the stats behind these vendors and where to find them.

### ▼ 3

A beautiful three-story atrium is at the heart of the **Wheeling Artisan Center**, a renovated industrial building that now houses a 7,500-square-foot exhibition space, "Made in Wheeling" exhibits and The Emporium, a retail mix of arts, crafts and a large selection of West Virginia's best food products.

### ▼ 5

Newell's **Homer Laughlin China Company** launched its famous Fiesta line with five original colors (red, yellow, cobalt blue, green and ivory) in 1936. The dinnerware collection remains a popular staple in kitchens today.

## OTHER MUST-VISITS, STAYS &amp; EATS

Wheeling Island Hotel-Casino-Racetrack, The Vagabond Kitchen, Good Mansion Wines, Avenue Eats and DiCarlo's in Wheeling • Tomlinson Run State Park in New Manchester • The Barn With Inn in Wellsburg



Wheeling Artisan Center

## ▼ 99

Gone, but not forgotten, the Fostoria Glass Company created eye-catching glassware for 99 years, from 1887 to 1986. In Moundsville, the **Fostoria Glass Museum** now pays homage with its extraordinary collection of delicate stemware that was especially popular at the White House.

## ▼ 165

In 2018, the **Centre Market** in Wheeling turns 165, which happens to be older than the state itself. Stop by to relish the eclectic variety of shops and eateries, from Wood-n-Stitches' carved gifts to Coleman's Fish Market.

## ▼ 700

The Conlon family maintains 700 beehives at their **ThistleDew Farm** in Proctor, resulting in an array of high-quality honey and beeswax products, such as candles and creams, sold at their retail shop.

## ▼ 2,200

It's hot business making glass—2,200 degrees Fahrenheit, in fact, that limestone, soda ash and sand are heated to when producing the **Paul Wissmach Glass Company's** signature colored sheet glass in Paden City.