

20 Reasons Why Groups Should Visit Newport News in 2020

Newport News, VA, Feb. 15, 2019 – Newport News has it all— historic homes, parks, museums, cultural attractions, outdoor recreation, festivals, along with a variety of restaurant and lodging options. The only problem your group will face is deciding what to do and how to fit it all in! We're excited to share with you our list of 20 things to look forward to in 2020 for students, adults, and seniors visiting Newport News next year!

1. **Historic Garden Week** – Join us in Newport News in 2020 for the 100th anniversary of the Garden Club of Virginia and the 87th year for [Historic Garden Week](#)! The 2020 Newport News tour on April 22 will feature several historic Mennonite properties. In addition to the houses and gardens that overlook the Warwick River, tours will also be given of the historic Mennonite church and its cemetery. One of the featured properties has a brick serpentine wall, behind which are beautiful grounds – complete with swans! Handmade Mennonite dresses and antique cars add to the day's enjoyment.
2. **Newly renovated resort** – Kiln Creek Golf Club and Resort has completed a renovation of its clubhouse and its boutique hotel: [THE LODGE at Kiln Creek](#). As the leisure and recreational hub of the Virginia Peninsula, Kiln Creek Golf Club and Resort includes an 18-hole golf course, an outdoor saltwater pool, tennis courts, a golf shop, a fitness facility, newly renovated banquet space, and a new restaurant called Nest Kitchen & Bar that provides in-house catering.
3. **Virginia Living Museum added to state trail** – The [Virginia Living Museum](#) has joined Luray Caverns, Natural Bridge State Park and 22 others as one of the newest stops of the Virginia Cave and Karst Trail. With more than a dozen stops, the trail gives visitors the opportunity to learn about and appreciate caves and karst features. On the lower level of the Virginia Living Museum, visitors can explore a simulated limestone cave and the creatures that dwell in them, including the Slimy Salamander, Cave Salamander, Pack Rat, Cave Crickets, Mexican Blind Cavefish and Black Rat Snake.
4. **Toys Ahoy!** – Opening in late 2019, *Toys Ahoy* will be a new and fun exhibit at [The Mariners' Museum](#), with more than 200 different toys and games on display. The collection will include wood and paper battleships, board games, card games, puzzles, motorized miniature engines and other historic toys and collectibles from years gone by. Included are opportunities to learn and hear amazing facts and stories from toy collectors and designers. Explore your childhood again and delight in this wonderful exhibit as you walk down memory lane!
5. **Beyond Tet: The Vietnam War 1968-1970** – In honor of the Golden Anniversary of the Vietnam War, this new exhibit at the Virginia War Museum examines two critical war years through artifacts, uniforms and photographs. Highlighting the stories of troops in the conflict, the exhibit contains significant artifacts never previously displayed at the museum, including Admiral John S. McCain's uniform, special forces uniforms and equipment, as well as items relating to the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, and Vietnamese and allied contingents. On display through Sept. 7, 2020, at the [Virginia War Museum](#).
6. **Getting Back to the Basics** – Give your student groups a whole new appreciation for the first three letters of the alphabet with the “*ABCs of Newport News*,” a customizable multi-day itinerary that takes students through the city to explore its Arts, Battles and Critters! Start your visit with our Art & Sculpture Tour, which showcases dozens of works of outdoor art throughout Newport News. Afterward, get up-close-and-personal

with re-enactors in period attire to learn about the lives of Civil War soldiers at Endview Plantation. Cap off your day with the critters at the Virginia Living Museum, with its hugely popular *Dinosaur Discovery Trail!*

7. **New Bike Trails Map** – A new online resource will be available for cyclists to find a variety of bike trails in the city. Trails will be separated into three categories: leisure, mountain, and road biking and will include interactive maps, downloadable PDFs, and a brief description of each. Look for updates starting this summer on our [website](#).
8. **New Brewery** – [Twisted Knot Brewing Co.](#) is a micro-brewery and tasting room that will be newly opened near City Center in 2020. With a one-barrel system, the brewery will make beers primarily for on-site and take-home consumption.
9. **3 Barrels 3 Cities** – Fashioned after the hugely popular *4 Taps 4 Cities* challenge, *3 Barrels 3 Cities* will allow you to experience distilleries in Newport News, Hampton, and Smithfield and receive some cool *Toast the Coast* gear in return! While enjoying the [Toast the Coast Trail](#), please remember to drink responsibly!
10. **Enter the world of Anderson Johnson** – The son of a sharecropper, Anderson Johnson was born in 1915. When he was 8, Johnson was working in his father's cornfield when he was struck by a life-changing vision of angels. After being baptized, Johnson began a ministry and traveled throughout the country, teaching himself to draw, play piano and guitar, and preach the gospel. After settling in Newport News, Johnson established a faith mission. To attract passersby, he painted both the exterior and interior of his Ivy Avenue house with folk-art paintings. In the late 1980s, his home was purchased for an urban renewal project. Prior to the house's demolition, Johnson's murals and other significant pieces were preserved to become part of a permanent exhibit at [Downing-Gross Cultural Arts Center](#).
11. **Unique Performance Venue for Groups** – The [Virginia Living Museum](#) would be a fun and unique setting for student performances. The museum's 100-seat outdoor amphitheater and its entrance courtyard are awesome places for your group to perform. There is plenty of room, the acoustics are great, and, best of all, the animals won't be disturbed! Plus, there's plenty of seating for audience members. At the conclusion of the performance, your group can spend a few hours relaxing and learning about the wildlife of Virginia inside the museum itself and along its 3/4 mile, elevated boardwalk!
12. **Progressive Lunch Tour with a focus on history** – Give your groups a tour that feeds the mind, body, and soul with *A Taste of Historic Warwick County*, a customizable progressive lunch tour that takes visitors through three historic homes in Newport News. You'll start your visit with appetizers at Endview Plantation, an 18th century plantation built in 1769. The main course will be served at Fairways BBQ & Grill at Deer Run, part of the picturesque Newport News Park. Homemade desserts served by docents in period attire will be on the menu at Lee Hall Mansion, an elegant plantation house that is the only large mid-19th century Italianate structure remaining on Virginia's Lower Peninsula.
13. **Ferguson Center for the Arts** – CNU's [Ferguson Center for the Arts](#) will celebrate its 16th season in 2020. The Center brings to Newport News world-renowned orchestras, touring Broadway shows, celebrity speakers, legendary performing artists, stand-up comedians and holiday entertainment. The Ferguson Center for the Arts always has something to please everyone – no matter the group type or size, it's always been a favorite venue for motorcoach groups visiting Newport News!
14. **New Themed Tour at The Mariners' Museum** – In [Waters of Despair and Hope](#), your group will discover the influences and impacts made by Africans and African Americans across centuries of maritime history. Includes a guided gallery tour, lecture, and an introduction to selected artifacts from the museum's vast

collection. Top off your visit with a themed meal, inspired by soul food.

15. **Experience Another Side of Maritime History** – A second new specialty tour at The Mariners’ Museum is [*Shady Ladies of the Seven Seas*](#). Enjoy a guided tour focusing on women's roles in maritime history. Afterward, your group will be served afternoon tea, followed by a behind-the-scenes look at artifacts chosen by our staff to be of special interest to your group.
16. **New Restaurants** – [Gallina Grasso Italian Kitchen](#) – also affectionately known as “Fat Hen” – has opened in City Center. The menu is primarily Italian, with some Mediterranean influences. Diners have the option of eating indoors or on the patio with its heaters and fire pits. Additionally, fresh Cajun-style seafood dishes and “create-your-own” poke bowls are now available from [Mr. Boil](#), a new fast-casual restaurant in City Center. Customers can also choose shellfish – from crawfish and crab legs to lobster – for customizable seafood boils.
17. **A New Arts Center** – Plans are now underway for the construction of a new [Peninsula Fine Arts Center](#) on the grounds of Christopher Newport University. Construction should be completed in 2020 on the three-story building that will include gallery and programming space for Peninsula Fine Arts Center itself, as well as lecture halls, classrooms, studios, labs, and a TV production studio for CNU’s fine arts students and professors.
18. **Fall Fun in Newport News** – As the leaves begin to change colors, Newport News Park comes alive during the Newport News Fall Festival, one of Coastal Virginia's biggest traditional craft shows. With more than 200 vendors, traditional crafts and trades and folk entertainment, groups can experience the sights, sounds and traditions that have been passed down from generation to generation. This annual festival, always held the first weekend in October, will be in its 47th year in 2020.
19. **Money-saving Coupons for Groups** – Newport News Tourism is pleased to announce the availability of coupon “sheets” for groups who visit the city. The coupons include percentage and money-off discounts, free admissions, and buy-one-get-one-free offers at some of the best attractions, hotels, restaurants and retailers in the city. In addition to saving groups money, these coupons benefit tour and reunion planners by providing them with great ideas on where to take their groups to eat/shop/play while staying in Newport News.
20. **Watch a Semi-Pro Soccer Game** – Lionsbridge Football Club, or Lionsbridge FC, is an American soccer club based in Newport News. Groups can customize their game day experience with reserved seating, private catered meals, or vouchers for food trucks, a post-game on-field penalty kick competition, and even a pre-game pep talk from Lionsbridge FC coaching staff.

To create a customized program for your group, discuss lodging needs, or to learn more about the abundance of group-friendly attractions in Newport News, contact Barb Kleiss, Group Marketing Manager, at 757-926-1442, toll-free at 888-493-7386 or by email at bkleiss@nmva.gov.

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