Dorchester County and Cambridge
HEART OF THE CHESAPEAKE

PHOTO BY GRAHAM SLAUGHTER

HEART OF THE CHESAPEAKE
DORCHESTER
water moves us

HOME OF IRONMAN Maryland
Dorchester County has more waterways than any other county in Maryland. From these waters come delicious crabs, oysters, and fish. Water here serves as a playground for all ages, a home to an abundance of wildlife, an inspiration to artists, a backdrop to history, and the site of one of the world’s most grueling endurance events.

See how water moves you!
LOTS TO EXPLORE
From the Chesapeake Bay to dozens of rivers and streams, Dorchester offers a range of beautiful waterways to discover and enjoy.

Fun on the Water

JOIN A PUBLIC SAIL OR CRUISE
No boat? No problem. Join a sail on the skipjack Nathan of Dorchester, a traditional oystering vessel. Or try a crabfeast on a riverboat or a sunset cruise on a converted workboat.

VISIT OUR LIGHTHOUSE
Offering beautiful views from Long Wharf Park in Cambridge, the Choptank River Lighthouse is a replica of a historic structure. It is open daily for visits May through October. You can also see Hoopers Island Lighthouse, located three miles off the western edge of Middle Hoopers Island.

BRING YOUR BOAT
Dorchester County offers more than a dozen marinas and 20 free boat ramps. The largest marina is the Municipal Yacht Basin in Cambridge.

GO FISHING OR CRABBING
Dorchester offers an amazing array of fishing opportunities. Anglers catch rockfish, croaker, black drum, flounder, and more. Head out with an expert captain or set up at one of the many public spots to fish or crab with the family.

PADDLE THROUGH BEAUTY
With pristine waterways and dramatic marshland, Dorchester offers great paddling, whether you’re steering a kayak, a canoe, or a stand-up paddleboard.
CYCLE ON FLAT, QUIET ROADS
Level terrain, uncrowded roads, and stunning scenery make for terrific bicycling throughout the county. A growing number of cycling events and triathlons draw thousands each year, but cyclists of all ages and skill levels enjoy riding here. Bring your own bicycle or rent one here. The free Dorchester Cycling Guide includes suggested routes from five to 80 miles.

ASK FOR OUR CYCLING GUIDE

WATCH THE BIRDS
A major stop on the Atlantic Flyway, Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge hosts more than 250 species of birds, including ospreys, hawks, herons, egrets, 20 species of ducks, and bald eagles. It’s been designated as an Internationally Important Bird Area.

ASK FOR OUR BIRDING GUIDE

TOP 10 FOR WILDLIFE WATCHING
USA Today named Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge one of the country’s top 10 places for “amazing wildlife watching.” The refuge is home to one of the largest populations of eagles on the East Coast, as well as herons, egrets, and thousands of migrating birds. The refuge also offers excellent cycling, paddling, and walking.

SWING A GOLF CLUB
Dorchester’s golf courses include River Marsh at the Hyatt, which made Golf Magazine’s list of the 10 best public golf courses in Maryland.

GO HUNTING
Dorchester is known for its excellent waterfowl and deer hunting. We’re home to one of the highest populations of sika deer, and we have guides who will show you great spots for hunting.

FIND FARM FUN
Pick your own strawberries or pumpkins. Try the corn maze. Bring your group for a tour of a bison farm, or go behind the scenes at the winery.

AND MORE!
You’ll also find opportunities for horseback riding, hiking, all kinds of water sports, sky diving, and more!
WALK IN TUBMAN’S FOOTSTEPS
Harriet Tubman was born into slavery in Dorchester County, and she lived here until she was a young woman. In 1849, she escaped, then repeatedly risked her life to return to guide others to freedom through a secret network called the Underground Railroad.

The best way to experience Tubman’s story is to take the self-guided driving tour along the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway. A mobile-friendly audio guide brings the stories to life as you explore. Highlights include the Harriet Tubman Museum and Education Center and the Bucktown Village Store.

In 2014, Dorchester lands were designated the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park—the first such park to honor an African American. Plans include a visitor center near Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge.

DISCOVER OUR MARITIME AND AGRICULTURAL HISTORY
Established in 1669, Dorchester is one of Maryland’s oldest counties. It has been an agricultural, seafood, and canning powerhouse; a hub for boatbuilding; and home to Native Americans, African Americans, and colonial settlers.

We celebrate our maritime heritage during an annual race of skipjacks (Maryland’s state boat), the Schooner Rendezvous, and seasonal sails on the skipjack Nathan of Dorchester. Dive deeper into the area’s maritime history at the James B. Richardson Maritime Museum.

Discover stories through Dorchester’s museums and historic sites, including the Meredith House, a home dating back to 1760; Stanley Institute, a one-room schoolhouse; and Old Trinity Church, one of the oldest Episcopal churches in the country.

ASK FOR THE TUBMAN BYWAY MAP AND GUIDE AND AUDIO GUIDE

ASK FOR OUR HERITAGE TRAILS GUIDES
Endurance Events

“From the sunrise at swim start, to the wildlife sightings on the bike, to sunset on the run, to the electric finish line in town—what an awesome day at IRONMAN Maryland!”

—Jennifer Bornemann, triathlete

Dorchester County is host to not one, but two IRONMAN triathlons. Athletes are drawn here for the fast, flat, scenic roadways—and the warm hospitality.

At IRONMAN 70.3 Eagleman in June, triathletes swim, bike, and run a total of 70.3 miles; IRONMAN Maryland triathletes tackle a whopping 140.6 miles in one day. Athletes come from all over the world and all walks of life to try for one of the coveted spots at the world IRONMAN championships—or to simply test their own perseverance. Spectators are welcome to cheer for these inspiring men and women.

For those who prefer their athletics a little less intense, Dorchester is also home to various family-friendly cycling and running events, including the Wild Goose Chase, a women-only cycling weekend. See the full list of endurance events at VisitDorchester.org/endurance.

WATCH ONE OF THE WORLD’S MOST PRESTIGIOUS ATHLETIC EVENTS

PHOTO BY MEG MADDOX

PHOTO BY LIZ KREUTZ/IRONMAN
TASTE THE DIFFERENCE
Dorchester County is known for fresh and delicious Maryland blue crabs, oysters, and rockfish that come straight from our waters. Nearby farmers bring us everything from sweet corn and juicy tomatoes to bison and beef. It makes for some delectable eating.

Enjoy the local flavors by dining in one of our award-winning restaurants, by picking your own produce at a U-Pick farm, or by coming to an event that celebrates our foods—the Taste of Cambridge Crab Cook-Off, the Hot Sauce and Oyster Festival, or the strawberry, peach, and apple festivals, to name a few.

You can also kick back with locally produced beverages, including craft beers from RAR Brewing, wine from Layton’s Chance Winery, and coffee from Night Kitchen. All three places offer a behind-the-scenes look at how they create their products.
GROUPS WELCOME
Dorchester County welcomes all kinds of groups, from meetings to family reunions and day trippers. Bring your group on a riverboat cruise, to a bison farm or winery, or to the annual Seafood Feast-I-Val, or another great event. Find out more at 410.228.1000.

Explore Our Towns

TAKE A TOUR
Enjoy walking tours in historic communities, driving tours to quaint waterfront villages, and tours by boat—all in the Heart of the Chesapeake. Themes range from watermen and crabbing to Harriet Tubman to historic churches. Guides are available to help you plan your itinerary; call 410.228.1000 for details.

DISCOVER CHARMING TOWNS
Dorchester County is home to some wonderful towns that are great for scenic drives or leisurely exploration.

**Cambridge**: Here you’ll find the county’s largest concentration of restaurants, shops, and art galleries. Join a historic walking tour on Saturdays, April–October, or a Ghost Walk.

**Church Creek**: Many houses here date back to the 1700s; Old Trinity Church goes back to the 1600s.

**East New Market**: Take a tour of this town whose historic district is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

**Hoopers Island**: You’ll find villages where working the water is still a way of life. Join a charter fishing trip or a cruise of area lighthouses.

**Hurlock**: The town is known for its railroading heritage and historic train station.

**Secretary**: With roots dating back to 1661, the town fronts the Warwick River.

**Taylors Island**: This fishing village was the site of a skirmish in the War of 1812. Its distinctive homes, schoolhouses, and churches are listed on the National Register.

**Vienna**: Explored by Captain John Smith in 1608, Vienna is one of Maryland’s oldest colonial settlements. Historic homes flank the waterfront park, which is perfect for picnicking.
A FULL CALENDAR
From the Taste of Cambridge, with its crab-picking contest and crab cook-off in July, to the National Outdoor Show with muskrat skinning championships and beauty pageants in February, Dorchester comes together for fun events all year long. Great events are part of the reason Cambridge was recently named one of 10 Fun Riverfront Towns in the Maryland-Virginia-D.C. area.

ASK FOR OUR EVENTS GUIDE

Things to Do

SHOP ONE-OF-A-KIND TREASURES
In Dorchester’s antique shops, boutiques, and country stores, you’ll find treasures old and new, traditional and contemporary. Most of our small businesses are independently owned and offer unique items created by area artists and artisans—not to mention friendly customer service.

ENJOY ARTS AND MUSIC
Discover our vibrant artist community. Take in one of the monthly exhibits at the Dorchester Center for the Arts. Browse galleries in downtown Cambridge, and enjoy free receptions during the Second Saturday Art Walks. There’s also live entertainment on weekends. Pick up the Weekend Roundup at the Visitor Center to see what’s happening while you’re here.
WHERE TO STAY
With its natural beauty and friendly pace of life, Dorchester County makes a great getaway. You’ll find cozy bed and breakfasts, a four-diamond waterfront resort, hotels, campgrounds, and vacation rentals.

HOTELS AND RESORTS
Best Value Inn
2831 Ocean Gateway, Cambridge; 410.221.0800; americasbestvalueinn.com
Reasonable rates.

Comfort Inn & Suites
2936 Ocean Gateway, Cambridge; 410.901.0926; comfortinn.com
Free breakfast, wifi. Indoor pool, fitness room.

Days Inn & Suites
2917 Ocean Gateway, Cambridge; 888.735.2980; daysinn.com
Free breakfast, wifi. Indoor pool.

Holiday Inn Express
2715 Ocean Gateway, Cambridge; 410.221.9900; ihg.com
Free breakfast, wifi. Indoor pool, fitness room. Event facilities available.

Oysters at Bistro Poplar
Chef Travis Todd at Ocean Odyssey Seafood Restaurant, a family-owned business in Cambridge that started as a crab-picking operation.

TREAT YOUR TASTE BUDS
Savor a meaty crab cake or slurp a plump oyster in one of our award-winning restaurants, and you’ll taste the difference with Dorchester County seafood. Some of our restaurants have even garnered raves for their crab cakes in Southern Living and USA Today.

Whether you’re dining dockside, riverside, downtown, or in the country, you’ll find a range of tastiness, from down-home meals to sophisticated cuisine—all served with a generous side of Eastern Shore hospitality.

ASK FOR OUR DINING GUIDE

SPECIAL DEALS: Find deals on lodging, dining, and more at VisitDorchester.org.
Kindred Spirits
Family Massage & Cottage Retreat
102 Hiawatha Rd., Cambridge;
410.221.7575; kindredspiritscottage
retreat.com
Private, peaceful atmosphere plus holistic health services.

Lodgecliffe on the Choptank
103 Choptank Terrace, Cambridge;
410.228.1760; lodgecliffe.com
Serene setting with spectacular views of the Choptank River. Maryland Green Travel Partner.

Mill Street Inn
114 Mill St., Cambridge; 410.901.9144;
millstinn.com
Queen Anne Victorian in the heart of the historic district; one block from the Choptank River.

Marvels on the Creek Bed & Breakfast
6230 Beverly Rd., East New Market; 410.943.4723;
marvelsonthecreek.com
Country living on Cabin Creek, about 10 miles from Cambridge.

The Tavern House
111 Water St., Vienna; 410.376.3347;
tavernhouse.com
On the banks of the Nanticoke River in a 300-year-old small town. About 15 miles from Cambridge.

Victoria Gardens Inn Bed & Breakfast
101 Oakley St., Cambridge; 410.901.2292; victoriagardensinn.com
Restored Victorian in the historic district with views of the Choptank River.

**CAMPGROUNDS**

**Madison Bay Campground**
4814 Canning House Rd., Madison; 410.228.1108
Campsites, boat slips, showers, restaurant. About 12 miles from Cambridge.

**Taylors Island Family Campground**
4362 Bay Shore Rd., Taylors Island; 410.397.3275
On the Chesapeake Bay. Camp and RV sites, store, laundry, bath houses. About 20 miles from Cambridge.

**VACATION RENTALS**

For a listing of vacation homes in Dorchester, go to VisitDorchester.org and click on “Where to Stay.” You can also find options by searching on airbnb.com or vrbo.com.
Dorchester County is on Maryland’s Eastern Shore, less than an hour from the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. Pick up a detailed map showing attractions and more at the Dorchester Visitor Center.