

MEDIKIT

DESTINATION
Gettysburg!
ADAMS COUNTY, PA



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WELCOME TO GETTYSBURG

More than 160 years after the cannons fell silent and the smoke cleared, the story of one Civil War battle continues to inspire travelers to set their sights on Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

Today, Adams County welcomes approximately 3 million visitors from across the world each year. Many come to walk the hallowed ground of Gettysburg National Military Park, pay their respects at Gettysburg National Cemetery, explore interactive museums and witness re-enactments that bring the past to life.

While Gettysburg's history is often the jewel that shines brightest, visitors will find there are more gems to be discovered — family farms, diverse cuisine, unique shops, locally made craft beverages, and so much more.

The charming downtown is filled with locally owned businesses carrying gifts that will delight even the most avid souvenir hunters. As you get to know the people behind the counter, you'll learn why Gettysburg was named the most welcoming town in America*.

Come hungry to indulge in an array of culinary experiences, from fine dining in a historic tavern to sipping beer in a local brewery. Many restaurants source fresh ingredients from nearby farms and markets.

Beyond the bustling streets awaits the great outdoors. Chase the sunrise from the seat of a bicycle or hike through the woods at one of our state parks. Spend your trip picking your own fruit, snapping photos in a sunflower field, petting farm animals, and sipping wine in the rolling hills of Adams County.

Whether you're drawn to Gettysburg for its historic past or the vibrant community of the present, you'll find yourself changed for having been here.

It's one small town with a big story to tell.

*In 2023, Gettysburg was named No. 1 on Booking.com's list of "Most Welcoming Cities and Towns in the U.S.A."



In 2026, the United States will commemorate the 250th anniversary of its founding — dubbed America 250.

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania — the location of perhaps the most pivotal moment in that 250-year history — is expected to draw hundreds of thousands of additional visitors over the next three years. Americans will look to mark this milestone anniversary by walking in the footsteps of history.

Four score and seven years after the United States was born in Philadelphia, Americans battled for the soul of their nation in Gettysburg. The Civil War turned brother against brother as they fought to define who should be free. There has never been another battle like it on American soil.

President Abraham Lincoln understood the enormity of this tragedy when he delivered his Gettysburg Address. With his opening line, Lincoln reminded Americans of the vision set forth by their forefathers in 1776 of a nation “conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.”

Gettysburg isn't just a destination to visit, but a destination you must experience to commemorate America's 250th anniversary.

STORY IDEAS

The Civilian Experience

The soldiers who fought in the Battle of Gettysburg left an indelible mark on this nation's history, but there's another side to the story that is not told quite so often.

Ordinary civilians showed their own bravery and picked up the pieces after the armies departed.

Twenty-year-old Jennie Wade was baking bread for soldiers when a bullet pierced through two doors and killed her. You can visit the Jennie Wade House Museum to hear her story and learn how her mother kept her memory alive.

A few blocks away sits the home of another Civil War era family. At the Shriver House Museum, your guide will walk you through the rooms where George, Hettie, and their two young daughters once lived. During the battle, Confederate sharpshooters took over the family's attic and turned their home upside down.



Courtesy of Gettysburg Foundation

Basil Biggs, a member of the African American community, was instrumental in helping bury soldiers in Gettysburg National Cemetery. When Black soldiers were not permitted in the cemetery, Basil and the Sons of Goodwill established Lincoln Cemetery for their fallen. Visitors can dive deeper into these stories by exploring The Gettysburg Black History Trail.

Basil, Jennie, and the Shrivvers are just a few of the remarkable Gettysburgians whose actions illustrate the resilience of the American spirit.





Countryside Escape

If Gettysburg wasn't famous for the Civil War battle, it would be for the rich farmland of Adams County.

A few minutes' drive down winding country roads leads to the hills of the South Mountain Fruit Belt. The fertile soil across these 20,000 acres produces apples, apricots, cherries, peaches, pears and plums. These orchards put Adams County among the top five apple growing regions in the United States.



For six decades, the massive fall harvest has been celebrated with the National Apple Harvest Festival. Over the first two weekends of October, the festival draws nearly 100,000 people who come to indulge in the abundance of apple treats and live entertainment.

Return in the spring as fruit trees emerge from their winter slumber to paint the landscape with pink and white blossoms. As spring fades to summer, petals fall to make way for more than 35 varieties of apples.

Throughout the year, visitors can escape to the serene beauty of the Gettysburg countryside. The Adams County Crop Hop, a self-guided driving tour paired with a digital passport, makes it easy to discover family farms and markets. Navigate a live hedge maze, sample homegrown brews, feast on farm-to-table dishes and get lost in hills beyond Gettysburg.



World War II

Gettysburg's place in the history books cannot be limited to the Civil War. There's a whole other chapter to explore — World War II.

Eisenhower National Historic site is the former home of a five-star World War II general and American president. The peaceful farm in the Gettysburg countryside was the only home Dwight D. Eisenhower and his wife Mamie ever owned. After a military career that included the invasion of Normandy on D-Day, Ike had hoped for a tranquil retirement.

Before long, he again felt the call to public service and was elected 34th president of the United States. During his presidency, Eisenhower helped bring about the Korean War Armistice and is credited with the birth of the country's interstate highway system.

The Gettysburg farm provided a quiet weekend retreat during the presidential years and hosted a number of world leaders such as Winston Churchill.



After exploring the Eisenhower home, head to the World War II American Experience museum to gaze upon military vehicles up close. Witness tank firing demonstrations, learn how families on the home front supported soldiers, and check out rare artifacts.

The museum is worth multiple visits as exhibits change throughout the year. Staff are always searching for new pieces to add to the permanent collection and planning exciting events.

Save time for Gettysburg National Military Park, but not just for the Civil War history. In 1944, a portion of the battlefield west of the High Water Mark and Emmitsburg Road became a German prisoner of war camp. The prisoners were later moved to Camp Sharp, just off Confederate Avenue.

Monumental Outdoors

Whether you're hiking in the summer, chasing blossoms in the spring, horseback riding in the fall, or snowboarding in the winter, adventure awaits in all of Adams County's seasons.

While Gettysburg National Military Park's auto tour is popular, it's just one of the ways to explore the battlefield. Lace up your hiking boots and embark on the 10-mile Billy Yank Trail or the 4-mile Johnny Reb Trail. Venture to Strawberry Hill Nature Preserve in Fairfield to walk under the trees of the Michaux State Forest, or visit one of the five state parks in the area.

Bring your bicycle to take a leisurely ride on or off the battlefield. Healthy Adams Bicycle/Pedestrian, Inc. has maps of all the best bike routes available at habpi.com. If you're looking for a little more power, rent a two-passenger scooter coupe or electric bike.

Maximize your time outdoors by staying at a local campground. Pitch a tent, park the RV, book a rustic cabin, or settle into a luxury cottage. Pick a site with a pool or mini golf for extra fun in the sun.

Golf doesn't have to be mini, with several 18-hole courses in the region, including Liberty Mountain Resort. When the weather turns cold, trade in your clubs for skis and hit the slopes at this all-season resort.





Merry and Bright

Gettysburg has quickly become one of the Mid-Atlantic's top holiday destinations. Horse-drawn carriages clip-clop past Civil War era homes exuding historic character. Restaurants adorned with twinkling lights serve up festive dishes, and storefronts fill their window displays with eye-catching gifts.

Festivities begin with the Christmas tree lighting on Lincoln Square after Thanksgiving and continue the first weekend of December with "A Gettysburg Christmas Festival." Sip hot cocoa, visit Santa Claus, meet live reindeer, and sample roasted chestnuts as you take in the sights and sounds of the holidays.

Search for the perfect presents to place under the tree as you stroll downtown or head to The Outlet Shoppes at Gettysburg to gaze upon a quarter million holiday lights as you check off your Christmas list.

Round out your cozy getaway by watching a live performance of "A Christmas Carol" at the 100-year-old Majestic Theater. This heartwarming Dickens classic is sure to put you in the holiday spirit.

Christmas in Gettysburg truly feels like the most wonderful time of the year.



ANNUAL EVENTS



APRIL Adams County Blossom Festival
Gettysburg Festival of Races

MAY Gettysburg Bluegrass Festival

JUNE Gettysburg Pride

JULY Battle of Gettysburg Anniversary
Gettysburg Bike Week
Gettysburg National 19th Century Base Ball Festival

AUGUST Gettysburg Brewfest
Gettysburg Bluegrass Festival

SEPTEMBER Gettysburg Wine & Music Festival
World War II Weekend at Eisenhower National Historic Site

OCTOBER National Apple Harvest Festival

NOVEMBER Dedication Day (Gettysburg Address anniversary)
Remembrance Day

DECEMBER A Gettysburg Christmas Festival

BY THE NUMBERS

TOURISM ECONOMIC IMPACT (2024)

Visitor spending: **\$809.2 million**
Tax revenue: **\$82.2 million**
Employment impact: **5,101 jobs**

VISITATION

3 million annual visitors to Adams County
1 million visitors to Gettysburg National Military Park



AIRPORTS NEARBY

Harrisburg International (HIA)
50 minutes

Baltimore-Washington (BWI)
80 minutes

Dulles International (IAD)
90 minutes

POPULATION (2024)

GETTYSBURG BOROUGH: 8,647
ADAMS COUNTY: 107,914
PENNSYLVANIA: 13 million

CITIES NEARBY

HARRISBURG, PA: 39 miles (63 km)
BALTIMORE, MD: 59 miles (95 km)
WASHINGTON, D.C.: 81 miles (130 km)
PHILADELPHIA, PA: 140 miles (225 km)
PITTSBURGH, PA: 185 miles (298 km)

GEOGRAPHY

Gettysburg Borough
1.6 square miles
(4 square kilometers)

Gettysburg National Military Park
6,000 acres
(24 square kilometers)

Adams County
519 square miles
(1,350 square kilometers)



AN OVERVIEW OF THE BATTLE

More than 160 years ago, two armies drew battle lines in a community nestled just north of the Mason Dixon. Their actions would alter the course of American history.

When the Battle of Gettysburg took place, the Civil War had already been raging for two years. Before the war reached Pennsylvania, earlier fighting had swept through the south.

In the summer of 1863, the Union and Confederate armies converged at a crossroads of America in south central Pennsylvania.

From July 1 to 3, approximately 165,000 men ferociously fought across Gettysburg. Gen. George Meade commanded the soldiers in blue, the Union Army, also known as the Army of the Potomac. Gen. Robert E. Lee led the Confederate soldiers in the Army of Northern Virginia.

Gettysburg went down as the single bloodiest battle of the war, with an estimated 51,000 casualties (dead, wounded, captured or missing).

The Union won, but at a great cost. Thousands of bodies filled the landscape. Farms were destroyed. Bullets shattered homes and businesses. The town's residents were left to rebuild after this massive tragedy and bury the dead.



The graves of unknown Civil War soldiers buried at Gettysburg National Cemetery.

David Wills, a local lawyer, led the creation of what would become Gettysburg National Cemetery. Members of the local African American community, including Basil Biggs, began interments the autumn after the battle. Wills began planning a dedication ceremony and invited President Abraham Lincoln. The president was asked to deliver “a few appropriate remarks.”

On Nov. 19, 1863, Lincoln delivered a speech that would become known as the Gettysburg Address. Today, Gettysburg National Cemetery is the final resting place for more than 6,000 soldiers and veterans, including more than 3,500 who died at the Battle of Gettysburg.

Many consider Gettysburg a turning point in the Civil War, though the war would not end until nearly two years later in 1865.

This town and this nation would never be the same.

CIVIL WAR VOCAB

battery

A unit made up of four to six cannon. A battery could also be the fortified position where the cannon are placed.

caliber

The distance around the inside of a gun barrel. Caliber is measured in thousands of an inch. Bullets are labeled by what caliber gun they fit.

casualty

A soldier that was wounded, killed, captured or missing in action.

colors

Any flag on the battlefield.

field hospital

Also called “tent hospitals,” they were located close to the battle lines. Field hospitals were created so surgeons could perform amputations quicker and increase the soldier’s chance of survival.

flanks

The farthest right or farthest left side of a military position.

living history / reenacting

The act of recreating the Civil War, whether as a soldier (re-enactor) or a civilian, dressed in period attire.

Minié ball

Rifle bullet from France used in the Civil War. Minié balls led to many casualties during the war because they increased the rifle’s accuracy. Made of lead, Minié balls were about a half-inch in diameter and an inch long.

muster

Gathering, usually of troops, for inspection, review or roll call.

ordnance

Military supplies, which can include weapons.

Rebel / Reb / Johnny Reb / Butternut

Nicknames for Confederate soldiers.

sutler

Traveling salesman that followed regiments to sell items to soldiers.

Yank / Billy Yank / Federals / The Blue

Nicknames for Union soldiers.

TYPES OF SOLDIERS

ARTILLERY

Men operating the artillery, such as cannon.

These men very rarely carried weapons of their own. Their main duty was to counter the artillery of the enemy or to hit attacking enemy infantry.

CAVALRY

Men fighting on horseback. Many cavalrymen carried weapons called carbines that were shorter and lighter than the rifles of the infantrymen. They were the eyes and ears of the army, scouting for enemies and protecting the flanks.

INFANTRY

Men fighting on foot.

Most soldiers were infantrymen who carried muzzle-loading rifles. Their main duty was to attack the enemy or defend against an attack by the enemy.

UNITS FROM SMALLEST TO LARGEST:

COMPANY (average 100 men)

REGIMENT (average 1,000 men)

BRIGADE (average 3,000 men)

DIVISION (average 9,000 men)

CORPS (average 27,000 men)

ARMY (everyone)

I.e., Private Richard M. Gates served with Company K, 57th Regiment, Indiana Infantry.

FAQ

*You have questions.
We have answers.*

When did the Battle of Gettysburg occur?

July 1, 2 and 3, 1863.

Where did the battle take place?

The Battle of Gettysburg occurred across thousands of acres in the countryside and throughout downtown. Gettysburg National Military Park encompasses 6,000 acres, and outside of the park you'll notice many historic structures in town still bear scars from the battle.

Did the Civil War end with the Battle of Gettysburg?

Though the battle was considered a major turning point, the war continued for nearly two more years, ending in 1865.

When is the best time to meet re-enactors?

Civil War re-enactors visit Gettysburg throughout the year, but the largest concentration can be found around the battle anniversary in early July. There is also a downtown parade of re-enactors every November for Remembrance Day, which takes place each year on the Saturday closest to Nov. 19, the Gettysburg Address anniversary.

Where is the battle re-enactment?

The largest battle re-enactment takes place at the Daniel Lady Farm each summer. Visit DanielLadyFarm.com/events to see when this year's re-enactment is planned and to learn about other events happening there through the year.

Battle re-enactments are not permitted on the hallowed ground of Gettysburg National Military Park. The National Park Service selects groups of re-enactors to conduct living history programs on park land that include artillery and infantry demonstrations. This year's schedule is available at nps.gov/thingstodo/gett-living-history.htm.

What's the best way to visit the battlefield?

Gettysburg National Military Park has a 16-stop self-guided auto tour you can take at your own pace. Online maps are available at nps.gov/gett/planyourvisit/maps.htm. Licensed battlefield guides provide tours of the park via bus, Segway, bicycle and horseback. You can also schedule a tour with a guide in your personal vehicle.

How much does it cost to visit the battlefield?

Gettysburg National Military Park has no entry fee. It is open seven days a week from sunrise to sunset. There is an admission fee to enter the museum at the visitor center.

Where is the best place to start my Gettysburg adventure?

We recommend starting at the Gettysburg National Military Park Museum & Visitor Center. You'll be able to talk to park rangers, book tours, and pick up maps.

I'm not into history, are there other things to do in Gettysburg?

Absolutely! Visit shops and restaurants, venture to countryside farms, explore the craft beverage scene, catch a live show at the theater, and attend one of our festivals. Find out what's happening at destinationgettysburg.com/things-to-do/gettysburg-pa-events/.

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