

Religious Freedom Byway

This byway, with several branches that reach toward the Potomac River, incorporates many of the nation's oldest churches, the site of the first Roman Catholic Mass held in English-speaking America, and Maryland's colonial capital, Historic St. Mary's City.

Length: 195 miles / 312.0 km

Time to Allow: Allow 5 hours to drive the byway.



Local Information

Maryland Office of Tourism

217 East Redwood Street
Baltimore, MD 21202
1-866-639-3526 or
1-866-MDWelcome

Visitor Services



Accessibility

Historic Saint Mary's City and the Thomas Stone Historic site have wheelchair accessibility and accommodations.



Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities

Maryland SHA accommodates bicycles in rural areas along the shoulders. All of the shoulders of State Routes are paved with a minimum of 4-foot shoulders and in many cases 8-foot shoulders (especially along MD-5, which is populated with Amish families). The roads along the Nanjemoy Loop have very low traffic volumes and can be shared. Chapel Point Road is a Charles County Road and has low traffic volumes so bicycles can be accommodated on road.



Food

There are places to dine along the byway.



Information

The St. Mary's County Charlotte Hall Visitor Center is open March 25-Oct 31 daily from 9 a.m.-5 p.m., and Fridays from 9 a.m.-6 p.m.; November 1-March 24, Fri-Sat from 9 a.m.-5 p.m., and Sunday from 10 a.m.-6 p.m.) The Crain Memorial Highway Welcome Center, located after crossing the Nice Bridge from Virginia, is open year-round, daily from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. From Memorial

Day to Labor Day, welcome centers have extended hours and are open daily from 8:30 a.m.–6 p.m. All Welcome Centers are handicapped accessible.

Retail



Downtown Leonardtown offers shopping, and the Mount Caramel Monastery has a gift shop.

Special Considerations

Southern Maryland does not have a peak travel season, but with its proximity to Washington D.C., Friday rush hours should be avoided.

Seasons

Best Time to Drive

Spring is the best time to drive the byway when views are accented with new spring green fields and trees.

Map and Directions



Legend:

■ Point of Interest	▲ Campground	— Featured Byway	— Water	— State Border
🌲 Park	⛺ Picnic/Rest Area	— America's Byways	— Wildlife Refuge	— Urban Area
⚔ Mountain	🛣 Interstate	— Other Byway	— Wilderness Area	— Tribal Nation
⊙ City	🛣 U.S. Highway	— Other Road	— Other Federal Lands	— Military Base
★ Capital	🛣 State Highway	⋯ Trail	— Other State Lands	

Driving Directions

Port Tobacco around the Nanjemoy Loop back to Port Tobacco

- Drive west on State Highway 6/Port Tobacco Road.

- Turn south on Durham Church Road.
- Merge with State Highway 425/Ironsides Road going West.
- Turn south on State Highway 6/Port Tobacco Road.
- Turn west on State Highway 224/Riverside Road.
- Turn north on State Highway 224/Chicamuxen Road.
- Turn southeast on State Highway 225/Hawthorne Road.
- Turn south on Rose Hill Road to Port Tobacco.

Port Tobacco to Mt. Carmel Monastery

- Drive northeast on State Highway 6/Port Tobacco Road.
- Turn north on Valley Road.
- Cross over State Highway 225/Hawthorne Road to Mitchell Road.
- Turn On Mt. Carmel Road.

Port Tobacco to Point Lookout State Park

- Drive east on Causeway Street.
- Turn south on Chapel Point Road.
- Turn south on U.S. Highway 301.
- Turn south on Popes Creek Road.

Alternative Section of the byway on State Highway 257

- Turn south on Edge Hill Road.
- Cross over U.S. Highway 301 to State Highway 257/Rock Point Road and follow to the end.

Continuation to Point Lookout State Park

- Turn north on Edge Hill Road.
- Turn north On U.S. Highway 301.
- Turn east on State Highway 234.

Alternative Section of the byway on State Highway 238

- Turn southwest on 238.

Continuation to Point Lookout State Park

- Stay on State Highway 234.
- Merge with State Highway 5 going East.

Alternative Section of the byway on State Highway 243

- Turn south on State Highway 243/Newtowne Neck Road.

Continuation to Point Lookout State Park

- Stay on State Highway 5.

Alternative Section of the byway on State Highway 249

- Turn south on State Highway 249/Piney Point Road to the end.

Alternative Section of the byway on State Highway 498

- Turn west on State Highway 498/Lighthouse Road.

Continuation to Point Lookout State Park

- Turn south on State Highway 5/Point Lookout Road to the end.

Alternative Section of the byway going to St. Ignatius Church

- Turn west on Villa Road.
- Turn south on Grayson Road.

Getting to the Byway



Nearby airports

Baltimore/Washington International Airport (BWI), MD
(60 miles / 96.56 km, 1 hour 15 minutes)

Start: ✈ Baltimore Washington International Airport
N 39.180° W 76.667° [?]

Directions:

- Follow I-97 south to US 301. From US 301, head west on Hawthorne Road to the Mount Carmel spur.
- Continue on Hawthorne to the Thomas Stone National Historic Site and the Nanjemoy Loop.

Junction with byway: * Hawthorne Road
N 38.540° W 76.987° [?]



Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA), VA
(28 miles / 45.06 km, 45 minutes)

Start: ✈ Ronald Reagan National Airport
N 38.850° W 77.040° [?]

Directions:

- Take the airport exit, and follow signs to US Route 1 south.
- Take the Capital Beltway (Interstate 95/495) to Indian Head Highway/MD 210.
- Follow MD 210 for approximately 19 miles to Hawthorne Road/MD 225.
- From Hawthorne Road, turn right on Chicamuxen Road/MD 224 to tour the Nanjemoy Loop or continue on Hawthorne Road



toward Rose Hill and the Thomas Stone National Historic Site.

Junction with byway: * Intersection of Hawthorne Road and Chicamuxen Road/MD 224
N 38.583° W 77.121° [?]



Nearby cities

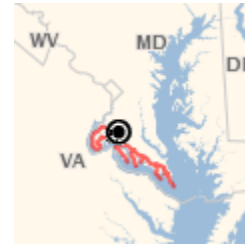
La Plata, MD (2.9 miles / 4.67 km, 6 minutes)

Start: ● Westbound on MD 6/ Charles St
N 38.531° W 76.971° [?]

- Start going west on MD-6/Charles St toward N Maple Ave.
- Continue to follow MD 6 for 2.7 miles.

Directions:

- Turn slight left onto Chapel Point Rd. 0.2 miles.
- End at Port Tobacco, MD.



Junction with byway: * Chapel Point Rd. in Port Tobacco
N 38.509° W 77.020° [?]

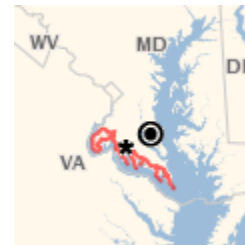
Prince Frederick, MD (30 miles / 48.28 km, 40 minutes)

Start: ● Hallowing Point Road/MD 231 in Prince Frederick
N 38.535° W 76.592° [?]

- From Hallowing Point Road/MD 231, take the Patuxent River Bridge into St. Mary's County, where Hallowing Point Road becomes Prince Frederick Road.
- Next, follow MD 231 to Trinity Church Road/MD 232 and on to Budds Creek Road/MD 234.

Directions:

- Alternatively, from MD 231, take MD 5 south to Charlotte Hall, to stop at the visitors center before continuing on to the byway on MD 236.



**Junction
with
byway:** * Intersection of Budds Creek Road/MD 234
and Trinity Church Road/MD 232
N 38.411° W 76.862° [?]

Road Trip: The Quest for Religious Tolerance

Departure: Historic St. Mary's City, Maryland

Destination: Thomas Stone National Historic Site, Maryland

Time to allow: 1 day

On this day-long tour of the Religious Freedom byway, you'll encounter sites that reflect the vision settlers of the fourth earliest colony brought to North America--religious tolerance and the separation of church and state. Though overwhelmed at the time by religious rivalry and conflict, these concepts became the founding principles of the U.S. Constitution.

You will begin your journey at the colony's birthplace, St. Mary's City, and then trace the struggle for religious freedom to two of the earliest parishes at Chaptico and Chapel Point. The story evolves at Port Tobacco with the growth and prosperity of the tobacco markets and leads to the Thomas Stone National Historic Site, home of one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence and predecessor to the colonists who would codify the separation of church and state in our Constitution.

Day 1

- **Start: Historic St. Mary's City**

Begin your byway explorations in the initial settlement and first capital of Maryland and the fourth permanent settlement in North America--St. Mary's City. Stop at the Welcome Center for ideas on what to do in this historic city including visiting some of the many museums, going on historic district walking tours, and enjoying the outdoors on a boating or fishing adventure. Spend a minimum of two hours here before continuing on to the next stopping point.



- **Stop 1: St. Clement's Island Museum**



From previous stop: 51 minutes / 30 mi (48.0 km)

Directions: Follow MD-5/ Leonardtown Rd. for 18 miles. Turn left onto MD-234 Budds Creek Rd. for 3.5 miles. Turn left onto MD-242/ Colton Point Rd. for 1.9 miles. Turn left onto MD-470/ Oakley Rd. for 3.8 miles. MD-470/ Oakley Rd. becomes MD-242/ Colton Point Rd. for 3 miles. Turn left onto Point Breeze Rd. for .1 miles. End at Saint Clements Island, MD.

Suggested time at this stop: 1 hour

Arrive at the Island Museum, which focuses on the English history and the religious and political issues of the 16th and 17th centuries. Discover the vision of George Calvert, the First Lord Baltimore, to found a religiously tolerant colony, and his son's implementation of this vision during your visit.

- **Stop 2: Christ Episcopal Church, Chaptico**



From previous stop: 23 minutes / 13 mi (20.8 km)

Directions: Turn right onto MD-242/ Colton Point Rd. for 3 miles. Turn slight right onto MD-470/ Oakley Rd. for 3.8 miles. Turn right onto MD-242/ Colton Point Rd. for 1.9 miles. Turn left onto MD-234/ Budds Creek Rd. for 4.2 miles. Turn slight left onto MD-238/ Maddox Rd. for 0.1 miles. End at Chaptico, MD.

Suggested time at this stop: 30 minutes

When you arrive at the Christ Episcopal Church, pick up a self-guided tour. Follow the tour to learn the story of Chaptico as an important port of entry on Chaptico Bay. Visit the adjoining cemetery to let the headstones tell their 18th-century stories.

- **Stop 3: St. Ignatius Church, Chapel Point**



From previous stop: 35 minutes / 18.5 mi (29.6 km)

Directions: Turn left onto US 301, Crain’s Highway for .4 miles. Turn right onto Edge Hill Rd. for .2 miles. Stay left to remain on Edge Hill Rd. for .4 miles. Turn right onto Popes Creek Rd. for 3 miles. Turn left onto US 301 for 1.1 miles. Turn left onto Irving Rd. for .6 miles. Irving Rd. becomes Chapel Point Rd. for 1.6 miles to St. Thomas Manor.

Suggested time at this stop: 30 minutes

Adjacent to Chapel Point State Park, which is great for hunting and boating, you'll find St. Ignatius Church. While you are visiting the historical church and graveyard, learn about Chapel Point's interesting and significant story as an early Jesuit manor, which developed over the entire colonial period interpreted by the byway.

- **Stop 4: Port Tobacco**



From previous stop: 7 minutes / 3.9 mi (6.2 km)

Directions: Continue north on Chapel Point Road for 3.9 miles. Turn left and follow the signs into the restored Courthouse site.

Suggested time at this stop: 30 minutes

Stop at Port Tobacco and you'll set foot on one of the oldest communities on the East Coast of the United States. It first existed as the Native American settlement of Potopaco, was colonized by the English 1634, and became a major port. Visit what remains of this historical town identified today as Port Tobacco Village. Learn about new findings revealed by ongoing archaeological investigations. Tour the site, and a costumed docent will share with you the town's early history.

- **End: Thomas Stone National Historic Site**



From 3 minutes / 1.75 mi (2.8 km)
previous
stop:

Directions: Start out going north on Chapel Point Rd. toward Causeway Rd. for 0.2 miles. Turn sharp left onto Port Tobacco Rd./ MD-6. for 0.3 miles. Turn right onto Rosehill Rd. for 1.2 miles.

Your final stop on this byway journey is the former home of Thomas Stone, one of four Maryland signers of the Declaration of Independence and member of the Continental Congress. Stop by and learn of the Stone family's influence on social political and economic development of the region from early settlement through the Revolution.

Totals for Day 1

Total Distance Traveled: 67.15 miles / 107.4 km

Total Travel Time: 1 hour 59 minutes

Total Stopping Time: 2 hours 30 minutes