Presidential Homes Tours

Gordonsville is the perfect jumping off point to explore presidential estates and plantations within Virginia. A total of eight presidents have at least one still-standing Virginia home with which they were associated. Several of these landmarks are very close to each other and make for excellent day trips.

James Madison's Montpelier is located just 9 miles from Downtown Gordonsville. There are several ways to get there. You can go north on US 15 to Orange and then left on Route 20 to the main gate. You can also go north on Route 231 and then right on Route 20 to the main gate. The visitor center is an excellent starting point. Hours are Monday - Sunday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The first tour of the home is 10:00 a.m. and the last tour at 3:00 p.m. Check out the archeology digs that are underway! Also worth exploring: the trails through James Madison's Landmark Forest, a large parcel of woods that has gone largely undisturbed since 1790 and is filled with trees that are two and three centuries old. There also are trails exploring the Civil War history around Montpelier, as well as the Freedman's Farm Trail that leads to the Gilmore Cabin and Farm, which features a restored cabin built by an emancipated slave in the 1870s. Visit www.montpelier.org. Basic tours, $7-$20.

Zachary Taylor, the 12th president, was born at **Montebello**. The estate is located 4 miles west of Downtown Gordonsville on US 33. The home is privately owned and is not open for tours. An historic marker sits in front of the home and you can pull into the gated entrance to view the estate.

Thomas Jefferson's Monticello is located 21 miles south of Downtown Gordonsville just below Charlottesville. Although there are several ways to get there, the most direct route is to take Route 231. Travel south on Route 231 and merge on Route 22 west. Turn left onto US 250 east. Turn right onto north Milton Road. Then turn right onto to Milton Road. Turn right onto Route 53 west and drive to the Monticello Loop. Turn left toward the Monticello Loop and make a slight right onto Monticello Loop. Entrance will be on your left. Start by going to the visitor center. Monticello is open every day of the year, except Christmas. Gates are open from 10 am – 5 pm, with the first tour starting at 10:15 am and the last tour starting at 4:10 pm. The property closes at 5 pm. Tours do fill up quickly. Tour prices range from $8 - $25. Besides the tour of the home, enjoy the beauty of the grounds and the scenic views. Although the regular hours are posted, it is recommended that you click on a date at the calendar link https://www.monticello.org/site/visit/hours-and-directions.

James Monroe's Ash-Lawn Highland is located just 21 miles south of Downtown Gordonsville. Although there are several ways to get there, the most direct route is to take Route 231. Travel south on Route 231 and merge on Route 22 west. Turn left onto US 250 east. Turn right onto north Milton Road. Then turn right onto to Milton Road. Turn left on Route 53. Turn right onto James Monroe Parkway. Turn right onto Ashlawn – Highland Drive. Entrance will be on your right. Tours are available and last up to 35 minutes. Tour prices vary based on age, various memberships, military status and community affiliations. They are closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day. Hours are 11 am – 5 pm November – March with last tour at 4 pm Monday – Friday and 4:30 pm Saturday – Sunday. Hours are 9 am – 6 pm April – October with last tour at 5 pm Monday – Friday and 5:30 pm Saturday – Sunday. Tour costs range from $8 - $14. The estate is 550 acres and you can enjoy the beautiful views, the gardens and many of the restored buildings. Visit www.ashlawnhighland.org.

The **Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library and Museum** is located 60 minutes from Downtown Gordonsville in Staunton, Virginia. The best way to get there is to go south on US 15 to I-64 west. Continue on I-64 west over Afton Mountain to exit 87 (I 81 north.) Merge onto I-81 north. Take exit 222 for US 250 toward Staunton. Continue on US 250 to South Coalter Street in Staunton. Look for Mary Baldwin College and Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library signs. Continue on South Coalter Street. Library and Museum will be on your left. Here you can learn about Wilson, his life and America's role in WWI. Take time to stroll through the Victorian-style gardens. Hours: Closed Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year's Day. Hours: Monday – Saturday 9 am – 5 pm and Sunday from noon – 5 pm. Visit www.woodrowwilson.org. Tours, $5-$14.

Mount Vernon, George Washington's estate, is located near Washington, DC, about 100 miles north of Downtown Gordonsville. There are several ways to get there. Take US 15 north to Orange. Take a right on Route 20 north. Route 20 will become Route 3. Continue east on Route to the I-95 north exit. Take I-95 north to Route 235 in Mount Vernon. Continue on Route 235 to the entrance. Another way is to go north on US 15 through Orange, through Culpepper and north to Warrenton. Take I-66 east to Route 286 south (Fairfax County Parkway). Go through Sully. Take exit 55 on follow Route 286 south to US 1 in Fort Belvoir. Look for the signs to Mount Vernon. The mansion is over 250 years old, with spectacular views of the Potomac River. Glimpse what it was like in the 18th century, tour the gardens and grounds, and visit the museum. Start your visit at the Ford Orientation Center. The tour will last about 35 minutes and timed tickets are issued on a first-come, first-served basis upon arrival. Also, tour the many outbuildings, the gardens, the Potomac River wharf and the tomb of both George and Martha Washington. Hours: April – August 8 am – 5 pm. March – October 9 am – 5 pm and November – February 9 am – 4 pm. Basic tour fees range from $9 - $17. Visit: www.mountvernon.org.

Berkeley Plantation is located 97 miles from Downtown Gordonsville and is between Richmond and Williamsburg. The estate is the birthplace of William Henry Harrison, ninth President of the United States, and ancestral home of his grandson, Benjamin Harrison, the twenty-third President. Take US 15 south to I 64 eastbound. Merge onto I 295 bypass. Go to exit 22A (Route 5) towards Charles City. You will pass Edgewood Plantation. Just past Edgewood Plantation, look for Route 633 (which is Harrison Landing Road). Entrance to Berkeley Plantation will be on your right. Grounds tours are self-guided and include five terraces of boxwood and flowering gardens leading to the James River, monuments to the First Thanksgiving and to Taps, and the Harrison family graveyard. The first Sunday in November, Berkeley celebrates the historic 1619 landing with the Virginia Thanksgiving Festival. They are open daily with the gift shop hours from 9:30 am – 4:30 pm. The grounds and gardens remain open for ticked guest until 5:30 pm. Tour prices range from $6 - $11. Visit www.berkeleyplantation.com.

Sherwood Forest Plantation was the home of the 10th U.S. President, John Tyler and is located 102 miles from Downtown Gordonsville between Richmond and Williamsburg. Take US 15 south to I-64 eastbound. Merge onto I-295 bypass. Continue to exit 28 A (I-64 east). Go east to exit 205. Take the exit ramp and turn right on Route 33. Go a short distance to US 60 (Pocahontas Trail) eastbound. Travel east on US 60. Merge right onto Route 629. Merge right at Providence Forge onto Route 155. Continue on Route 155 towards Charles City. In Charles City, turn onto Route 5 (John Tyler Highway) and continue to the entrance (on your right). John Tyler's grandson still lives in John Tyler's house. The Tyler family still maintains the plantation today through the Sherwood Forest Plantation Foundation. Their children and grandchildren frequently are seen at the Plantation. That limits access to the house to appointment-only tours; grounds tours are self-guided. Sherwood Forest Plantation's grounds are open 9:00 am-5:00 pm daily. Grounds tours, $10; house tours, $35 (appointment only). Visit www.sherwoodforest.org.