

RoadTrip

Scouting Shenandoah's Skyline

WHERE: Shenandoah National Park.

WHY: Crayola-colored leaves, GPS guides, and Bambi and friends.

HOW FAR: About 52 miles from start to finish, and about 100 miles from Washington.

In Shenandoah National Park, summer is so last season. The 300-square-mile area in Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains has slipped on its autumnal colors: purple, red, cinnamon, gold, orange.

During fall, Skyline Drive becomes a conga line of cars carrying leaf peepers. But visitors can break away from the traffic and walk trails that feature more trees than people. (For a foliage update, check the park's Leaf Color Webcam at www.nps.gov/shen/photos/multimedia/leaf-color-webcam.htm.)

Established in 1935, Shenandoah has been a year-round retreat for those looking to escape hectic urban life. This year, the park celebrates the 75th anniversary of the Civilian Conservation Corps, the work relief program established during the Great Depression,

through which President Franklin D. Roosevelt sent an army of unemployed young men to build and shape the park.

Although Shenandoah is about getting back to nature, the staff isn't afraid of using a little technology. In June, the park introduced GPS Ranger tours, in which rented devices guide visitors through specific areas and provide interpretive information via videos, photos, interviews and animation. The tours cover hikes along the Appalachian Trail and to Dark Hollow Falls, Hawksbill Mountain and Big Meadows, and they expand on such topics as flora and fauna, mountain geology and Native American history.

Some park sights, however, don't require gadgetry. To enjoy the changing leaves, all you need are a good set of eyes and an appreciation for Mother Nature.

— Jada Bradley

Shenandoah National Park: Open year-round. There are four entrances to the park: Front Royal, Thornton Gap, Swift Run Gap and Rockfish Gap. 540-999-3397. www.nps.gov/shen. March-November: \$15 per vehicle, \$8 per pedestrian or bicyclist; December-February: \$10 per vehicle, \$5 per pedestrian or bicyclist. Fee allows access for seven consecutive days.

Road Trip maps and details about each stop are available at www.washingtonpost.com/roadtrip. Have an idea for a trip? E-mail roadtrip@washpost.com.



When the park first opened, cars were just gaining popularity. Go back to the days of hoofed transportation with a horseback ride through Skyland Stables.

Creatures two-legged (people) and four (deer) stop at the **Big Meadows Picnic Grounds** for a bite to eat.

The multimedia exhibits at the **Byrd Visitor Center** dig deep into the park's geology, culture, history and environment. You can also rent a GPS Ranger here.

Goodbye, city life: The **Shenandoah Valley Overlook** offers one last peek at an urban landscape.

Feast on such regional dishes as country pot pie and baked Virginia trout at the **Pollock Dining Room** in the **Skyland Resort**, which sits on Skyline Drive's highest point, near Milepost 42.

Watch an orientation movie and grab snacks for the road ahead at the **Dickey Ridge Visitor Center**.

Greet the rising sun on the big rocky outcrop at **Hazel Mountain Overlook**.

At the **Crescent Rock Overlook**, crane your neck at Hawksbill, the park's tallest mountain peak.

Watch for scampering white-tailed deer and the setting sun at the **Spitler Knoll Overlook**.

No need to drop bread crumbs along the **Story of the Forest Trail**; it takes only 15 minutes to hike one way.



Eco Wise

Big Yellow Taxis Are Turning Green

Forget yellow. Green is fast becoming the taxi color of choice — at least in Earth-friendly Arlington.

Alongside the hybrid cab service EnviroCab (703-920-3333), a host of other companies in the Virginia suburb are responding to customers who are signaling that eco-friendly taxis are no longer a luxury; they're a necessity for companies to compete.

"Often our car won't be the first one in a line of taxis. But the customer will insist on the EnviroCab and argue with the other drivers who will try to stop it from happening," says founder Hans Hess, who notes that calls for cars from his 50-vehicle fleet have increased since the company started in February. (The price of a green taxi ride is the same as a traditional ride.)

Red Top Cab (703-522-3333), which controls more than half of Arlington's taxis, has 30 hybrids in service and plans to add more, according to Vice President Charlie King. Red Top's efforts began in 2006, when the company was awarded certificates for a trial hybrid taxi program.

Arlington Blue Top Cab (703-243-8294) recently bought 10 hybrid taxis to add to its 150 vehicles. The company expects its entire cadre of cabs to be environmentally friendly within a decade — either by using ethanol fuel or being classified as hybrids, says

John Massoud, the firm's vice president.

"The fact is that the citizens of Arlington County are requesting alternate fuel. We've been seeing this more and more," he says. Why Arlington? For starters, the area has long enjoyed a reputation for environmental stewardship. Still, Arlington's County Board has been picky about allowing too many taxi companies to spring up or expand.

EnviroCab's request in May to increase its fleet was denied. And two new all-hybrid businesses were rejected last month because board members said the market was too crowded. For Hess, that means his eye is on other parts of the region.

"We would love to be in other jurisdictions. I think that is definitely on our horizon," he says.

— Dena Levitz

Is there an environmental topic you want to learn more about? E-mail sundaysource@washpost.com with the subject line "Eco Wise."



GETTY IMAGES

MediaMix

A Quick Take on New Releases

	BOOK	CD	CD	CD	DVD	DVD	GAME
TITLE	Cobain Unseen By Charles R. Cross Little, Brown and Co. \$35	Evolver John Legend G.O.O.D./Columbia \$18.98	Funhouse Pink LaFace \$18.98	That Don't Make Me a Bad Guy Toby Keith Show Dog Nashville \$18.98	Journey to the Center of the Earth Rated PG New Line \$28.98	Kit Kittredge: An American Girl Rated G New Line \$28.98	LittleBigPlanet PlayStation 3 Rated Everyone Sony \$59.99
BASIC STORY	The author of the best-selling biography "Heavier Than Heaven: A Biography of Kurt Cobain" revisits his pet subject with a collection of artifacts culled from the musician's archives.	The latest from one of soul's warmest, mom-friendliest artists features cameos by Kanye West and Estelle and a kind-of-smoking duet with Brandy.	Vinegary pop singer Pink gives a bruising account of her divorce from pro motocrosser Carey Hart.	Keith, Nashville's top earner and its favorite lightning rod, releases his umpteenth studio album.	A geologist (Brendan Fraser) and his nephew (Josh Hutcherson) go searching for his missing brother in Iceland . . . in 3-D! Guess where they end up?	The popular line of dolls, books and magazines fires up a big-screen film franchise with a story set in the Depression, in which a girl reporter (Abigail Breslin) gets the story on a series of thefts blamed on hobos.	Set in a kooky kinetic dreamscape, LittleBigPlanet gives you a cuddly Sackperson to customize as you romp through jumping, swinging and racing adventures.
SAMPLE GRAB	"Many of Kurt's friends reported that when they visited, he shared cartoons or passages from his journals, and he enjoyed having an audience for his creative work. Now you are part of that intimate audience." — Cross explains his motives	"I'm dying to meet you / So let's mess around / I've got an obsession with us getting down" — "Green Light"	"Sometimes you think everything is wrapped inside a diamond ring" — "Crystal Ball"	"I'm not the devil / Just a dude" — "You Already Love Me"	"Just make conversation with me, Sean." "So, uh, Hannah. Do you come here often?" — Our hero's nephew journeys to the bottom of comedy with a comedy guide (Anita Briem)	"Everyone's in trouble these days." — Kit's mom (Julia Ormond) explains why she's taking in the great unwashed as boarders	In addition to the game's prefabricated romps, users are given basic tutoring and virtual tools that let them craft levels to share online with players all over the world.
OUR TAKE	Though the treatment lends a visceral immediacy to parts of Cobain's legacy, many of the replicated mementos give it the air of an exploitative pop-up book, with Cross's commentary tending to make things worse by assigning the objects a degree of importance that feels forced. — Reviewed by Sara Cardace	Legend incorporates reggae and club pop into his usually conservative sonic palette, though "Evolver" works best when he hews close to his R&B roots. There's not a clunker here, but anyone who's been waiting for Legend to complete his transformation from soul-singer-on-the-verge into a generational star like Stevie Wonder will have to keep waiting. — Allison Stewart	Pink is mostly known for singing faux-rough-edged songs about how sassy she is. There's plenty of that here, but also some grown-up, better-style ballads (with strings!) and bluesy pop, almost all assessing the wreckage of her marriage, and all done movingly and well. If you shop at Hot Topic, this is your "Blood on the Tracks." — A.S.	Keith usually gets more attention for his reflexive sexism and feud with the Dixie Chicks than for his music, which is more muted and less mavericky than his reputation might suggest. There are forays into Kenny Chesney-style resort country, but this is mostly straightforward, mainstream Nashville at its most astute. — A.S.	The 3-D effects lose some of their luster on the small screen, Fraser does a lot of standing around and yelling at CGI stuff, and the overall feeling is of having watched other people go on a fun ride while you just sat there. — Greg Zinman	Call it serendipity or call it irony, but the fact that this exceedingly bland DVD is being released in the midst of a financial crisis provides the perfect opportunity for you to tell your children why you can't shell out for a \$90 doll right now. — G.Z.	The amount of sheer whimsy in the level design and art direction will leave you aglow with giggly good vibes hours after you've stopped playing. Be warned, though: Unleashing your creativity will require working through a steep learning curve. — Evan Narcisse
	C-	B+	B+	B	C-	C	A-

JOHN LEGEND BY SAMIR HUSSEIN — GETTY IMAGES