

RoadTrip

Go Tribal in Maryland

WHERE: Waldorf.

WHY: Hiking on tribal grounds, bows for beginners and powwowing with the Piscataway.

HOW FAR: About 70 miles from start to finish, or 2½ hours by car from Washington.

The Piscataway Indian Festival and Pow-Wow is a true family affair. Next weekend, about 300 Native Americans from near (Maryland, Virginia) and far (Central America, Hawaii) will gather at the American Indian Cultural Center in Waldorf to catch up as well as dance, sing, eat and celebrate. In all, nearly 3,000 folks are expected to attend — extended family, indeed.

Hosted by the Cedarville Band of the Piscataway tribe, the 25th annual event is a modern, more social take on the private gatherings the Piscataway and other Native American tribes have been practicing for ages. “Today’s powwows are extensions of the tribal powwows that existed for hundreds of years,” says Natalie Proctor, tribal chairwoman of the Cedarville Piscataway. “It’s still a family event.”

The Piscataway, an Algonquin-speaking tribe, have had a presence in Southern Maryland for more than 10,000 years. Many Piscataway summered along the Potomac, in an area now called Piscataway Park, and wintered by Zekiah Swamp in Cedarville State Forest. Unlike the migratory tribes of the American Plains, the Piscataway and such neighboring tribes as the Anacostan and Potomac maintained permanent villages in the region. They explored and hunted along the Eastern Seaboard but always returned home.

All powwows include dancing, and this one will feature a performance by the Piscataway Spirit Dancers, a local troupe that specializes in traditional native dances. In addition, about 30 artisanal vendors will sell Native American jewelry, bows, hides and tribal regalia. And those in need of a snack can sample Native American food. A Piscataway special: tacos made of beef and fried bread.

With only a weekend to powwow, you most likely won’t meet every “family” member. Yet you could experience something rare at most reunions: “The general public feels a sense of peace, a sense of healing at the powwow,” Proctor says. “It’s a spiritual thing you don’t feel at other events.”

— Ben Chapman

Piscataway Indian Festival and Pow-Wow: Saturday, noon-6 p.m.; Sunday, noon-5 p.m. American Indian Cultural Center, 16816 Country Lane, Waldorf. \$10, ages 7-11 \$5, 6 and younger free. 301-782-2224. www.piscatawayindians.org.

WEDNESDAY IN STYLE | Sail ho! Escapes compares pirate ships in Annapolis, Baltimore.



The front room of **Robey Re-Cycles** contains a small museum of antique motorcycles, including a rare 1946 Indian bike.



George Catlin's portraits documented vanishing Native American cultures on the Plains in the 1830s. See a sampling of his work at the Smithsonian American Art Museum's **Renwick Gallery**.

Potomac area tribes such as the Piscataway used dugout canoes for transportation and hunting. **Atlantic Kayak Co.** rents and sells more modern watercraft — but, hey, it's still the Potomac.

The Piscataway used parts of **Piscataway Park** as burial grounds, but the on-site National Colonial Farm is hardly somber: It's filled with such warm and fuzzy critters as Devon milking cows and Hog Island sheep.

Learn about Native American history, beliefs and tribal life with live performances outside the **National Museum of the American Indian**. The Indian Summer Showcase, an evening concert series, is held twice a month from June through September (the first one is Saturday).

The **Alexandria Archaeology Museum** displays stone tools and other artifacts from the native peoples who lived in the Alexandria area between 500 and 9,200 years ago.

During the Civil War, **Fort Washington** was a major military installation that helped protect the Union capital. Now, it's a peaceful picnic spot along the Potomac River.

The Piscataway used the land that's now **Cedarville State Forest** — which has campgrounds, a stocked fishing pond and 19 miles of trails — as their winter hunting ground.



Keith Anderson, shown at last year's **Piscataway Indian Festival and Pow-Wow**, is expected to perform there this year as well.



Even if you don't have to catch your own steak these days, as local tribes did with bows and arrows, you can still go for the bull's-eye with hunting bows from **Fred's Sports and Furniture**.

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