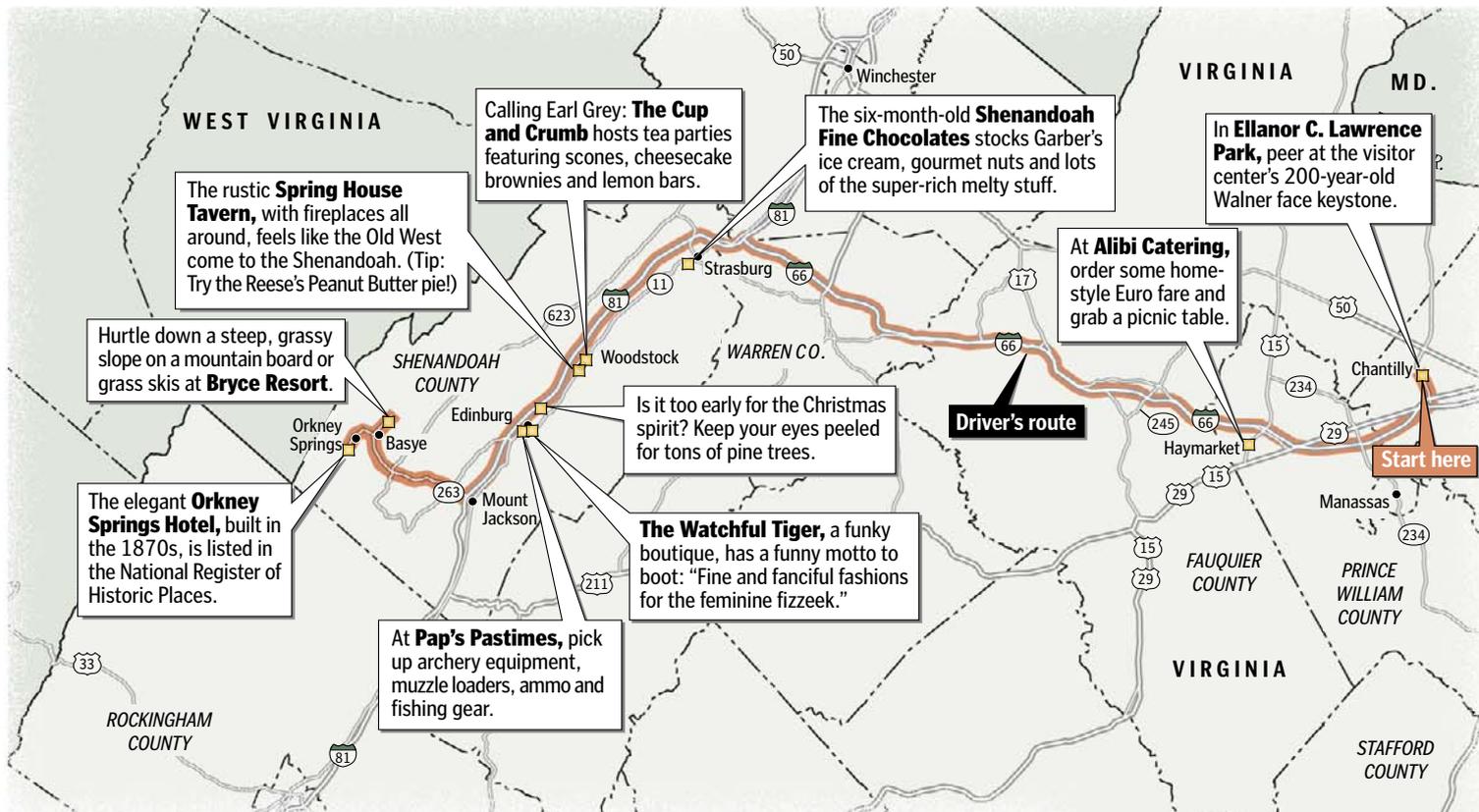


ROADTRIP | Grass Skiing at Bryce Resort



WHERE: Basye, Va.

WHY: Afternoon tea, choco-holic heaven and the chance to zoom down a grassy mountain.

HOW FAR: About 100 miles, or just under two hours from Chantilly.

Skiing calls for snow, right? Wrong: This October, those who can't wait to get their wintry thrills can strap on gear customized for whooshing down the mountain in dry season. At Bryce Resort in Basye, 64-year-old Horst Locher, who's been the ski instructor there since 1966, shows daredevils how to get the most out of the slopes by teaching the adrenaline-pumping sport of grass skiing. A \$27 beginner's package gets you a lift ticket, protective gear, a half-hour of instruction and, of course, your mini-skis—three feet long, or about half the regular size, and inline-wheeled to keep you sliding on the grass. For the same price, snowboarding types can learn to manipulate a skateboard-like contraption, wheels and all.

One thing to keep in mind: As fun as it is to get up on those skis, it's a lot less fun to fall down. With no snow to break your fall, you're likely to go home with a few bruises and bumps. But that's never stopped a true adventurer, right?

Start your trip at Chantilly's Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, where you can sip a morning coffee in the quaint gazebo or gaze upon the sparkling pond nearby. In Strasburg, the relatively new Shenandoah Fine Chocolates offers 130 kinds of the mouthwatering sweets, plus 18 varieties of fudge (including pumpkin pecan roll and cookies and crème). Gals can get a jump on fall shopping in Edinburg, where the Watchful Tiger invites customers to pounce on whimsical jewelry, funky outerwear and other duds in specialty sizes (petite to plus-size!). And to feed your great-outdoors fixation, you can gear up down the road at Pap's Pastimes, Outdoor Sports & Gifts, a family-run shop (in a house dating to 1906) that sells hunting gear and fishing supplies.

Bryce Resort offers grass skiing and mountain boarding Sundays in October (beginning Oct. 10) from 1 to 3:30 p.m. Mandatory check-in for first-timers is 12:45 p.m. 800-821-1444. www.bryceresort.com.

— Michele Capots

