HIGHLAND COUNTY – WHAT A SWEET SPOT!

Many people know about Highland because of our famous maple syrup. On the second and third weekends of March, we celebrate our local maple industry with our annual Maple Festival, which has been designated “the official Maple Festival of the Commonwealth”. But we are more than just maple syrup. We have many sweet things for visitors to enjoy throughout the entire year. Among the first comments of visitors to our area is: “What a sweet spot!” Whether your sweet spot is enjoying the scenic beauty of a rural countryside, driving mountain roads, taking in a star-filled night sky, or simply sitting on the porch enjoying the rural charm of a bed and breakfast; we want to help you find your favorite Highland County “sweet spot”. If you like festivals, arts and crafts, old time country music, square dances, country fairs, farmers’ markets, or the simple serenity of nature; we suggest you come home to Highland County.

HIGHLAND COUNTY EVENTS

Highland County is home to one of the most unique events in the state and country – the Highland County Maple Festival. Each March, tens of thousands of visitors are drawn to this unspoiled, rural region of Virginia to celebrate the “opening” of the trees and observe the process of maple syrup-making. However, Highland County is more than just Maple. This mountainous area boasts music festivals, street dances, fall festivals, artist getaways, farmer’s markets, historical events, sporting events, and the longest running small county fair in the state.

For more information on Highland County events, visit www.HighlandCounty.org.
BLUE GRASS LOOP (PAVED)

- From Monterey, travel west on Rt. 250 to Hightown (5.7 miles)
- Take a right onto Rt. 616 (Blue Grass Valley Rd) heading north (2.5 miles)
- In Blue Grass, go straight through intersection to continue on Rt. 647 (Blue Grass Valley Rd) to Rt. 220 (2.5 miles)
- Once in Hightown, take left on Rt. 220 heading south back to Monterey (4.6 miles)
- Take a right on Rt. 220 heading south back to Monterey (4.6 miles)
- Once in Monterey, continue on Rt. 220 and to Rt. 84 (3.9 miles)
- Turn right on Rt. 84 to Meadowdale (2.4 miles)
- Turn right on Rt. 640 (Meadowdale Rd) to Hightown (4.4 miles)
- Once in Hightown, turn right on Rt. 250 and travel back to Monterey (5.7 miles)

MILL GAP LOOP (PAVED & UNPAVED)
AT THE SOUTHERNMOST END OF THE BLUE GRASS VALLEY, YOU CAN SLIP AWAY INTO MORE REMOTE LOCATIONS TO EXPERIENCE COUNTRY ROADS, BOTH STRAIGHT & WINDING.

- In Vanderpool, take a right and proceed onto Rt. 84 heading to Mill Gap (8.4 miles)
- Take a left onto Rt. 604 (Valley Center Rd) which changes to Rt. 603 (4 miles) *portions of this road are unpaved/hard-packed dirt
- Take a right turn onto Rt. 600 (Lower Back Creek Road) which will lead you back to Rt. 84 (1.5 miles)
- Take a right and follow Rt. 94 back to Meadowdale, then on to Vanderpool and the intersection of Rt. 84 and Rt. 220 (7.8 miles)
- From Vanderpool, there are 3 options:
  1. Take a left onto Rt. 220 heading north back to Monterey (2.9 miles), OR...
  2. Take a right and extend your ride by taking the Big Valley Loop (22.5 miles) before heading back to Monterey.

BIG VALLEY LOOP (PAVED)
CRUISE DOWN RT. 220 FOR MORE EXPANSIVE VIEWS BEFORE TURNING ON BIG VALLEY ROAD TO PASS BY COUNTRY LIFE & RELICS OF HIGHLAND COUNTY’S PAST.

- In Vanderpool, take Rt. 220 heading south to Midway & intersection of Rt. 607 (11.5 miles)
- At Midway, take a left onto Rt. 607 toward Bolar & continue back to Rt. 220 in Mustee (11.1 miles)
- Take a right and follow Rt. 220 heading north back towards Vanderpool (3.4 miles) & continue on Rt. 220 back to Monterey (9.7 miles)

COWPASTURE LOOP (PAVED & UNPAVED)
CRUISE PAST MORE EXPANSIVE, FARM LAND AND THROUGH OUR ICONIC BULLPASTURE RIVER GORGE WHERE WILDLIFE VIEWS ARE COMMON. BE SURE TO TAKE IN THE STOPS AT THE HIGHLAND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE COUNTY’S WILDLIFE AND ENVIRONMENT.

- From Monterey, take Rt. 250 E to McDowell (9.6 miles)
- In McDowell, take left on Rt. 617 (Cowpasture River Rd) toward Doe Hill (4.4 miles)
- Take a left on Rt. 616 (Cowpasture River Rd) toward Doe Hill (8 miles)
- Take a right on Rt. 617 (Golden Sow Rd) (2.1 miles) *portions of this road are unpaved/hard-packed dirt
- Take a right on Rt. 614 (Jack Mountain Rd) to the village of Doe Hill (1.5 miles)
- In Doe Hill, take a right on Rt. 654 (Doe Hill Rd) to travel back to McDowell (7.4 miles)

BULLPASTURE LOOP (PAVED & UNPAVED)
CRUISE PAST MORE EXPANSIVE, FARM LAND AND THROUGH OUR ICONIC BULLPASTURE RIVER GORGE WHERE WILDLIFE VIEWS ARE COMMON. BE SURE TO TAKE IN THE STOPS AT THE HIGHLAND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE COUNTY’S WILDLIFE AND ENVIRONMENT.

- From McDowell, head east on Rt. 250 (1.3 miles)
- Take a right on Rt. 626 (Bullpasture River Rd) to travel to Williamsville (10.8 miles)
- In Williamsville, take a left on Rt. 614 (Cowpasture River Rd) (4.4 miles) *portions of this road are unpaved/gravel
- Take a right on Rt. 616 (Lower Back Creek Rd) which will lead you back to Rt. 84 (1.5 miles)
- Take a right and follow Rt. 94 back to Meadowdale, then on to Vanderpool and the intersection of Rt. 84 and Rt. 220 (7.8 miles)
- From Vanderpool, there are 3 options:
  1. Take a left onto Rt. 220 heading north back to Monterey (2.9 miles), OR...
  2. Take a right and extend your ride by taking the Big Valley Loop (22.5 miles) before heading back to Monterey.