

RVA Driving Tour Script

Stop 1: Queally Loading Zone

Queally Center

Hello and welcome to the University of Richmond's self-guided driving tour of the city of Richmond. This tour will last approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes and will go through many of the unique neighborhoods which make up the City of Richmond.

These audio files are designed to guide you through each location and highlight how Richmond Spiders interact with the city we call home. If you are following our tour route through a GPS navigation service, we recommend turning on the "avoid highways" option, so you can see some of the locations we unfortunately do not have time to include in the tour. We will also note when a location has readily accessible parking, if you would like to further explore any areas on foot.

There is a short drive to our first location, so we'd like to take the opportunity to talk a bit about the University of Richmond itself. Sitting on 350-acres in the west-end of the City of Richmond, the University of Richmond is a liberal arts and sciences institution with an undergraduate population of around 3,200 students. The University of Richmond comprises three undergraduate schools- the School of Arts & Sciences, Robins School of Business, and the Jepson School of Leadership. With these three undergraduate schools the University of Richmond offers a world-class education which prepares students for lives of purpose, thoughtful inquiry, and responsible leadership in a diverse world. We encourage you to explore our website at www.richmond.edu for more information and sign up for an in-person information session and tour through our office of admission.

If you have any questions after this self-guided driving tour, feel free to come back to the Queally Center. We'd love to hear from you and would be happy to help! Have a safe trip!

Stop 2: Carytown

City of Richmond Overview

As you are driving down Cary Street toward our first location on the tour, I'd like to tell you why the City of Richmond has been such a fantastic place to study during my time in college. As the capital of Virginia and home to three major universities, the City of Richmond is a hub of arts, culture, and opportunity. Home to 8 Fortune 500 companies and a multitude of government and non-government organizations, Richmond provides a diverse array of career development opportunities for students while our 25 museums and over 900 local restaurants ensure there is always something to do in the city.

Carytown

Entering into the heart of Carytown, you can see what

makes this a popular destination for students throughout the week. Offering shopping, dining, and entertainment, Carytown also hosts a variety of festivals, such as the Carytown Watermelon Festival and the Sunday Carytown Farmers Market! Some favorite food destinations include Galaxy Diner, Greek on Cary, the Daily, Ginger Thai, Can Can Brasserie, and New York Deli. If you'd like to stop and walk around the area, the "Cary Court Park & Shop" is a convenient place to park.

Continuing down the street, we will see the historic Byrd Theatre on your left. This is the oldest movie theater in Richmond and still hosts select movies for \$9/ticket. The best part of a Saturday movie is that a live organ performance precedes them, with the organ rising from the orchestra pit.

The University of Richmond runs a daily connector bus between campus and Carytown, so even students without a car have ready access to the area. Speaking of transport, U of R prides itself for how accessible off-campus exploration is for our students. The University provides on campus transportation every day of the week and off-campus shuttles run every hour, on the hour from our Transportation Hub. About 30% of first years and 60% of the student body have a car on campus, but a car is in no way needed due to free GRTC bus access and even airport shuttles running at peak travel periods.

Stop 3: Museum District

Arthur Ashe Boulevard

We are now turning onto Arthur Ashe Boulevard, which is named for our hometown hero Arthur Ashe, the first African American man to win the singles titles at Wimbledon and the U.S. Open, and the first African American tennis player to be ranked No. 1 in the world.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA)

As you are driving down Cary Street toward our first location, Cary Street is home to the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) which is one of the premiere comprehensive art museums in the United States and hosts rotating exhibits such as: "Matisse, Picasso, and Modern Art in Paris", "Dave Chihuly at the VMFA", and "The Dirty South: Contemporary Art, Material Culture, and the Sonic Impulse". The VMFA has a permanent collection of over 50,000 pieces of art representing almost every major world culture, plus admission is completely free. Student memberships to rotating exhibits are discounted and the University of Richmond provides free transportation to the museum through the Daily Connector bus, making the museum a favorite study spot for UR students throughout the week.

The sculpture in the front of the museum is by Kehinde

Wiley, an American painter who is best known for his portrait of Barack Obama which is hanging in the Smithsonian Portrait Gallery in DC.

Virginia Museum of History & Culture

Next door to the VMFA, sits the Virginia Museum of History & Culture (VMHC), with permanent exhibitions telling the story of the Commonwealth through a multisensory journey of the 5 regions in Virginia. Traveling exhibitions include: “Julia Child: A Recipe for Life”, “Determined: The 400-Year Struggle for Black Equality”, and “Founding Frenemies: Hamilton and the Virginians”.

As we head toward Broad Street for our next location on the tour, I'd like to talk a bit about the Arts at the University of Richmond. U of R students may take classes in visual arts, dance, theater, or music regardless of their major and there is no requirement to submit a portfolio to declare a major or minor within these four disciplines. This means that any student on campus can explore our arts program and even get involved outside of the classroom. We have student lead theater groups, 4 acapella groups, and 8 dance groups. For students interested in music, we have a university orchestra, band, choir group, jazz ensembles, and chamber ensembles. The University of Richmond itself hosts a wide variety of world-class performers in our Modlin Center for The Arts with free or heavily discounted tickets for students. In a city that has such a vibrant arts and music scene, U of R encourages students to get involved and become a part of the Richmond arts community.

Stop 4: Broad Street and Jackson Ward

Broad Street

You are now driving down Broad Street which is one of the main thoroughfares of the city and provides accessible transportation to different parts of Richmond through the GRTC Pulse bus system. This bus line is free and stops on the University of Richmond's campus daily.

As you begin to enter the City of Richmond center, you will pass the Institute for Contemporary Art (ICA) which is an art museum with rotating exhibits throughout the year. This is also the location of First Fridays for the Arts, a city event that takes place on the first Friday of every month featuring open local gallery walks, music, food, entertainment, and a chance to meet and mingle with artists. It's also completely free!

Jackson Ward

Continuing onward, you will be driving past the borders of Jackson Ward to your left. This neighborhood is a historical center of business and the arts. In the early 20th century, this area was known as both the “Black Wall Street of America” and the “Harlem of the South”. One of Jackson Ward's most

famous residents, Maggie L. Walker, was the first woman to charter and serve as the president of a bank, providing loans and banking resources to local businesses. The Hippodrome Theater located in the area was once frequented by Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, and Nat King Cole. If you're feeling hungry, Mama J's is a Richmond institution in Jackson Ward and has some of the best soul food in the area. Since the early 2000's there has been a revival of the Jackson Ward area, recognizing its cultural and historical significance as well as the systemic discrimination which led to its decline in the mid 20th century. The University of Richmond has an active role in analyzing the effects of this discrimination through an award-winning project entitled “Mapping Inequality”, exploring how discriminatory property grading systems affected urban development and economic inequality in Richmond and other cities across the US.

The City of Richmond has been the location of major events throughout US history from the American Revolution to the Civil War and Civil Rights Movement, meaning there are endless experiential learning opportunities located minutes from U of R's campus for students interested in public policy, leadership, geography, history, public health, and social justice. As a liberal arts institution, students at U of R are encouraged to take a multidisciplinary view of their studies and the City of Richmond is the perfect place to do so. The University of Richmond prioritizes connection to the City of Richmond through Bonner Center for Civic Engagement. This on-campus center has a dedicated staff who have formed relationships with community partners throughout the City of Richmond and connect students to opportunities for volunteering, community-based learning and research, and civic fellowships.

Stop 5: Downtown

Virginia State Capitol

Continuing down Broad Street, you are now entering Downtown Richmond and will be passing the Virginia State Capitol to your right. Home to the Old City Hall, Executive Mansion, U.S. Court of Appeals, and Supreme Court of Virginia. The Capitol was designed by Thomas Jefferson, and it is the first state capitol building to be designed after the Revolutionary War.

Virginia has the first and oldest continuous English-speaking representative legislative assembly in the Western Hemisphere – formerly House of Burgesses – although democratic organizations have been around since the 12th century in the area via the Iroquois Nations.

For students interested in law and public policy, there are an abundance of opportunities to intern and work in the City of Richmond Government, the Virginia State Government, and various non-profits centered in the area.

Each year, our political science department offers a class

called “the Legislative Internship”, in which U of R students receive course credit equivalent to two classes by working as interns to members of the Virginia General Assembly. This unique opportunity provides students hands-on experiences in politics and is an amazing example of how closely integrated our students are with the City of Richmond. The University is also fortunate to bring in young professionals from the area to be visiting lecturers, providing students with a professional as well as academic view of their fields.

Stop 6: Church Hill

Church Hill

Driving up one of the most iconic sections of Broad Street, you are now entering Church Hill. This area is a beautiful residential neighborhood with some popular restaurants such as Sub Rosa Bakery, Millie’s Diner, and Alewife. At the top of this hill and to your right, you will be passing Historic St. John’s Church, the namesake of Church Hill and the location of Patrick Henry’s famous “Give me liberty or give me death” speech. The church puts on regular reenactments of this speech and a meeting of the continental congress throughout the year.

This driving route will also take you past Libby Hill Park which is a beautiful place to stretch your legs and see an overlook of the James River. This park is a popular place for students to picnic, exercise, and relax. In 2015, the Union Cycliste Internationale Road World Championship was held in Richmond and curved through the park.

While University of Richmond students can enjoy the vibrant downtown City of Richmond area, there are also numerous locations such as these for students to relax and slow down during the semester. The University of Richmond has made a holistic commitment to its students’ health and wellbeing. Our state-of-the-art Well-Being Center not only serves as an on-campus support for exercise, nutrition, self-care, and mindfulness, but also a connection for students to off-campus health and counseling services. Additionally, student run clubs such as CHAARG get U of R students out into the Richmond community to stay active and explore the city.

Stop 7: Shockoe Bottom and The Financial District

Shockoe Bottom

As you drive back down from Church Hill, you will be entering Shockoe Bottom. This area is home to historic landmarks such as Shockoe Bottom African Burial Ground, Libby Jail, and the Edgar Allen Poe Museum. The area also includes the Riverfront Canal Walk, a strip of restaurants and arts locations lining the city’s downtown canal ways. This walk is a great way to explore the river.

Financial District

Driving further into downtown, you are now entering the

Financial District. These city blocks are home to 80,000 jobs at a variety of institutions including 8 Fortune 500 companies such as Altria, Dominion Energy, CarMax, Markel, and Genworth Financial. Richmond is also home to the 5th district branch of the Federal Reserve Bank.

For students interested in business administration, accounting, and economics, the Robin’s School of Business at the University of Richmond is among the top 20 undergraduate business schools in the nation and provides a wide variety of business concentrations from finance to marketing, international business, and entrepreneurship, allowing students to specialize in a field of interest. U of R has hosted an impressive group of visiting lecturers who are leaders in their field of research and have personal experience working in fortune 500 companies. All of these factors have led to some amazing outcomes for our students. In 2023, the Robins School of Business reported that 100% of job-seeking graduates found employment within three months of graduation.

Stop 8: Tredegar

Tredegar Iron Works

This will be our third to last location on this self-guided driving tour and one of the best places to get out and stretch your legs. You are parked in front of the Historic Tredegar Iron Works which is now home to the American Civil War Museum. Tredegar was the main supplier of iron for the confederate army during the civil war. Due to its riverside location and surrounding open space, this location hosts multiple festivals throughout the year. The Richmond Folk Festival is a nationally acclaimed three day long folk music festival which is completely free, and River Rock is another two-day free festival for outdoor sports such as rock climbing, whitewater kayaking, slacklining, and the always popular dog jumps.

Belle Isle

Located to your right is Belle Isle which is a popular day-spot for walks and rock hopping accessible by a suspension bridge under the Belvidere Street bridge. If you choose to get out for a walk, I would highly recommend visiting the Potterfield Bridge which is only a short walk from the Tredegar parking lot. This bridge is also historically significant as one of the multiple bridges purposely burned by confederate soldiers during The Fall of Richmond and has one of the best views of the James River. Richmond is the only city in the US where a river with class IV rapids runs straight through the city limits and the James includes over 20 miles of trails and opportunities to observe wildlife. Other popular paths along the river include the flood wall, the Slave Trail, Hollywood Cemetery, the Canal Walk, and Pony Pasture.

For students who like to stay active this is just one of the

great opportunities Richmond has to offer. Outside of the 17 division 1 sports, 33 club sports, and intramurals at U of R, the Outdoor Adventure and Recreation program organizes backpacking, kayaking, and skiing trips throughout the year. The University of Richmond Campus also includes courts for tennis, pickleball, squash, disc golf, basketball, beach volleyball, and multi-sport fields.

the Jewish Community Center (JCC) and to St. Mary's Hospital which is a less than 10-minute drive from U of R.

Stop 9: Monroe Park

Monroe Park

Making our way back towards campus, we are passing through another center of the City of Richmond, Monroe Park. Since Richmond is home to three major universities, The University of Richmond, Virginia Commonwealth University, and Virginia Union University, there is a really vibrant student culture in the city. It also means that the City of Richmond is a hub for academic research.

Since the University of Richmond is a primarily undergraduate institution, the vast majority of our impressive research output is conducted by undergraduate students. Research opportunities are available in every department on campus and 70% of students engage in research during their time at UR. Further, the University of Richmond supports students to pursue research and internship opportunities through the Richmond Guarantee Program. Through this program, students receive up to \$5,000 in funding for an unpaid or underpaid internship or research experience. Whether this is staying on-campus to pursue faculty mentored research or traveling abroad to conduct field research, this program makes pursuing your passions accessible to all students here at U of R.

Located to your right as you exit Monroe Park, the Altria Theater is one of the city's largest performance venues which regularly hosts Broadway Shows such as Hamilton, Wicked, Mama Mia, and other musical performances. The Altria also hosts the Richmond Forum, a monthly speaker series which brings in a large variety of high-profile commentators to speak to the Richmond Community such as Dr. Anthony Fauci, Liz Cheney, Michelle Obama, and Theresa May. As you continue to drive, you will be cutting through The Fan District which is a residential area full of amazing restaurants. Some favorites include Fat Dragon for Asian fusion, Kuba Kuba for Cuban, Garnett's for sandwiches, and Shyndigz for dessert.

Stop 10: Monument Avenue & Grove Avenue

Monument Avenue

You are now on Monument Avenue which is another main thoroughfare for the city and will take you back to campus. As you drive, you will be passing a few shopping centers that are within a 10-minute drive from campus, including Willow Lawn and The Shoppes on Grove. Monument Ave is also home to