



2026

TrailLink Unlimited 

Guides



Great American Rail-Trail, Mid-Atlantic

*District of
Columbia,
Maryland,
Pennsylvania, West
Virginia*



Great American Rail-Trail, Mid-Atlantic

District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia

The Mid-Atlantic portion of the Great American Rail-Trail runs through Washington, D.C., Maryland, Pennsylvania and West



The Mid-Atlantic portion of the Great American Rail-Trail runs through Washington, D.C., Maryland, Pennsylvania and West Virginia for more than 300 miles, and will comprise about 390 miles when complete.

Heading east to west, the Mid-Atlantic section of the Great American Rail-Trail heads east, momentarily, at the steps of the U.S. Capitol and runs almost entirely uninterrupted through the District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia, reaching its western end in Weirton.

This section of the route features some of the Mid-Atlantic region's most renowned cultural and geographic assets, including the Potomac River waterfront and the National Mall (The Mall), one of the country's most visited

national parks, with tens of millions of visitors each year; a former canal route with economic-development roots stretching back to George Washington; the famous hills and highlands of Pennsylvania, with their stunning foliage and outdoor opportunities; and the Northern Panhandle of West Virginia, where access to the Ohio River gave rise to industry.

In D.C., The Mall commemorates our nation's founders and many others who played critical roles in American history, with monuments and world-class museums, performance venues, and cultural institutions dotting the destination. Heading into Maryland, the Great American follows the 184.5-mile [Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park](#), or C&O Canal Towpath, which features more than 1,300 historic canal structures and relics. The canal is considered the brainchild of George Washington, who used his Revolutionary War clout in 1784 to successfully lobby for the creation of the precursor Patowmack Canal Company, which was ceded to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company in the late 1820s.

The towpath links with the celebrated 150-mile [Great Allegheny Passage](#) in Cumberland, Maryland and together the two trails comprise a nearly 335-mile route through Maryland and Pennsylvania. The route is one of the most sought-after long-distance trail destinations in America and is a testament to how trails and rural communities can combine to promote outdoor pursuits in nature and generate vast tourism dollars.

Southwest Pennsylvania features one of the most scenic sections of the Great American Rail-Trail, passing along hills and valleys in the 3,000-square-mile Laurel Highlands area. People visit the region in all four seasons for camping, skiing, canoeing, boating, hiking, and whitewater rafting, with the region's water bodies—including the Youghiogheny (pronounced "yock-i-gay-nee") and Casselman Rivers and several creeks—offering many recreational opportunities.



Great American Rail-Trail, Mid-Atlantic

District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia

States: District of Columbia, Maryland,

Pennsylvania, West Virginia

Counties: Allegany, Allegheny, Brooke, Fayette,

Frederick, Hancock, Montgomery, Somerset,

Washington, Westmoreland

Length: 375.6 miles

Trail end points: Washington, D.C. to West

Virginia

Trail surfaces: Asphalt, Crushed

Stone, Dirt, Gravel

Trail category: Rail-Trail

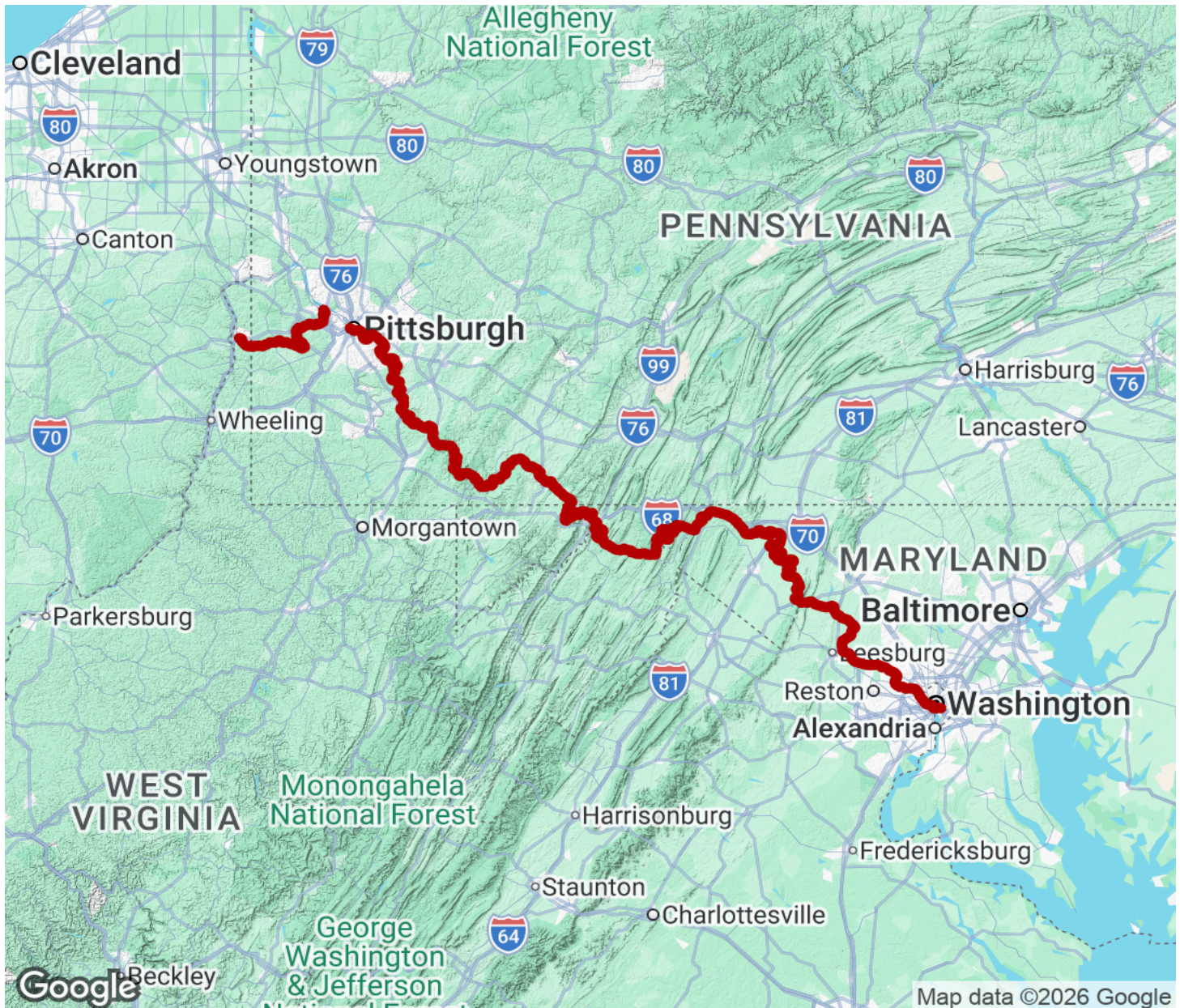
Parking & Trail Access

There are numerous parking options along the Mid-Atlantic portion of the Great American Rail-Trail. Please check the individual trail records to see all waypoints including parking, restrooms, and water.



Great American Rail-Trail, Mid-Atlantic

District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia



Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



TrailLink
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

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