

TRAVEL > WEST VIRGINIA

The Best Things To Do In Lewisburg, West Virginia

This cozy, quirky town is full of exciting surprises.

By [Carolanne Griffith Roberts](#) | Published on March 4, 2023



We're bonkers over the idea of the Blind Date with a Book concept at [A New Chapter](#), an engaging bookshop with sparky vibes and a wine bar smack dab in the middle of [Lewisburg, West Virginia](#).

Sure, you can peruse the latest titles while you sip. But dare to wander to the Blind Date bookcase with all its volumes dramatically wrapped in brown paper. No frills, no bows—just a hand-written, tantalizing teaser on each cover to help you choose your reading "date." We predict [love at first word](#).

And we predict love at first visit to this cozy little community that throws an annual Chocolate Festival (April), Literary Festival (August), and A Taste of Our Town called TOOT (October); it's also a town that speaks creative pizzas and exotic tacos as well as grits and gravy, and flaunts fine wine lists and French menus. Lewisburg is [charmingly quirky](#), utterly sure of itself, and addictive, rolling out surprise after surprise.

Like surprises? Read on.



PHOTO: SHEENA PENDLEY

Surprise #1: Women Rule (Mostly)

Shopping is a full-time attraction here—cozy little stores span four easy-to-stroll blocks. No two places are remotely alike—the women owner trend is the common thread. You'll meet the women themselves, hear their tales, and get their guidance.

For instance, Adrienne French's [The Golden Rabbit](#) is a heavenly assortment of antique silver, china, and jewelry; [Cat and Kate](#) brings you a [mother-daughter duo](#) who buys pizzazzy clothing from Europe and the US. At [Cybele's](#) there's talented Cybele Mallory, who found her way to West Virginia from Istanbul to hand-create one-of-a-kind

specializes in coming trends at [Wolf Creek Gallery](#).

We dare you to even count the shoes at [Yarid's Shoes](#), a true foot-fest in the hands of Katherine Yarid Juker, the savvy third generation owner. A young ex-pat West Virginian named Meredith German has returned from New York City with husband Ross to brighten spirits at [Lewisburg Surf Shop](#), a merry mix of upscale boutique items (especially Meredith's marvelous purse designs).

Because Lewisburg isn't pretentious or snobby, your unexpected finds can stop you in your tracks. Return visitors know to save a generous chunk of time for [Bella the Corner Gourmet](#) where Tamera Pence artfully stuffs her sophisticated space with cookware, fascinating foods, wines, artisan cheeses, accessories, and signature Blenko water bottles from West Virginia (Christmas shopping often starts here no matter the month). And at [Edith's](#), for the health of it, see all your lifestyle resolutions fulfilled—the place is alive with health food and a lower level with scoop-your-own grains, spices, and beans in wooden barrels.



PHOTO: SHEENA PENDLEY

Surprise #2: Carnegie Hall Is In West Virginia

Philanthropist Andrew Carnegie endowed more than the [New York City icon](#)—and one of the four remaining halls, built in 1902, serves Lewisburg as a vibrant performing and visual arts scene (including summer outdoor concerts with BYOBlankets). Greenbrier Valley Theatre, the state professional theater of West Virginia, is on many a New York actor's bucket list—the season includes home-grown shows to Broadway titles along with feeds of live Metropolitan Opera productions. In this art-minded community, pop-up

Likewise, visual arts flourish at [Cooper Gallery](#) for jazzy modern and serene landscapes; and [Harmony Ridge](#), a potpourri of crafts and objets d'art (and wine bar). On weekends, [Lee Street Studios](#) invites you to meet the local resident artists as you shop in a restored 1924 elementary school.



PHOTO: SHEENA PERMBERLY

With its beret-topped mascot named Marcel, [The French Goat](#) boasts a decidedly Gallic food and wine menu and a variety of special events. [Stardust Cafe](#), one of the area's first farm to table spots, still sources locally; the Historic General Lewis Inn opens doors (and front porch) for meals Friday-Monday to yum reviews. At [Thunderbird Taco](#), adjacent to the [Wild Bean Coffee Shop](#), fare gets creative—from Chorizo to Chili Lime Tofu tacos (open seasonally).

The [Livery Tavern](#) calls itself "elevated American" while the [Humble Tomato](#), [Blackwell's](#), and [Hill and Holler](#) make a mean pizza (other options available too). [The Briergarten](#), channeling German heritage, is your place for beer and a killer pretzel. [The Asylum](#) is the spot for pub grub; [Amy's Market](#) offers grab-and-go fare but oh-yeah to the Hershey's ice creams, breakfast [French toast](#) with sautéed apples, and a wildly long lunch menu when you stay to eat.



PHOTO: SHEENA PENDLEY

Surprise #4: The General Is The Place To Sleep, Smooth Ambler The Spot To Sip

Still around since 1929, the Historic General Lewis Inn continues to charm with updated rooms and a last-century charm. Rooms are simple yet comfortable—and close to the bar specializing in craft cocktails and congeniality. Hotels with familiar national names do exist and put you close to the action.

There's definitely action at Smooth Ambler Distillery whose Old Scout and Contradiction whiskies are winners—*real* winners as in Best Single Barrel Bourbon in the World (Old Scout) and Best Craft

name in spirits, yet all bottles remain true to the West Virginia recipe.

If beer's more to your taste, just up the road from Smooth Ambler the [Greenbrier Valley Brewing Company](#) creates the likes of Devil Anse, an IPA described as "balanced bitterness," which is more than one can say about its namesake, a Hatfield who led his family in the bloody Hatfields & McCoys feuds in the late 1800s along the [West Virginia-Kentucky border](#). Other choices run to pilsners and ales with equally exotic titles nodding to the West Virginia roots.

Surprise #5: The Greenbrier River Trail Is Almost Heaven

Bring your bike, hiking boots, or horse and hit the rail trail which follows the river—the longest undammed waterway in the eastern US. Go the full 77 miles or select your chapter of activity. The Trail passes over 38 bridges, through two tunnels (like the 511-foot Sharp's Tunnel in the next county), a dozen campsites, remote [small towns](#), lush forests, and even the Roadkill Cook-Off in Marlinton (September). Autumn is the coolest and the [prettiest](#)—or is it? Spring is divine.



PHOTO: SHEENA PENDLEY

Surprise #6: Choose An Architectural Style

In this town, officially laid out in 1780, you'll see Greek Revival, Italianate, [Victorian](#), Craftsmen, and 50's International architecture. Lewisburg's oldest structure, an early 18th century fort, now operates as an escape room with local history clues. From Revolutionary War roots forward, you learn in order to earn your release.

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PHOTO: BILL AND ALBANESE

Surprise #7: Glamour Is 10 Miles Away

and championship [golf courses](#). Since you're literally in the neighborhood, it's worth the short hop for the big impression—you should experience this flashy big star in Greenbrier County's crown.

But Lewisburg isn't worried, knowing you'll be right back. And you will.

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