

VIRGINIA IS FOR VALENTINES:

Check out various lodging options, including Bed and Breakfasts, as well as established national hotel chains. The Joshua Wilton House, circa 1888, was named for its original owner, who was one of the first citizens of Harrisonburg. Located in the Old Town district of the city, this elegant Victorian mansion also boasts a renowned gourmet restaurant sure to please the most discriminating palette. By the Side of the Road provides extra features to make your romantic stay special. Enhance your romance with flower arrangements, picnic lunches, and other treats.

Saturday mornings from 9 AM to 1 PM, shop the Winter Farmer's Market at Turner Pavilion, where you might see chefs from local restaurants buying ingredients for the day's menus, as well as locals patronizing their favorite stand. Or work up an appetite for lunch by hiking the network of trails at the Edith J. Carrier Arboretum. Downtown Harrisonburg's designated Culinary District provides many choices for lunch. Food.Bar.Food advertises global comfort food made from local "fresh ingredients with thoughtful flavors." Another popular option is Bella Luna Wood-Fired Pizza; rated #3 of 269 restaurants in Harrisonburg by Trip Advisor, this establishment practices sustainability by making sure that most of its ingredients come from within a three-mile radius. Watch your pizza being made in a wood-fired oven that reaches 1,000 degrees! Both restaurants feature unique, hand-crafted designer cocktails.

In the afternoon, scout out Shenandoah Valley fine arts and crafts at the Oasis Gallery, the city's premier artists' co-operative. February features a faculty curated show by art students at nearby Bridgewater College, "Observations and Explorations." Other galleries include 101 Franklin Street, Smith House Gallery, the gallery at Larkin Arts and Duke Hall Gallery of Fine Art, among others. Stifle afternoon yawns at Black Sheep coffee shop in the Ice House complex, formerly the Cassco Ice plant. Enjoy a unique blend of "Coffee, Conversation & the Art of Simple Pleasures" at this comfy, casual spot, featuring in-house baked goods served along with finely crafted espresso, drip coffee, and manual pour-over service; all brews start with fresh roasted beans from fine Virginia roasting companies.

For quality evening entertainment, chose from a variety of offerings at the Forbes Center for the Performing Arts at James Madison University. Check the Court Square Theater schedule for their selection of live performances as well as the latest critically acclaimed films.

And remember, it doesn't have to be Valentine's weekend--make any weekend (or weekday, for that matter) a romantic one! Or turn this time into a sisters' getaway, or quality time with an old friend.