Hudson River Valley
National Heritage Area

Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, New York
www.hudsonrivervalley.com

Hudson River Valley

Spectacular views of the river's majestic panoramas have inspired artists, writers, philosophers, and politicians throughout history. Today, the views of the Hudson Highlands are spectacular. The region's most breathtaking views, along the river's 150-mile valley, are the natural and cultural treasures that continue to inspire. The region includes the Hudson Highlands, the Catskills, and the Shawangunks, all of which are part of the Catskill Mountains.

Nature and Culture

Amerindians have lived in the Hudson Valley for thousands of years. The first Europeans to settle in the region were the Dutch, who established trading posts and planted farmland along the river. The English took control of the region in the 17th century, and the French followed in the 18th century.

In the 19th century, the Hudson Valley became a popular destination for artists and writers. Some of the most famous artists to live in the Hudson Valley include Thomas Cole, Frederic Edwin Church, and Albert Bierstadt. These artists helped to establish the Hudson River School of painting, which is known for its realistic depictions of nature.

In the 20th century, the Hudson Valley remained a popular destination for artists and writers. Some of the most famous modern artists to live in the Hudson Valley include Mark Rothko, Paul Cézanne, and Willem de Kooning. These artists helped to establish the Hudson River School of painting, which is known for its abstract depictions of nature.

The Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area supports activities such as the 10-day Great Hudson Valley River Festival, which features a variety of events, including music, art, and food. The area is also home to a number of museums and historic sites, including the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, which celebrates the legacy of one of the most important American presidents.

National Heritage Area

The Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area was established by Congress in 1996 to recognize, preserve, protect, and interpret the region's unique cultural and natural resources. The area includes a variety of national, state, and local parks, as well as a number of historic sites and museums.

New York City is a partner in the Hudson Valley National Heritage Area. The area is supported by the National Park Service and other local, state, and federal agencies. For more information, visit www.hudsonrivervalley.com.

Freedom and Dignity

New Yorkers met at the Senate House in Kingston in 1777 and formed a new government system that continues to guide the state today. The patriots thwarted British attempts to control the Hudson by fortifying the Hudson Highlands at West Point and installing two massive cannons on the cliffs above the river. The patriots also captured the British fleet at New York harbor, which was a significant victory for the American Revolution. The patriotic spirit was renewed in the 19th century, when abolitionists worked to end slavery and other forms of discrimination.

Today, the Hudson Valley is a popular destination for visitors and tourists. The region is home to a variety of historic sites and museums, as well as a number of outdoor activities, including hiking, biking, and kayaking. The area is also home to a number of festivals and events, including the Great Hudson Valley River Festival, which features a variety of events, including music, art, and food.

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Major highways, such as I-487 (New York State Thruway), I-90, I-84, and the Palisades and Taconic State Parkways, provide access from New York City and the bordering states to the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area. U.S. 9, 10, and 9W, the primary travel routes in the valley, connect with a network of country roads leading to places of interest.

There are 90 heritage sites designated in the Hudson River Valley, and all are shown on this map in bold.

A few of the valley’s heritage sites are described at right from north to south. For more information, visit this website: www.hudsonrivervalley.com

Upper Hudson

Troy's Riverpark Visitor Center and walking tour celebrate the area's heritage, including the Mutual Bank building, scene of an anti-labor event sparked by Harriet Tubman.

Major sites in Albany include the State Education Building, the Empire State Plaza Art Collection, and New York State Museum, Albany Institute of History & Art, and Schuyler Mansion.

In Old Chatham, the Schuyler Museum and Library displays books, furniture, and other items created by the Schuylers. The city of Hudson offers a walking tour of the historic district. Nearby is Olana, Frederick E. Church's Persian-style estate, which has been restored with original paintings and furnishings.

From FDR's home in Hyde Park, follow the road to the high Kaaterskill escarpment that figured prominently in his paintings. Three trails in the Catskills take hikers along the escarpment and past old hotel ruins, mountain lakes, and the 260-foot Kaaterskill Falls.

After his Presidency, Martin Van Buren returned to Kinderhook, where he spent the rest of his life as a gentleman farmer at Lithinwood, a Federalist mansion that has been restored by the National Park Service.

Mid Hudson

Clement was the Germanic home of the Livingstons from 1726 to 1862. In 1777 the British torched the original mansion; the Independence-minded family rebuilt.

South of Clement is Montgomery Place, an estate that was founded in 1862 by Janet Livingston. Architect Alexander Jackson Davis enlarged the house into a 23-room mansion, and Andrew Jackson Downing designed the gardens and grounds.

Kingston offers a walking tour reflecting its Dutch roots, the Senate House representing New York's governmental origins, and the Hudson River Maritime Museum interpreting the river common story.

Al Rihbeck, the sushi family’s Wildenstein mansion feature interior decorations designed by Joseph Burt Trayffy and ornamental grounds designed by Calvert Vaux.

To the south, overlooking the Hudson, are two elaborately furnished house museums exemplifying America’s splendid Gilded Age. Staatsburg (Mills-Mansion), in Staatsburg, was remodeled and expanded to 60 rooms by McKim, Mead & White for Ogden and Ruth Livingston Mills. The same architectural firm designed the 50-room Vanderbuilt Mansion, in Hyde Park, for Frederick and Louise Vanderbilt.

Hyde Park commemorates Franklin D. and Eleanor Roosevelt at the Home of FDR, the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library and Museum, Val-Kill, Mrs. Roosevelt’s retreat, and Top Cottage, the President’s hideout retreat.

Artist-inventor Samuel F. B. Morse’s Poughkeepsie villa, Locust Grove, features historic gardens, paintings, and early telegraph equipment.

Huguenot Street in New Paltz, with its stone church and houses, commemorates the village’s settlement in the 1680s by French emigrants. West of New Paltz, the Minnewaska escarpment is the source of many of its hiking trails.

Lower Hudson

Marlboro’s Greene’s Mill is the oldest continuously operating gristmill in the nation. It is a 1780s structure that housed a distillery in the 1880s and a mill in the 1980s.

More than 105 sculptures—by Alexander Calder, Henry Moore, Mark di Suvero, Isamu Noguchi, David Smith, and others—are exhibited outdoors at the 500-acre Storm King Art Center in Mountainville.

The U.S. Military Academy at West Point offers guided tours of its grounds and a museum with a vast collection of military items. Fort Putnam, Clinton, and Montgomery and Stony Point Battlefield commemorate Revolutionary War events.

Bear Mountain Bridge, opened in 1922, is an early 20th-century suspension bridge that was saved from demolition in the 1950s. Besides featuring Federal period decorative arts and interior gardens, Bear Mountain is host to the Hudson River Shakespeare Festival every summer.

Bear Mountain State Park and Harriman State Park offer opportunities for hiking, camping, cross-country skiing, swimming, boating, and fishing. Visit the Touchstone Museum and Wildlife Center and take a ride on the monorail train in Bear Mountain State Park.

Such skills as blacksmithing, hearth cooking, and blacksmithing are demonstrated at Van Cortlandt Manor, which includes an 18th-century Carriage House and interpretative center house. Nearby is Kykuit, the Rockefeller’s hideout estate, which features a vast art collection, formal gardens, and outdoor sculptures. Kykuit tours begin at Philipse Manor, an 18th-century farm and gentleman’s residence.