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What's New in Alexandria, Virginia 2017

Alexandria's First Riverfront Hotel Adds to Waterfront Evolution

Within eyesight of Washington, D.C. on the Potomac River, Alexandria welcomes its first waterfront hotel, the highly anticipated [Hotel Indigo Old Town Alexandria](#) opening in spring 2017. Touches of Alexandria's colonial past blend with contemporary design at the boutique hotel, nestled on a riverside site where a [300-year old ship was discovered](#) and excavated during the hotel's development. At the city's marina, new restaurant [Vola's Dockside Grill and Hi-Tide Lounge](#) offers waterfront dining with an oyster bar, seafood classics and tiki-inspired cocktails. More recent expansions on Alexandria's waterfront include new connections to D.C. via [Potomac Riverboat Company's](#) water taxis and future plans to create a new public plaza at the foot of King Street.

New NH2 Bus, Water Taxi Bridge New MGM National Harbor and Old Town Alexandria

The D.C. region's hottest new attraction, [MGM National Harbor](#), is just a **15-minute ride** from Old Town Alexandria on the [new NH2 bus](#) and is also accessible by water taxi, making Alexandria an easy home base for an MGM excursion, or a destination during an MGM weekend. MGM National Harbor opened its doors in December 2016, bringing the region's first casino, restaurants led by celebrity chefs Marcus Samuelsson, José Andrés and the Voltaggio brothers, a 3,000-seat theater featuring acts such as Bruno Mars, Sting and Kings of Leon, as well as Sarah Jessica Parker's first physical store. Visitors can easily access the new entertainment venue by taking the [Potomac Riverboat Company's water taxi](#) to National Harbor or by hopping aboard the new NH2 bus that runs every 30 minutes between 6 a.m. and 1 a.m. and takes only 15 minutes to transport passengers from the King St-Old Town Metro Station to the resort. VisitAlexandriaVA.com/MGM

Fans of PBS' MERCY STREET Enjoy New Visitor Experiences for Season Two

As fans of the PBS Civil War-era drama [MERCY STREET](#) anticipate the show's return for a second season on January 22, 2017, historic Alexandria, Virginia announces **25 new tours, exhibits and events** inspired by the series, launching in 2017 as the new season airs. **MERCY STREET is inspired by real events of Civil War Alexandria** and is PBS' first original American drama in a decade. Fans are invited to visit the city's historic sites to enjoy new exhibits and events inspired by the series, with several that focus on Civil War-era cultural customs including food, fashion and music. Uncover the real people behind the characters on the show, the realities of Civil War medicine, the changing roles for women, and the breakthrough experience of enslaved African-Americans claiming their freedom. VisitAlexandriaVA.com/mercystreet

Portner Brewhouse Revives Historic Beers, Launches Craft Beer Test Kitchen™

Two sisters are launching a new reason to visit Alexandria, already a destination for craft beer lovers, with the opening of pre-Prohibition inspired [Portner Brewhouse](#). Catherine and Margaret Portner are honoring their **great-great grandfather's legacy 100 years later** by brewing up **historic family recipes** from Alexandria's Robert Portner Brewing Co., the largest pre-Prohibition brewery in the South. Portner

Brewhouse, which opens its doors in January 2017, also serves contemporary German-American cuisine and offers the public a chance to taste and rate home-brewed recipes in the Craft Beer Test Kitchen™. portnerbrewhouse.com

Port City Brewing Co., which was named the **Best Small Brewery in the U.S. in 2015** and put Alexandria on the map by being the first craft brewery in the D.C. region, will also expand in 2017.

Creative Comfort Food Trend on the Rise in Alexandria

Alexandria's booming dining scene is trending with classic comfort foods with creative culinary twists. **Named Virginia's top food truck by Southern Living** in 2016 for its quirky and imaginative eggroll flavors, [Meggrolls](http://meggrolls.com) will open its first storefront in Old Town in 2017 with menu items such as Chicken Parm, Buffalo Wing, Four Cheese Mac and Chorizo Pablano. Also in Old Town, celebrity pitmaster Myron Mixon will open **Myron Mixon's Pitmaster Barbecue** in January 2017, serving up authentic barbeque with signature dishes such as cupcake chicken, peach barbecue beans and baby back mac and cheese. Nearby and new, [Hen Quarter](http://henquarter.com) puts a creative twist on chicken and waffles by adding compressed watermelon, honey pearl butter and Tennessee bourbon maple syrup. In Del Ray, new restaurants [Live Oak](http://liveoak.com) and [Junction Bakery & Bistro](http://junctionbakery.com) serve up dishes like head-on shrimp and grits and short rib grilled cheese, respectively. Other hot spots for comfort food include [Hank's Pasta Bar](http://hankspastabar.com), named one of the **10 best new restaurants in the D.C. area by The Washington Post**; [Stomping Ground](http://stompingground.com), serving creative biscuit sandwiches; [Cheesetique](http://cheesetique.com), with its Mac 'n Cheesetique named **one of the best mac n' cheeses in the U.S. by Food & Wine**; and [Haute Dogs & Fries](http://hautedogs.com), serving both classic and unexpected flavors. meggrolls.com

blog.visitalexandriava.com/11-spots-creative-comfort-food-alexandria

Nicecream Adds Arctic Blast to Alexandria's Already Cool Sweets Scene

Liquid nitrogen meets fresh farm ingredients at made-to-order ice cream concept [Nicecream Factory](http://nicecreamfactory.com), bringing its newest location to Old Town Alexandria in the spring of 2017, **joining nearly 20 artisanal sweets and dessert spots** in this already sweet dessert destination. Each Nicecream serving is crafted right before the customer's eyes with rotating weekly and seasonal flavors such as Mint Mojito, Cran-Orange Dark Chocolate Chunk and Butter Toffee Pecan. [Duck Donuts](http://duckdonuts.com) will also bring its signature concept to Alexandria in the spring, offering customers made-to-order doughnuts with their choice of toppings and other warm, freshly made doughnuts of the day such as Maple Bacon & Raspberry Drizzle and Blueberry & Powdered Sugar. Family-owned confectionery shop [Dolce & Bean](http://dolceandbean.com) will open in Del Ray in 2017 and offer premium artisanal products, including macarons, gourmet fudge, crepes and gelato. Nearby, local favorite [The Happy Tart](http://thehappytart.com), a gluten-free patisserie created by a classically trained French pastry chef when she discovered she was gluten intolerant, will expand in 2017 with a more extensive menu and more seating. These sweets shops join recent newcomers [Sugar Shack Donuts](http://sugarshackdonuts.com), featuring handcrafted designer flavors and a hidden cocktail speakeasy inside, and Argentine-inspired [Casa Rosada Artisan Gelato](http://casarosada.com).

nicecreamfactory.com

duckdonuts.com

dolceandbean.odoo.com

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New Niche Tours Cater to Photo Enthusiasts, Runners, African-American History Buffs and More in Alexandria

Visitors seeking uncommon tour experiences will find a wealth of options in Old Town Alexandria, a neighborhood steeped in history while humming with a cosmopolitan feel, located just outside of Washington, D.C. Joining a robust calendar of history, ghost, and boat tours are new niche tours including [Fetching Photos](#), which presents walking photo tours for both smartphone and SLR users (and dogs are always welcome!); [Nightly Spirits](#), featuring a “Frights and Pints” tour for beer fans who love a scare; [Manumission Tour Company](#), which explores Alexandria’s rich African American history through curated heritage tours; and [Discover Alexandria](#), presenting tours such as “Virginia is for Runners,” visiting iconic sites while on a brisk run, and “Sweet History,” combining history with the city’s best dessert spots.

VisitAlexandriaVA.com/things-to-do/tours

Alexandria’s Key to the City Museum Pass Expands with Major Mount Vernon Offer and Observation Deck Access for Stunning Views of the Capital Region

In 2017, the city’s **Key to the City museum pass** (\$15) expands to include 40% off of admission to the most visited historic site in America, **George Washington’s Mount Vernon**, located just 8 miles south of Old Town, and admission to the **George Washington Masonic National Memorial observation deck**, which offers breathtaking 360-degree views of Alexandria, Washington, D.C., and the surrounding region from the ninth floor of the memorial. With the Key to the City museum pass, visitors can access eight historic sites—a \$49 value—for just \$15.

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Alexandria Serves as Hub for African-American Heritage Travel

In the fall of 2016, the highly anticipated [Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture](#) opened on the National Mall. Days later, **George Washington’s Mount Vernon** opened a ground-breaking exhibition, [“Lives Bound Together: Slavery at George Washington’s Mount Vernon”](#) focusing on the personal stories of Mount Vernon’s enslaved people. Nestled between these two sites on the Potomac River waterfront is historic **Alexandria, Virginia, a city steeped in African-American history since its founding in 1749**. To walk through the streets of Alexandria is to walk through America’s timeline of African-American history from colonial times, to the Civil War, to Civil Rights. Alexandria’s Civil War history inspired the **PBS national drama series**, [MERCY STREET](#), returning for season 2 on January 22, 2017. Alexandria’s Black History Museum Director Audrey Davis serves as an official consultant for MERCY STREET’s African-American storylines of contrabands and freedmen. Numerous historically rich sites of interest in Alexandria, such as the **Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery Memorial**, can be seen through a new **Courageous Journey self-guided driving tour**. Additionally, visitors can take the “Alexandria’s Fight for Freedom” walking tour through the new **Manumission Tour Company**, which offers curated heritage tours for socially conscious day trippers.

blog.visitalexandriava.com/african-american-history-sites-in-alexandria

Marriott Autograph Collection Raises Two New Flags in Alexandria

Alexandria’s hotel portfolio continues to evolve following the addition of two Marriott Autograph Collection boutique hotels in Old Town in late 2016 that were formerly Kimpton properties. Four blocks from the waterfront, located on historic King Street, [The Alexandrian, Autograph Collection](#) is a 241-room hotel offering a luxurious design in the heart of Old Town with access to local museums, restaurants, shops, historic Mount Vernon and Washington, D.C. A few blocks away and just off King Street is [Morrison House, Autograph Collection](#), an elegant, yet approachable and bold, yet undeniably

classic four-star, 45-room hotel featuring contemporary luxury while staying true to the spirit of Alexandria.

These two boutique hotels complement Alexandria's evolving hotel portfolio. The city will welcome its first waterfront hotel, [Hotel Indigo Old Town Alexandria](#), in the spring of 2017, and other hotels underwent major renovations in 2016, including Hilton Alexandria Mark Center and Courtyard Alexandria Old Town/Southwest.

Experiential DIY Retail Grows in the D.C. Region's Shop Small Headquarters

Alexandria, the D.C. region's Shop Small destination, is attracting more shoppers than ever with new experiential DIY retail concepts that are passion projects of independent owners. [AR Workshop](#), a boutique DIY workshop that offers hands-on classes for creating custom home décor in a lounge style atmosphere, will have its first mid-Atlantic location open Old Town Alexandria in 2017 by local owner Katie Nguyen Wells. Nearby, owner Kalle Thompson launched [Stitch Sew Shop](#), her dream of a highly curated boutique and "maker space" for a community of beginning through advanced sewers with intimate workshops with "sew-lebrity" contemporary pattern designers, in 2016. [fibre space](#), a knitting universe by Danielle Romanetti, offers yarn tastings, designer workshops, movie nights and more.

arworkshop.com/alexandria

With her own sewing studio on site, [TSALT](#) owner Tamara Saltonstall fulfills her passion by offering shoppers an intimate boutique experience in which they can work with the store's in-house designer on custom pieces and can take advantage of free alterations with the purchase of any TSALT-labeled items.

From Foodtruck to Storefront, Meggrolls Opens its First Restaurant in Old Town Alexandria

Named Virginia's top food truck by Southern Living in 2016 for her quirky and imaginative eggroll flavors, native Alexandrian Meghan Baroody is converting her successful [Meggrolls](#) food truck and catering business to her first brick and mortar location, with a 25-seat shop coming to Old Town in the spring of 2017. Meggrolls are "eggrolls with multiple personalities" and an innovative way to enjoy favorite dishes such as Chicken Parm, Buffalo Wing, Four Cheese Mac and Chorizo Pablano. The Big Megg will satisfy a Big Mac craving, while the breakfast Meggroll tantalizes with fried egg, bacon, French toast, Béchamel sauce and maple syrup. Each Meggroll is handmade, cooked to the perfection, sliced in half and served as a hot open-faced sandwich with an amazing crunch.

meggrolls.com

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