

Omni Homestead Resort, VA



The Omni Homestead Resort in southern Virginia (formerly known simply as The Homestead) has an unusual motto: ‘An American Treasure since before America.’

What that means, hard as it may be to believe, is that the resort first opened its doors in 1766, a full decade before the United States of America was formed in 1776!

For an institution now a quarter-of-a-millennium old (IE—250 years) The Homestead is aging gracefully, with a cornucopia of wonderful activities, some great golf, and it goes without saying, a rich and vibrant history sure to enthrall anyone lucky enough to visit one of the most singular properties in the nation.

Pick up a National Rental Car in Roanoke, and after a beautiful 90-minute drive through the rolling Virginia countryside, you’ll arrive at the Omni Homestead. We’ll begin with the golf, despite the fact there’s much more to this venerable institution than the typical walk-through-the-meadow-with-stick-and-ball. But what a meadow it is, the Cascades Course in particular.



Omni Homestead

Cascades, dating from 1923, is a William Flynn-designed classic. This is one of the original mountain courses in the nation, though it plays more as a valley course, with narrow fairways routed through some of the most spectacular scenery east of the Mississippi. Because earth-moving equipment was little more than horse-and-plow in those bygone days, the holes had to fit the landscape as God created it, and Flynn did a masterful job of routing the course. Recently refurbished, this 6,700 yard par-70 is the premier golf attraction at The Homestead, and its status as an eight-time USGA Championship venue speaks to both the quality and memorability of the course. The legendary Sam Snead, who hails from these mountainous parts, once exclaimed that if he could only play once golf course, he'd opt for Cascades. Part of the reason Snead became so proficient as a professional was honing his not-inconsiderable skills on the canted fairways, where every awkward lie might offer a different result than the previous day's shot from virtually the same position.



Omni Homestead

The Old Course, the second option at The Omni Homestead, is well-named. First completed in 1892, it boasts the distinction of having the nation's oldest first tee in continuous use. Having been updated over 130-plus years, first by William Flynn and later by Rees Jones, this antiquity still intrigues in large part due to the uneven nature of the terrain. Much like its more celebrated sibling Cascades, uphill, side-hill and downhill lies are the rule, not the exception. Exacerbating the inherent difficulty of the approach shots are the targets—mostly smallish and well-defended greens.



Omni Homestead

While golf is an essential attribute of the Omni Homestead, there are dozens of other amenities that will divert and distract all but the most single-minded golfers. Just a 'Cliff Notes' listing would include their world-renowned, 60,000 square-foot spa, and the Jefferson pools, named after our third president, which is a natural hot spring. In addition there is falconry, shooting, equestrian pursuits, hiking, mountain biking, kayaking, canoeing, swimming, tennis and fly-fishing. For those not athletically inclined, the Omni Homestead offers a fascinating and rich history. Just perusing the portraiture and artifacts while ambling through the various lobbies and public rooms is an immersing experience in the historical timeline of the United States.



Omni Homestead

It's astonishing to realize that, of the forty-four presidents who have led the nation, fully half of them have visited The Homestead, either before, during or after their administration. But presidents only tell part of the story. Living history at The Homestead also includes visits from visionaries like Henry Ford and Thomas Edison. J.P. Morgan, various Rockefellers, and members of the DuPont and Astor families have also been in residence, ensconced in one of nearly five hundred rooms or suites, spread over 2,000 expansive acres.

Dining options, much like recreational pursuits, are varied and abundant. The [Main Dining Room](#) offers a breakfast buffet of such size and scope it is almost bewildering to first-timers. Bring a sport coat to enjoy the traditional dining and dancing that are hallmarks of the dinner hour. [Sam Snead's Tavern](#) has no sartorial requirements, just a charming and artifact-filled dining space where Angus Beef and Allegheny Mountain Trout fly off the menu nightly. Finally, [Jefferson's Restaurant & Bar](#) is a newer addition to the gustatory lineup, having opened its doors in 2013. Guests enjoy a wide range of farm-to-table entrees sourced from local vendors, farms and ranches.