

Patty MacDonald and Maureen Beck

What'll it be, Hon?

Things to do in Baltimore

Baltimore is a great city to visit as there is so much to see and do near the downtown and harbor areas. Within walking distance, or by water taxi, you can explore the scenic waterfront and an interesting mix of neighborhoods, museums, and galleries. You'll get to know what makes Baltimore unique and exciting; the quirky mix of ethnic diversity, old world traditions, and hometown funk alongside the modern elements of the harbor renaissance. A short ride on the Light Rail, a bus, or taxi will take you to destinations a bit further away. Here are a few of the many attractions of Charm City, but brochures and maps will be available at the convention center or stop by the Baltimore Area Convention and Visitors Association (www.baltimore.org) for all the information you need.

Inner harbor

These attractions are located within walking distance of the convention center starting with the National Aquarium in Baltimore.

National Aquarium in Baltimore (501 E. Pratt St., Pier 3, www.aqua.org/). Designated *national* by Congress, the National Aquarium in Baltimore is Maryland's most popular attraction, and the glass-topped triangular design makes it the most striking building in the harbor. The aquarium contains more than 10,000 specimens and represents not only the ocean and rain forest, but an Icelandic coast, a coral reef, and its newest exhibit on the animals of Australia.

Top of the World Observation Level-World Trade Center (401 E. Pratt Street, www.baltimore.to/TopOfWorld). Get a panoramic view of the city and harbor from

the 27th floor observation deck of the World Trade Center, the world's tallest pentagonal building.

USS Constellation (Pier 1, 301 E. Pratt St., www.constellation.org). Another standout feature of the inner harbor, this 179-foot sloop is the last full sail warship and the last Civil War vessel still afloat. Built in 1853, it has been fully restored and gives visitors a good look at life on board the ship with its elegant, if compact, captain's quarters, the simple hammocks for the crew, the prison brig, and even a manger for livestock. Of course there are the many cannons on the deck, one of which is fired regularly by a spirited guide in uniform, who gives an enlightening history of the vessel.

Harborplace and the Gallery (Pratt and Light Street, www.harborplace.com). Time for a stop at Harborplace, the two eating and shopping multiplex glass pavilions centrally located on the harbor and connected with an outdoor amphitheater, where you can sit and watch the street performers or boats. The **Pratt Street Pavilion** has many good restaurants and a wide selection of traditional and unusual shops, such as Hats in the Belfry. At the **Light Street Pavilion** you'll find the well-known standard, Philips Seafood Restaurant, along with lunch and snack choices galore from homemade ice cream and fudge to an extensive food court

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on the second floor, where you can sample the local seafood favorites. The Light Street Pavilion also specializes in stores featuring everything Maryland.

Maryland Science Center (601 Light St., www.mdsci.org). Kids of all ages will enjoy three levels of hands-on exhibits. Explore the past with full-size dinosaurs and the future in "Our Place in Space." Other interactive exhibits include: the Chesapeake Bay ecology, kinetic energy, human body, and fossils. If you prefer to sit back and watch, enjoy an IMAX movie or a show in the Davis Planetarium. On Friday nights, there is free stargazing through the center's historic refracting telescope on the rooftop observatory.

Inner Harbor Pedestrian Walkway. This walkway affords one a path through all of the tourist activity of the harbor proper, and takes you to either Federal Hill, or, in the other direction, to the Living Classroom. A detailed description of the walk appears in the highly recommended book, *60 Hikes Within 60 Miles*, by Evan Balkan (Menasha Ridge Press, 2006).

Downtown attractions

Reginald F. Lewis Museum of African American History and Culture (830 E. Pratt St., www.africanamericanculture.org). Opened in 2005, the museum is the largest African American museum on the east coast, and it traces the history of African Americans from the slave trade to the present in the areas of agriculture, trades, business, arts, and culture. The main purpose of the museum is education, and its exhibits document the struggles as well as the accomplishments of African Americans. There is an interactive exhibit of the underground railroad and a variety of changing displays, such as African American baseball greats and photographs of African American farmers.

Oriole Park at Camden Yards (333 West Camden Street, [888] 848-BIRD, orioles.mlb.com). This beautiful stadium, with its traditional design and state-of-the-art features, is a 12-minute walk from the inner harbor and only two blocks from the birthplace of

Babe Ruth. The brick façade, sunroof over the upper deck, and grass turf are some of the features that connect it to the great ballparks of the early 1900s such as Fenway Park and Wrigley Field. The 1905 B&O brick warehouse, which runs 1,000 feet along the east side of the ballpark, adds to the historical urban ambience.

B&O Railroad Museum (901 W. Pratt St. www.borail.org/). A must for train buffs, the B&O Railroad Museum has the oldest and most extensive railroad collection in the world. The site marks the birthplace of American railroading, as the B&O Railroad was the first successful commercial and passenger train, and many of Baltimore's most prominent business and civic leaders were involved in the enterprise. The museum covers the history of the B&O Railroad and early railroading in America, and displays steam locomotives, rolling stock, and a small object collection covering every facet of railroading.

Lexington Market (400 W. Lexington St., www.lexingtonmarket.com/). The largest market in Baltimore has operated since 1792 and provides more than 100 stalls with fresh and prepared foods, including a wide variety of international cuisine, deli, and soul food, as well as general merchandise. Annual events include "Lunch with the Elephants," which takes place in March when the circus comes to town; the elephants march up Eutaw Avenue to the market where they consume the world's largest buffet of fruits and vegetables.

Fell's Point

No trip to Baltimore is complete without a visit to the historic waterfront community of Fell's Point, and the water taxi is the best way to get there from the convention center. Fell's Point was Baltimore's original deep seaport, and it is still a working waterfront with bright red tugboats docked at the wharf. With its eclectic shops, cobbled streets, and many taverns and restaurants, the Point is a favorite of the young and old. You can feed the ducks from the pier, relax in the adjoining square, walk along the waterfront promenade, get

an ice cream at Molly Moo's, and have tea or a drink in the cozy downstairs pub at the historic Admiral Fell Inn—humorously named after the founders of the port, William and Edward Fell. Amid the 18th- and 19th-century row houses you can still find the **Fell family grave marker** on 1607 Shakespeare Street. There are shopping opportunities of all sorts—from old brass to expensive jewelry, home décor at Su Casa, handicrafts from around the world at 10,000 Villages, new and used book and music stores, antiques and oriental rugs, and funky shoes and body jewelry at **Sticky Fingers**. The young crowd flocks to the late-night bars in Fell's Point, but this is also a great choice for an afternoon visit or dinner.

Some of the attractions at Fell's Point include: **Broadway Pier**, the second busiest immigration port after New York City until 1917; **Broadway Market**, a long-standing market where you can sample food from Baltimore's Polish, Greek, and Italian heritage; **City Recreation Pier**, once a dancing and social center, later a police station and setting for "Homicide, Life on the Streets;" **Douglass Terrace**, five houses which Frederick Douglass had built when he returned to Baltimore as a free and famous man; the **Robert Long House**, the oldest existing house in Baltimore, which was built in 1765 complete with pre-revolutionary war furniture; and the **Fell's Point Maritime Museum** (www.baltomaritimemuseum.org) for the history of Baltimore seafaring commerce.

Federal Hill

American Visionary Art Museum (800 Key Highway, 410-244-1900, www.avam.org/). Walk 15 minutes from the convention center to the unique American Visionary Art Museum, home to the most bizarre, whimsical, and poignant collection of "outsider" art that you'll ever see. Many of the self-taught artists are farmers, rural inhabitants, or people



A view of the tug boats at Fell's Point. Credit: Baltimore Area Convention and Visitors Association

on the fringes of society, and they use paint as well as such everyday materials as matches, metal, or paper plates to create their vision. Along with the permanent collection, year-long exhibits have a central theme that is explored in six galleries. The building itself, described as an "architectural jewel," combines a historic industrial building with new construction and a central stairway of hand-cast metal. On the exterior of the building, a mosaic of hundreds of mirror, glass, and tile pieces covers an entire three-story wall, and there is a bright, multicolored wind-powered 55-foot whirligig in the courtyard, built by 76-year-old mechanic, farmer and visionary artist, Vollis Simpson. The museum also includes a sculpture barn and wildflower garden.

Federal Hill Historic Park (Warren Avenue and Key Highway). This grassy space is located across the Key Highway behind the Science Center, so it is close to the harbor activity. The site of many important events in Baltimore's history, Federal Hill got its name in 1788 when thousands of Baltimoreans marched from Fells Point to the Hill to celebrate Maryland's ratification of the U.S. Constitution. Later, an observatory was built on the hill so merchants could be on the lookout for the arrival of their ships, as Federal Hill, along with Fells Point, was a center of Baltimore's shipping trade through the 19th century.

The Federal Hill neighborhood offers a view of early Baltimore houses. Built in the 18th and 19th centuries, many have been beautifully restored. Some have elegant facades and others are quaint and charming, such as the compact two-story brick row houses that line the streets near **Cross Street Market**. The market has all types of local treats and produce, as well as a crowded beer and seafood venue. Federal Hill comes alive at night with its many bars, wide selection of restaurants and music blaring from the Funk Box, where the city mayor formerly played with his Celtic band, O'Malley's March.

Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine (Fort Avenue, www.nps.gov/fomc). The star-shaped fort is famous for its pivotal role in the defense of Baltimore in the War of 1812 and for the origin of the national anthem. Although British warships bombarded the fort for more than 24 hours on September 13, 1814, at dawn the huge American flag made by a local flagmaker, Mary Pickersgill, still waved over the fort. Seeing the flag, a young American lawyer, Francis Scott Key, who was watching from the deck of a truce ship where he was working on prisoner exchange, was inspired to write the poem that would become the *Star-Spangled Banner*. You can tour the living quarters within the fort, and cells for prisoners, see the many cannons, and walk the perimeter of the grounds for a great view of ships on the harbor.

Mount Vernon

Less than a mile north of the inner harbor on Charles Street is the cultural center of Mt. Vernon with libraries, museums, and beautiful historic townhomes clustered around the central park.

Washington Monument. Completed in 1829, this is the first monument to George Washington. It was designed by Robert Mills, who later built the Washington Monument in D.C. Climb the 228 spiraling steps for great views of the city.

The Walters Art Museum (600 N. Charles Street (www.walters.org), free admission

starts October 2006). The Walters collection spans 55 centuries of art, including Egyptian antiquities (e.g., a rare sarcophagus), Asian ceramics, exquisite illuminated manuscripts, ivory, Faberge eggs, and masterworks of old and modern paintings. William Walters, a wealthy railroad and liquor magnate, began collecting art in the 1800s, and he displayed these works for public viewing in his house on Mt. Vernon Place. His son Henry continued the eclectic collection and eventually left the vast holdings to Baltimore.

The Basilica of the Assumption (Cathedral and Mulberry Streets, www.baltimorebasilica.org/). The Basilica was built from 1806 to 1892 and was the first metropolitan cathedral. John Carroll, the first Catholic bishop and Archbishop of Baltimore, wanted a cathedral in the neo-classical American style, and Benjamin Henry Latrobe, who designed the capitol, volunteered his services. Thomas Jefferson's insistence on skylights for the capitol influenced Latrobe's plan for the Basilica's grand dome. The church, considered one of the finest examples of 19th-century architecture, is being fully restored and will re-open in November 2006.

Mount Vernon United Methodist Church (Corner of Charles and Mt. Vernon Place, www.mvpumc.org/). One of only three Gothic buildings in Baltimore, the high steeple and unique exterior walls of green serpentine add to its splendor. It was designed by Dixon and Carr and built in 1871. Interior pews are of handcarved walnut.

The Maryland Historical Society (201 W. Monument St., www.mdhs.org). The recently renovated and expanded Maryland Historical Society is the state's oldest cultural institution. Highlights of the museum's 5.4 million objects include: extensive genealogy indexes, rare Civil War and other photographs, slavery and plantation records, currency, and historical maps. In addition to the permanent exhibits at the Historical Society, there are ten featured exhibits each year. Also, there is a great gift store.

Johns Hopkins University (JHU)/ Northwest Baltimore

Baltimore Museum of Art (10 Art Museum Drive, www.artbma.org, free admission). Adjacent to John Hopkins University, the Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) has a spectacular collection of modern art contributed by two sisters, Claribel and Etta Cone, who traveled in Europe in the early 1900s and acquired works by Matisse, Picasso, Cezanne, Renoir, and others. Next spring an exhibit on the impressionist landscape paintings of Pissaro will be on display as well.

Homewood House Museum (3400 N. Charles Street, www.jhu.edu/historichouses). This 1801 National Historic Landmark, home to Charles Carroll Jr., provided the architectural vocabulary and name for Johns Hopkins University's recently renovated Homewood campus. Built on a Palladian-inspired five-part plan, Homewood is one of the nation's best surviving examples of federal period architecture and is renowned for its elegant proportions, fine workmanship, and extravagant details.

Evergreen House (4545 N. Charles Street, www.jhu.edu/evrgreen/, closed on Mondays). A few miles north of downtown Baltimore, the lovely wooded grounds of Evergreen House offers respite from the city's hustle and bustle. On the National Register of Historic Places, this Italianate mansion on 26 landscaped acres was the home of two generations of Baltimore's Garrett family of B&O Railroad fame (from 1878 to 1942). Today a museum owned by JHU, Evergreen's 48 opulent rooms contain more than 50,000 of the Garretts' diverse belongings, including post-Impressionist paintings, drawings by Degas and Picasso, Chinese porcelain, Japanese lacquerware, rare books, and one of the largest private collections of Tiffany glass. Tours are offered during visitor's hours.

Hampden

Visit the birthplace of John Waters for a taste of hometown funk, great shopping, and offbeat restaurants. The former modest mill community has become a haven for artists,

who live alongside the old-time blue-collar residents. Thirty-fourth Street is famous for its Christmas decorations and some are displayed year-round. Along "The Avenue," actually 36th Street, there are many unique shopping and dining opportunities. Look for the giant pink flamingo on the storefront to find **Café Hon**, a local tradition, which offers good basic fare, including the Hon burger and Hon bun, and also sells off-beat Baltimore souvenirs.

Druid Hill Park

Maryland Zoo in Baltimore (www.marylandzoo.org). Started in 1862 with a donation of four swans by a local citizen, the zoo is one of the oldest in the country and now has more than 1,500 birds, reptiles, and mammals.

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More Baltimore attractions

For additional places to visit while in Baltimore, please see the online version of this article on the ACRL Web site at www.acrl.org/c&rlnews.