

## 12 Unexpected History Trips

*From retro Palm Springs to Newport mansions, history is everywhere you look. Below are 12 ways to experience our geeky, gaudy, mystical, majestic, tough and tragic roots.*

### Washington D.C

Keep Watch



Susana Raab for The New York Times

An old lock keepers house.

Conceived by George Washington and built in the 1830s, the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal was a vital shipping lifeline for the region during the mid- to late-1800s before railroads eventually made it obsolete. Civil War-era houses where lock keepers and their families once lived line the 184-mile waterway, which stretches from [Washington](#) to the Appalachians. Originally there were 57 houses; today there are 26, most of which have been sitting empty for years. But now three of them have opened to the public for overnight stays, sort of like maritime Little Houses on the Prairie.



All three lockhouses have two bedrooms and sleep up to eight people. Historic photos, maps and furnishings help lend each of these Canal Quarters a distinct period feel:

**Lockhouse No. 22** near Gaithersburg, Md., is evocative of the late 1830s (\$70 a night), and **No. 49**, north of Williamsport, recalls the 1920s (\$85). But for anyone who likes a bit of running water and even air-conditioning, **Lockhouse No. 6**, just outside Washington, is the only option (neither of the others has indoor plumbing). There's also a stove and refrigerator but no TV. Instead, a box of jacks and marbles, a covered porch with rocking chairs, and a wildlife-watching guidebook serve as entertainment. The 1950s décor recalls the decade's canal preservation efforts, led by the Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas. Sleeping six, at \$100 a night it's a bargain for a place just three miles outside the city limits. The **C&O Canal Trust** (301-739-4200; [canaltrust.org](http://canaltrust.org)) handles registration.

— DAVID G. ALLAN