



» CATCH ALL THE SPORTING ACTION WITH AN ORIOLES HOME GAME AT CAMDEN YARDS

Howard County was the hunting and farming grounds of Native Americans until 1608 when Captain John Smith sailed up the nearby Patapsco River. In the 1700s, original Declaration of Independence signer Charles Carroll acquired 13,000 acres of farmland and forests and established an elaborate plantation home still lived in by his descendants. In 1772, the Ellicott family established a flour mill on Carroll's estate, which became one of the greatest milling and manufacturing centers in the East. In 1830, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad's first 13 miles of track connected the bustling port center of Baltimore to Ellicott Mills. Howard County also played a small but critical role in the Civil War when Union soldiers in the area delayed Confederate Jeb Stuart just long enough in a skirmish to render him too late to save General Lee from defeat at Gettysburg. Today, it's worthwhile to visit the B&O Railroad Museum in Ellicott City, the African Art Museum in Columbia or take an outing to the river falls at nearby Patapsco Valley or Patuxent River state parks.

Just half an hour from Columbia lies what the city locals lovingly and slurringly pronounce "Balimer." Baltimore has been inhabited by the spectral presence of several literary lights such as famed horror author Edgar Allan Poe, crusty newspaperman H.L. Mencken and movie directors from John Waters (*Hairspray*) to Barry Levinson (*Diner*). Let's not forget, either, Baltimore's blue-collar athletic heroes, from football's Johnny Unitas to baseball's Brooks Robinson and Cal Ripken, Jr.

Not far from Baltimore's beautifully renovated harbor and vibrant downtown is Fort McHenry. When U.S. forces bravely withstood a British bombardment for 25 hours at the fort during the War of 1812, the event



» THE BEST VIEW OF BALTIMORE MAY BE FROM A WINDING PARK TRAIL

inspired poet Francis Scott Key's unsingable national anthem, "The Star Spangled Banner." History buffs might also wish to visit the home of widow Mary Young Pickersgill, who sewed the flag flying over Fort McHenry. Don't-miss stops also include the Maryland Zoo with its flock of African black-footed penguins and the National Aquarium with 10,000 sea creatures swimming in fascinating habitats such as the Atlantic Coral Reef and the Rain Forest. The National Great Blacks in Wax Museum includes representations of Rosa Parks being dragged from the Montgomery, Alabama, bus; pioneering black athletes Joe Louis, Jackie Robinson and Jesse Owens; and political greats such as U.S. Army General and Secretary of State Colin Powell and Martin Luther King, Jr. Baseball aficionados will love the Babe Ruth Museum at 216 Emory Street where The Babe was born in 1895. In a happy co-

incidence, Columbia Triathlon finishers have the opportunity to see the modern-day Orioles play a night game at home following the race at the elegantly crafted, historically conscious Camden Yards downtown.

Gourmands and beer lovers must flock to the shining jewel of the 1980s Baltimore renovation, the Inner Harbor. Tidewater Grille, Charleston, Obrycki's, Pisces and Phillipps Harborplace all serve top-shelf cracked stone crab you can smash with wooden hammers over paper, add lemon juice and stuff your face before washing it all down with one of Baltimore's most beloved beers.

You likely won't have enough time to head south 35 miles to our nation's capital to visit the Smithsonian and see the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument. So catch Baltimore this time around, then enter Columbia Triathlon early next year to see D.C. in 2009. 🍷