

The Lure of Great Golf Near Luray Caverns

Shenandoah Valley Boasts One of the East Coast's Premier All-season Resorts

By Ken Mink



If you want beautiful scenery and immaculate golf courses when you lace up your golf shoes, it would be hard to find any better than the golf courses to be found in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia.

Located between the Blue Ridge Mountains and Allegheny Mountains, this bucolic valley is a golfer's dreams come true.

In mid-July 2017 our foursome visited four of the more than a dozen courses within a 20-mile

radius of Harrisonburg, the geographic center of the valley.

The most interesting contrasts we found were the two golf courses at the sprawling [Massanutten Resort](#), a year-round sports Mecca offering skiing, water park, horseback riding, tennis, mountain biking and hiking.

The Mountain Greens Course

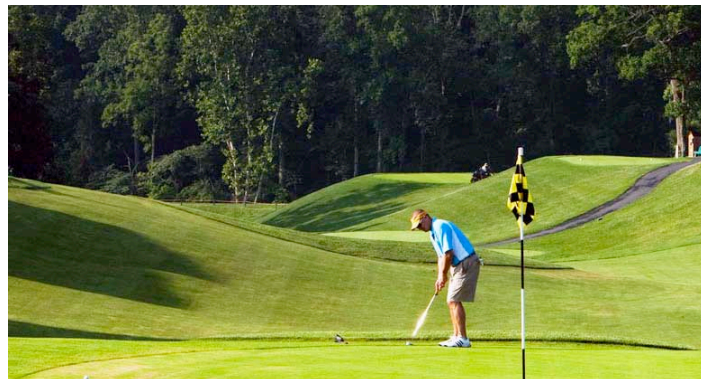
The **Mountain Greens Golf Course** is a challenge for golfers from any of its set of tees. For a low-handicapper this course can be a lot of fun. For high handicappers, be sure to bring plenty of balls.

The course offers some great views, but you have to play it a few times to get used to its nuances.

The course is in great shape, but several steeply terraced fairways, particularly on the front nine, can make golfers pull their hair out. Seemingly nice shots hit to the middle of the fairway more often than not roll into the woods.

Woodstone Meadows Course

But the **Woodstone Meadows** course is a world apart from the Mountain Greens course. It is located at the flatter base of Massanutten Mountain and offers golfers a chance to improve their handicap. The picturesque course measures



only about 4,500 yards from the shortest tees with nine par 3s – a real executive golf course par 65.

But it is a ton of fun to play, with birdie opportunities available at every hole.

Woodstone runs through a rather residential area in some parts but other parts offer some pretty good views and a small sense of isolation on the back nine. The first few holes play across the street on a small patch of land. The next few play around the condos. No. 17 was actually very picturesque with condos on the right and a pond and fountain on the left.

The fairways and greens are immaculate.

Both courses offer reasonable green fees rates, with a driving range and afternoon twilight rates.

Massanutten Resort Amenities

With fantastic mountain vistas all around, **Massanutten Resort** features 6,000 acres of mountain experiences. Unique in both its size, variety of amenities, and outstanding condo and hotel accommodations, ranging from about \$100 to \$400 per night. Massanutten is generally regarded as one of the premier all-seasons resort destinations on the East Coast.

The resort offers many unique amenities including the Indoor/Outdoor Water Park, Ski and Adventure Park area, farm-to-table dining experiences, shopping and recreation options, along with a day spa.

Information on the resort and golf courses can be found at www.massresort.com.

Quality Golf Nearby

Just down the road from Massanutten is the [Lakeview Golf Course](http://www.lakeviewgolf.net), one of the most popular in the valley.

Featuring 27 holes, the course when we visited was in great shape, with fairways and greens rolling true and fair.

Five sets of tees ranging from about 6,600 yards to 4,600 yards offer golfers of all skill levels a shot at reaching a decent score.



The rolling hills landscape provides some beautiful views of the nearby mountain ranges. For more Lakeview info: www.lakeviewgolf.net.

A well-stocked clubhouse includes light dining and a driving range is nearby.

At nearby Luray is the Caverns Golf Course, one of the most beautiful courses in Virginia.

Located only a handful of miles from the renown Luray Caverns (see separate story), this rolling hills course has some of the widest and well-maintained fairways to be found anywhere.

Starting with its elevated signature hole par 5, golfers are presented postcard after postcard views as they traverse this magnificent 18-hole layout.

Nestled in the shadows of the Blue Ridge Mountains overlooking the fabled Shenandoah River, this unique setting creates one of the most scenic golf opportunities in the Mid-Atlantic region. High above the banks of this storied river, these 6,499 yards of gently rolling fairways seem to touch the mountain foothills. Amid vistas of nearby farmlands, large tees and greens complement this 18 hole, par 72 course.

The Famous Cave Hole



The course is famous for its Cave Hole, where balls accidentally reaching this crevice are never seen again. The underground marvels of **Luray Caverns** make it one of the great wonders of the world. One wonders what happens to a golf ball that goes down a cave opening in the middle of the par-5 first fairway at [Caverns Country Club](http://www.cavernscountryclub.com).

“We are the only course in America with such a feature,” says John Shaffer, director

of public relations for Luray Caverns and Caverns Country Club. “The “karst” topography of the immediate area (hence the proximity of Luray Caverns) makes the probability of cave openings a near certainty on this large tract of land on the limestone bluffs of the Shenandoah River.

Superintendent Putt Lancaster can list at least seven others that are in the near rough and can easily come into play.

“Back in the early days, we made it a point to call the USGA to find out what would happen if your ball rolled into a cave knowing we had one in play. So we took the appropriate measures and applied for an official ruling. That's why you are allowed a free drop if your ball goes down the hole.”

What is known is that with the free drop rule there are no complaints. If your ball rolls into it, don't go looking for it in Luray Caverns. This opening leads to a small unexcavated cavern. Still, the cave opening does conjure up some interesting comments.

“On our first visit in 1986, we had all heard about this ball catching the cave opening on No. 1,” says Larry Johnson, a former EEO specialist with the FBI who at one point had arranged 25 consecutive summer outings to Caverns Country Club as the golf

Luray Caverns Golf

Yardage/Rating/Slope - Blue tees: 6499, 71.2, 117; White tees: 6307, 69.8, 115; Red tees: 5499, 72.4, 120. Greens Fees: \$30 Monday-Thursday; \$40 Friday-Sunday and holidays; Golf cart rental: \$15/18 holes. Discounted single day and multi-day Tournament packages seasonally. For more, visit <http://www.cavernscountryclub.com>

chairman for activity promotions at the FBI. “It was the first time I had ever seen everybody try not to hit the ball long and down the middle of the fairway.”

Visit Luray Caverns

A must while here is the adventure of Luray Caverns, the largest and most popular caverns in Eastern America. Golf packages beginning with 3 days and 2 nights from \$249 U.S. (including tax) per person provide unlimited golf, food and lodging.

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