

# Memorial Day weekend 2019: 10 best places to go in the US

(CNN) — Memorial Day weekend 2019 is quickly coming upon us. After we get over the shock that that summer travel season is already here, we need to start making plans.

This list can help you get started.

Here are the 10 of the best Memorial Day destinations around the USA for 2019. They are in alphabetical order, and we're presenting opportunities in each place to honor those who gave their lives in service to their country along with other activities:

## Charleston, South Carolina

South Carolina's charming port city, famed for its food scene and Southern hospitality, has also played a key role in wars from the American Revolution to more modern times.

On Memorial Day, you can dedicate an American flag to your own personal hero at the Charleston Field of Honor, held 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (all times are local). Proceeds go to help local veterans groups. You'll find the field at Marion Square in downtown. (*329 Meeting St., Charleston, SC 29403*)

Check out cannons and other artifacts from the American Revolution at Fort Moultrie, which is on nearby Sullivan's Island. Late May often provides some the best weather of the year to enjoy the beach, too. (*1214 Middle St, Sullivan's Island, SC 294820*).

Other nearby beach options include Isle of Palms (just down the road from Sullivan's) and Folly Beach.

If you have cultural pursuits in mind, then catch Piccolo Spoleto, which starts Memorial Day weekend and continues until June 9. It's a more casual companion to the Spoleto Festival USA -- with some of the programs for free.

## Columbus, Ohio

It would be hard to find a more fitting place for Memorial Day than Columbus. Ohio's largest city is home to the new National Veterans Memorial and Museum. Here, the emphasis is on the people who served more than the conflicts they were in.

Entry is free for veterans, Gold Star families and active duty service members. *(300 W Broad St, Columbus, OH 43215; +1 614 362 2800)*

Two more suggestions for capital times in the capital city:

-- The Columbus Asian Festival runs Saturday, May 25, to Sunday, May 26. Kick off summer with food, dance, music and sports with Columbus' various Asian populations. *(Franklin Park, 1755 E. Broad St., Columbus, OH 43203)*

-- While you're there, you may wish to check out the Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens. Take in some lovely greenery, enjoy a butterfly exhibit or watch glass-blowing demonstrations. *(1777 E. Broad Street Columbus, OH 43203; +1 614 715 8000)*

## **Indianapolis, Indiana**

You'll find one of the most impressive conglomerations of veteran-focused monuments, statues and fountains in the entire USA at the Indiana War Memorials. A highlight is the Indiana War Memorial Museum.

Don't miss the Shine Room on the upper level; it's an unforgettable salute to the sacrifices of those who fought in World War I. It's usually closed on national and state holidays, but it opens for Memorial Day and Veterans Day. *(55 E Michigan St, Indianapolis, IN 46204; +1 317-232-7615)*

If speed is what you need, there's the Indianapolis 500 on Sunday, May 26. Gates open at 6 a.m., and the race starts at 12:45 p.m.

If you can't make the race, you might want to attend the Legends Day on Saturday, May 25, which includes autograph sessions with former and current drivers. *(Indianapolis Motor Speedway, 4790 W 16th St, Indianapolis, IN 46222)*

Finally, for a slower pace than the Indy 500, the city's three-mile-loop Canal Walk is a great place to mix and mingle, grab a bite to eat and take gondola rides. *(801 W. Washington St., Indianapolis, IN 46204; +1 317 233 2434)*

## **Nantucket, Massachusetts**

Nantucket is a classic New England beach getaway. The island is about 30 miles south of Cape Cod and can be reached by ferry or airplanes.

Nantucket Visitor Services says the island's annual holiday parade will start at 1 p.m. local time Sunday, May 26, at Nantucket Legion Hall (*21 Washington Street*) and end at Prospect Hill Cemetery (*Hummock Pond Road*).

The big weekend event in these parts is the Figawi Race, which started back in 1972 as a challenge between a few friends to see who could sail from Hyannis Harbor to Nantucket harbor the fastest. It's now a full-on regatta and is a major social event. (*See website or call +1 508 221 6891 for details on the Saturday, May 25, race*)

In keeping with the island and oceanic themes, you may want to stop in and check out the Whaling Museum, where a 46-foot-long sperm whale skeleton hangs from the ceiling. (*13 Broad St, Nantucket, MA 02554; +1 508 2281894*)

The Atlantic is still mighty cold in these parts in late May, but the sun and beaches can get plenty warm. Nantucket.net can give you the details on various beaches for fun and relaxation to kick off your summer season.

## **Nashville, Tennessee**

Country music's hometown also has places where you can reflect on the nation's history.

A good place to start is the World War II Memorial on the grounds of the Bicentennial Capitol Mall. Its main feature is an eight-ton marble globe that sits in flowing water so that you're actually able to turn it with your own hands.

The mall has plenty of other things to see, and it's easy to tour the nearby Capitol grounds. (*600 James Robertson Parkway, Nashville, TN 37243; +1 615 741 5280*)

About 30 minutes away by car from downtown Nashville, you can get a glimpse into the life and times of Andrew Jackson, one of the nation's most colorful (and controversial) presidents, at The Hermitage. His former home has been well-preserved, and grounds are gorgeous. (*4580 Rachel's Lane Nashville, TN 37076; +1 615 889 2941*)

One of the top events in the city will be the Nashville Boogie, celebrating mid-century music, culture, fashion, cars and more from Thursday, May 23, to Sunday, May 26. An eclectic line-up of musicians for 2019 include the B-52's, Wanda Jackson and Los Straitjackets. The car show is Friday, May 24, and Saturday, May 25.

*(The music portion of the fun will be at Gaylord Opryland Resort, 2800 Opryland Dr, Nashville, TN 37214; the car show will be behind the nearby Nashville Palace at 2611 McGavock Pike, Nashville, TN 37214)*

## **Oklahoma City, Oklahoma**

Oklahoma City has what's considered one of the best military museums in the country, the 45th Division Museum.

It has an annual Memorial Day ceremony at 10 a.m. that has included the firing of a WWII anti-tank gun. Don't miss the Reaves weapons collection at the museum. *(2145 NE 36th St, Oklahoma City, OK 73111; +1 405 424 5313)*

For a look at history from another angle, don't miss the superb National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, which holds Native American objects, old cowboy gear and much more. The museum will host its annual Chuck Wagon Festival on Saturday, May 25, and Sunday, May 26. *(1700 NE 63rd St, Oklahoma City, OK 73111; +1 405 478 2250)*

Oklahoma is far away from any ocean, but it has plenty of lakes where you play.

For starters, consider Lake Hefner, where walkers, runners and bicyclists line the shores and sailboats and kite-surfers rule the water. *(The lake is about 15 minutes west of the Heritage Museum by car and an easy reach from downtown)*

## **Palm Springs, California**

Memorial Day weekend launches the summer tourist seasons in most places in the USA. But here in the Southern California desert, it tends to wrap things up before four solid months of average daily highs above 100 Fahrenheit (38 Celsius).

You can pay your respects to the fallen at the annual Memorial Day Flower Drop & Air Fair at the Palm Springs Air Museum. More than 3,000 red and white carnations are to be dropped from a B-25 Mitchell bomber at 1 p.m., but various flight exhibitions and activities are scheduled all day long. *(745 North Gene Autry Trail, Palm Springs, CA 92262; + 1 760 778 6262)*

This is also a good chance to check out the natural wonders at nearby but sprawling Joshua Tree National Park, where two types of deserts meet. *(See website for entrances; + 1 760 367 5500)*

If it's too hot for a desert hike, take the dramatic Palm Springs Aerial Tramway high up into the mountains for an extreme cooling off (you'll likely need a jacket) and some memorable views of the desert valley. *(1 Tram Way, Palm Springs, CA 92262; + 1 888 515 TRAM)*

## **Pensacola and environs, Florida**

The Florida panhandle is famous for its stunning white-sand beaches and alluring turquoise water of the Gulf of Mexico. Pensacola and environs are no exception.

There's a big military presence here, and one way to honor the fallen is a visit to the National Naval Aviation Museum, which happens to be the largest of its type in the world. You can see more than 150 restored aircraft, including the last combat F-14D Tomcat. You

can also enjoy flight simulators and a giant screen theater among other attractions. (*1878 S Blue Angel Pkwy, Pensacola, FL 32508; +1 800 327 5002*)

Memorial Day Pensacola Beach Pride is held over the holiday weekend at Pensacola Beach. It starts with a kickoff party on Thursday, May 23, and the fun doesn't end until Sunday, May 26.

If big crowds, DJs, dancing and partying aren't your style, you may want to escape to a nearby beach such as Perdido Key, the westernmost point of Florida -- drive any farther west and you'll find yourself at the lovely beaches of Alabama's coast. (*Perdido Key State Park, 15301 Perdido Key Dr, Pensacola, FL 32507; +1 850 492 1595*)

## **Seattle, Washington**

A short ferry ride away from Seattle is lovely Whidbey Island in Puget Sound, and it's a perfect spot for a time of reflection.

A Memorial Day Service of Remembrance is set from 10 a.m. to noon Monday, May 27, at Maple Leaf Cemetery in Oak Harbor on the northern part of the island. The Oak Harbor High School Chorus and Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps will have presentations. (*1961 W Cemetery Road, Oak Harbor, WA 98277*)

In between Whidbey and Seattle, check out the Flying Heritage & Combat Armor Museum, which opens from Memorial Day to Labor Day. You can see weaponry from around the world, including Germany and even Australia, while also learning about the causes of conflict. (*3407 109th St SW, Everett, WA 98204; +1 877 342 3404*)

Back in Seattle proper, this is the weekend for the Northwest FolkLife Festival, where you can experience traditions of various ethnic groups living in the Northwest. From Friday, May 24, to Sunday, May 27, you'll find a little bit of everything here: music from bluegrass to reggae; dance styles from Nordic to Indian; art exhibits, theater and more. (*Seattle Center, 305 Harrison St, Seattle, WA 98109*)

Finally, it's always a good time to visit Seattle's beloved Pike Place Market. At 9:30 p.m. Saturday, May 26, you can enjoy cabaret and burlesque there. (*Pike Place Market, Seattle, WA 98101; +1 206 682 7453*)

## **Washington, D.C.**

No "best places" list for Memorial Day weekend is complete without the nation's capital. Here are few of the highlights among many excellent offerings:

-- National Memorial Day Concert: The right music can really put this holiday into perspective. The annual concert starts at 8 p.m. ET Sunday, May 26. If you can't be there in person on the west lawn of the US Capitol, you can watch it on PBS. 2019 appearances will include

Patti LaBelle, retired Gen. Colin Powell, National Symphony Orchestra and performance groups from the military branches.

-- National Memorial Day Parade: It starts at 2 p.m. Monday, May 27, along Constitution Avenue, which runs alongside the National Mall. 2019 grand marshals will be actor Gary Sinise, who has a foundation for veterans, and the heroes of D-Day, survivors who stormed Normandy 75 years ago to liberate France from the Nazis.

-- Arlington Cemetery: Some of the most hallowed ground in the United States is at Arlington Cemetery in Virginia. Roughly 5,000 people a year attend the Memorial Day remembrance ceremony at the Memorial Amphitheater. It starts at 11 a.m. be prepared for large crowds over the long holiday weekend. (*Arlington National Cemetery, 214 McNair Road, Arlington, VA 22211; +1 877 907 8585*)

-- National Mall Memorials: The National Mall contains memorials to the people who served in World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. See the website for details and information on other attractions at the mall.

<https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/memorial-day-weekend-2019/index.html>