



Presidential Retreats: Where the Presidents Went and Why They Went There

Peter Hannaford

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A fascinating history of U.S. presidential vacation spots—collected for the first time in one guide that covers everything from Mount Vernon to Kennebunkport to Camp David.

Where do you go to relax when you're the leader of the free world?

Even the president needs to get away from it all sometimes. From George Washington to Barack Obama, each of our presidents has sought solace from the tightly structured daily routines of the White House. As Ronald Reagan once said of his California ranch, "I do some of my best thinking there." Peter Hannaford takes readers on a fascinating armchair vacation with each of our leaders, offering unique historical context for the why and the where of their chosen retreats.

Which president asked visiting foreign dignitaries to send him seeds to plant at his family home? Who called his vacation property "Sherwood Forest" because it was "a good place for an outlaw"? Which adventure-loving Commander-in-Chief set up a Summer White House in New York every year? Who liked to cruise aboard the presidential yacht when faced with momentous wartime decisions? Who polled the American people to help him decide where to vacation?

Presidential Retreats explores a side of the American presidency that we don't often see—the downtime—as it offers an intriguing glimpse at the evolution of leisure time in this country.

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