

RoadTrip

Jump Into Bridge Day in West Virginia

WHERE: Fayetteville, W.Va.

WHY: Bridge-ho, gorgeous gorges and get-stuffed pizza.

HOW FAR: About five miles from start to finish, and about 300 miles from Washington.

On Saturday, pigs will fly in Fayetteville.

During Bridge Day, the world's largest BASE jumping event, men and women dressed as swine and other characters will free-fall and parachute from the New River Gorge Bridge. These daredevils are far from chicken.

Costumes aren't required for this adrenaline rush, but courage is. BASE is an acronym for building, antenna, span and earth, the platforms the athletes use as launching pads. The extreme activity was galvanized by cinematographer Carl Boenish, who in 1978 filmed jumpers from the 3,000-foot-tall El Capitan rock formation in Yosemite National Park for "National Geographic Explorer." The sport quickly caught on.

The Fayetteville event started two years later, with five parachutists. This year, nearly 200,000 spectators are expected to watch 450 jumpers from more than a dozen coun-

tries leap from the 876-foot-high bridge, the second-tallest in the country. (On any other day of the year, it's illegal to jump off the bridge.) In addition, rappelling teams will dangle from the span, a zip line will hurl folks from the bridge to the banks, and 200 local vendors will set up crafts, food stands and climbing walls.

For the main event, adventurers drop like stones for up to five seconds before releasing their parachutes and landing safely in the New River Gorge. Many will do repeat performances, for an expected total of more than 800 jumps. "When you see it," says organizer Cindy Dragan, "your heart jumps into your throat."

— Ben Chapman

Bridge Day is Saturday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., at the New River Gorge Bridge, on U.S. Route 19 at the New River Gorge in Fayetteville, W.Va. 800-927-0263. www.officialbridgeday.com. Free. \$2 shuttle rides from free parking lots.

Road Trip maps are available at www.washingtonpost.com/roadtrip, as are addresses and hours of operation. (Be sure to check before you go.) Have an idea for a trip? E-mail roadtrip@washpost.com.



At last year's Bridge Day, BASE jumpers soar through the air after leaping off the **New River Gorge Bridge**, which spans 3,030 feet.

Get in gear at **Waterstone Outdoors**, which carries sporting goods for climbers, paddlers, backpackers and chic urban adventurers.

Learn about one of the continent's oldest rivers at the New River Gorge's **Canyon Rim Visitor Center**, which has exhibits, a video and killer water views.

Ride the bumps along gorge trails on a mountain bike rented from the **Marathon Bicycle Co.**

Learn the ropes with **Hard Rock Climbing Services**, which instructs climbers of all levels on nearby limestone faces.

Studio B Gallery fills its rooms with photographs, jewelry and paintings by local artists, in addition to more than 200 area wines and brews.

Drinking coffee is almost a religious experience at **Cathedral Cafe**, a converted church complete with soaring ceilings and stained-glass windows.

Rivermen offers whitewater rafting excursions from tame to terrifying on the New River.

BASE jumpers boast about their free falls over beers at **Elliott's Whitewater Bar & Grill**.



Pies & Pints goes beyond pepperoni with such nontraditional toppings as gorgonzola and grapes. Can't settle on one pie? Try the all-you-can-eat buffet on Tuesday evenings.

Fly high with **Wild Blue Adventure** pilot Chris Kappler and his 1940 Boeing Stearman open-cockpit biplane.

Fayetteville
LAUREL CREEK ROAD
LAUREL ST.
WHITLOCK RD.
HINKLE ROAD
NICKELVILLE ROAD
COURT STREET
HIGH ST.
LIVELY STREET
WESBMAN AVE.
MAPLE AVENUE
FAYETTE AVE.



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MAP BY JEROME COOKSON FOR THE WASHINGTON POST; BRIDGE DAY PHOTO BY PRESTON KERES — THE WASHINGTON POST; OTHER PHOTOS BY BEN CHAPMAN FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Pop Culture

Pac-Man Inspires Yellow Fever



The original video game icon (sorry, Super Mario!) was little more than a yellow circle, opening and closing what was ostensibly a mouth and eating, well, smaller circles. Now Pac-Man, which debuted in 1980, is finding new small-screen fame online. Perhaps it is his improbably simple design that makes so many amateur filmmakers keen on challenging themselves with live-action versions of his "adventures." YouTube is simply awash in Pac-Man movies, several of them sharing the title "Pac-Man: The Movie." If you need a power-pellet fix, here's a rundown of some of the more interesting Pac-Vids. (For the links, visit www.washingtonpost.com/popculture.)



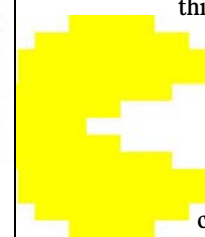
The action movie: This faux trailer gets the award for best production values. Deciding against a more literal translation of the character, the filmmakers simply put their vigilante hero in a yellow motorcycle helmet as he defends his city from an onslaught of murderous ghosts (imagine the same sort of ragged mop-head ghosts from the video game, only fanged and rabid). Best scene: While in pursuit of a ghost, Pac-Man stops mid-stride to pick two cherries off the ground and take a bite.

The espionage thriller: This is an endearingly low-budget spy flick that features a solitary ghost chasing a traditional pie-shaped Pac-Man around town (both are portrayed by actors in flimsy costumes). Strangely, in the end, the ghost ends up being pushed off the roof of a parking garage. Best scene: As villain chases hero past a restaurant mascot in a giant milkshake costume, the pursuit is temporarily put on hold so all three can dance to Kelis's "Milkshake."

The music video: British band the Go! Team dramatizes its song "Junior Kickstart" by having its members chase one another through the streets of New York (in full Ms. Pac-Man and ghost costumes, of course). Best scene: Even while running for her life, Ms. Pac-Man can't resist stopping to get her caricature sketched by a street artist in Central Park.

The bizarre Japanese show: Swiped from Japanese television, this clip shows costumed players running a true-to-the-source-material Pac-Man maze. The whole ordeal has that typically inscrutable Japanese game show feel. Best scene: When the ghosts corner Pac-Man, they beat him to the ground with big foam sticks.

The horror spoof: In an imaginative POV switch, this story is told from the perspective of the ghosts (actors with colored garbage bags over their heads). Inky, Dinky, Pinky, Blinky and Clyde are trapped in a maze with a giant carnivorous spheroid stalking them. Best line: "Dinky's dead. He's not coming back."



— Christopher Healy