**Forage & Feast: A Weekend Exploring Virginia’s Northern Neck**

Join All Over the Map and The Wild Life for a three-day workshop and tour of Virginia’s Northern Neck on the Rappahannock River. This small group intensive features hands-on lectures, demonstrations, forays and workshops learning about, working with and tasting wild foods. You’ll also discover some gems of the Northern Neck, experiencing crabbing, local farm stands, wineries and time on the water, whether fishing from the dock, paddleboarding or simply enjoying the sunset views from our riverfront location.

Thursday, August 11: Evening arrival. Enjoy a welcome spread of seasonally inspired hors d’oeuvres and drinks, meeting your hosts and fellow guests while getting an orientation to the weekend and region.

Friday, August 12:

Continental breakfast

1030am start: After breakfast, we’ll dive in with an introduction to foraging, including safety & ethics, basics of plant and fungi identification, and tools to assist with your learning. We’ll do a “weed walk” around the premises to give you an idea of all the common wild edibles underfoot in a domesticated setting, including some goodies that may end up in our weekend meals. We’ll also have a look at your host’s garden and talk about alternative edible parts to extend the bounty of a seasonal garden.

We’ll next caravan to a beautiful private wooded location to hunt for wild edibles, with choice wild edibles such as chanterelles likely though never guaranteed. We will stop to talk about whatever we find en route, be it deadly destroying angels or delectable chicken of the woods, to get field application of the morning’s ID lesson.

Lunch will be either a farm to table picnic or an outing to a local delicatessen.

In the afternoon, participants can choose from a few options: wine tasting at a local winery with live music and food truck noshes, or a return to our base camp to enjoy time on the water, fishing on the dock, paddleboarding or just relaxing in a hammock.

Evening: We will enjoy a dinner out tonight at local seafood restaurant, which features fresh ingredients from local farms and fishers, such as rockfish, catfish, oysters and more. (Vegan/vegetarian options also available.)

Saturday, August 13:

After an early morning wakeup call and quick breakfast, we’ll escort a young and upcoming waterman at the crack of dawn to check his crabpots and learn about the life of a crabber. (Those who prefer to sleep in can do so!)

Upon our return, we will set out for another foray on private land. You’ll get a deeper dive into key identifying features of some of the most common and sought after edibles of the season and the coming one, including discussion of poisonous lookalikes.

After the morning foray, we will stop off at a local farm stand where you can shop for local products and while your hosts pick up goodies for lunch (provided) back at the homestead. We will set up spore prints of mushrooms found in the morning to talk about this important aspect of mushroom identification.

After lunch, we’ll have an optional mushroom cultivation workshop taught by a member of the Mycological Association of Washingto. You’ll learn a tried and true method that can be applied to many common culinary species, and go home with an oyster mushroom grow kit of your own. Guests who opt out will have a few free hour to relax (napping suggested after our early morning!)

In late afternoon, we’ll have a wild food processing techniques workshop and demo to go over some quick, easy ways you can conserve the bounty of your foraging finds and garden harvest, including tincturing, infusions, dehydrating, syrups, etc.

Dinner (optional, additional cost) will be an extravagant 12-course menu developed by chef and forager Iulian Fortu of X Foods. The meal will feature local seafood & other delicacies from the region, while incorporating foraged finds from our time together, accompanied by foraged cocktails. For those who choose not to partake, we are happy to make dinner recommendations based on your food preferences.

Sunday August 14:

As our final activity together, we will help build a native plant garden on a local community college campus in appreciation of the lands that has sustained our weekend together. After playing in the dirt, we will have a look at the arboretum on campus, followed by a walk through a nature trail behind campus, led by an ecologist with the Virginia Department of Transportation, who will talk about local species of trees, plants and wildflowers underfoot, as well as a trail peppered with magical wood carvings by a local carver. Should we be lucky enough to find some good wild edibles, participants can keep what they find to take home.

We will return for a final lunch, a wild mushroom pizza featuring fungi foraged during our time together.

About your Hosts, Chefs & Instructors:

[April Thompson](http://aprilwrites.com/news-and-events/) (foraging instructor and foray leader): April is a Washington, DC-based writer, gardener, foodie, and forager. Working as a freelance writer for more than 20 years, April has covered food, travel, sustainability, gardening, foraging, and other subjects for dozens of publications, including her ongoing column in [Natural Awakenings magazine](http://naturalawakenings.com/). She has taught workshops on foraging, fighting food waste, and related topics for Knowledge Commons DC, Rooting DC, AirBNB Experiences and other organizations. She is a founding member of the Bruce Monroe Community Garden, a board member of the Mycological Association of Washington, and an alum of the UDC Master Gardener program. She is licensed to sell wild foraged mushrooms in several states via a wild mushroom certification overseen by Mushroom Mountain.

Paige Conner Totaro (host): **Paige** is a [freelance writer focusing on food, culture, and family experiential travel](https://www.alloverthemap.net/about/paige-conner-totaros-portfolio/). Her website, All Over the Map, began as a travel journal when she took an 11-month trip around the world with her husband and twin daughters, visiting 28 countries along the way. She now helps others plan great vacations as a travel planner at [~~All Over the Map Travel~~](http://www.alloverthemap.travel/), and tour organizer at [Unquote Travel](http://unquotetravel.com/). Paige grew up exploring the Northern Neck region with her family; Paige, her mother and her sister all now have homes in the region, where Paige has now made her full-time home.

Iulian Fortu (chef for optional group dinner): Iulian is a chef and owner of foraging company Arcadia Venture, with a focus on wild mushrooms and plants of the Mid-Atlantic. Iulian has a degree in Food Business Management from the Culinary Institute of America. While a student he worked at the world acclaimed Noma restaurant in Copenhagen, Denmark, where he acquired an in-depth knowledge of indigenous ingredients and unique methods of food preparation. Concurrent with the last four months of his culinary degree, he spent time at the Puglia Culinary Centre in southern Italy learning and preparing foods from every Italian region, while undertook various educational trips throughout the Mediterranean to strengthen his culinary and foraging skills and worked at Ristorante Peppe Zullo, a biodynamic farm and restaurant in the mountains of Puglia.