



## Five of the Best Leaf-Peeping Destinations in the U.S. Where (and When) to See Fall Colors

(July 1, 2024) In the midst of record-breaking temperatures in the United States, the team at MBPR is cooling off (at least in our heads) by rounding up some fantastic places to see the foliage this fall. The destinations we represent expect fall foliage anywhere from mid-September to late October, so if you're thinking about embarking on a progressive road trip to catch Mother Nature's colorful show, we've got you covered. Read on for more details.



*Enjoy stunning displays of fall foliage from the grounds of The Otesaga Resort Hotel.  
Photo Credit: Otesaga Resort Hotel*

### **Mid-September to Mid-October: [Cooperstown, New York](#) and [The Otesaga Resort Hotel](#)**

The village of Cooperstown is tucked in the foothills of the Northern Catskill Mountains of New York, and it takes the top spot for earliest views of fall foliage in our roundup. The ideal home base for a visit to Cooperstown – which is nicknamed “America’s Most Perfect Village” – is [The Otesaga Resort Hotel](#). Situated on the southern shore of Otsego Lake, the hotel offers unmatched views of the water and surrounding hills. Leaf-peeping from the famed Veranda is a must, but resort guests can also enjoy such favorite activities as a round of golf at the award-winning [Leatherstocking Golf Course](#) or a photography tour of the property. Instead of driving around Cooperstown, guests can rent the hotel’s bikes and peddle around the village to take in the scenery. Favorite cultural stops

in town include The Farmers' Museum, The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, and Fenimore Art Museum.

**In Cooperstown, here's a sampling of tree species paired with expected color transformation:**

*Ash (bright yellow), Pin Oak (russet-red to bright crimson), Red Maple (red color that transitions from yellow to orange), Shag Bark Hickory (rich yellows to golden browns), Sugar Maple (yellow to red), White Oak (brick red to scarlet color) and Willow (bright green to yellow).*

Fun Fact: The maple trees in this region boast beautiful leaves AND their wood is ideal for making baseball bats!



*Take a self-guided driving tour of Green Ridge State Forest this fall.*

*Photo Credit: MDMountainside.com*

**Early October: [Allegany County, "The Mountain Side of Maryland"](#)**

Mother Nature is the star of the show on the Mountain Side of Maryland. With nearly 70,000 acres of public land in Allegany County, the ways in which leaf-peepers can experience the great outdoors on the mountainside are limitless. Located in the "ridge and valley" region of the oldest mountain range in the U.S. – the Appalachian Mountains – Allegany County is a great destination for hiking and biking. Local outfitter [WheezUp Adventures](#) offers "The Big Deal" ride, which traverses the picturesque landscapes of the Appalachian Mountains on the Great Allegheny Passage (GAP). Along the carefully curated 25-mile downhill route, cyclists will see lush vistas, charming towns and historic landmarks. More fantastic views of fall foliage await visitors on a self-guided driving tour of [Green Ridge State Forest](#). In addition to outdoor recreation opportunities, Rocky Gap State Park (which is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year) offers plenty of options for overnight guests, including a stay at [Rocky Gap Casino, Resort & Golf](#).

**In Allegany County, here's a sampling of tree species paired with expected color transformation:**

*Leaf-peepers can see more than 100 common tree varieties and a rainbow of changing colors in the fall, including American/European Large (yellow), Sassafras (orange/yellow), Scarlet Oak (vibrant red), Speckled Alder (yellow/brown) and Yellow Birch (yellow).*



*A road trip to Shenandoah County, Virginia, in the fall doesn't disappoint.  
Photo Credit: Shenandoah County Tourism*

### **Early to Mid-October: [Shenandoah County](#)**

Shenandoah County, Virginia, is a haven for foodies, art lovers, outdoor enthusiasts ... and leaf-peepers. With more than 26% of the county covered in National and State Forest and 178 miles of trails ready to be explored, it's hard to feature just a few experiences. (In fact, it's so difficult, we're dedicating another fall-themed release to Shenandoah County in the coming weeks.) A few of the best spots for viewing fall foliage in the destination include [Buzzard Rock](#) and [Big Schloss](#). Located east of Fort Valley, Buzzard Rock is a relatively easy four-mile hike with spectacular vistas from the namesake rock. Big Schloss often tops the destination's list of best hikes in the Shenandoah Valley for its unique vantage point of the Valley from rock outcrops along the Virginia/West Virginia border. A guided horseback ride through the George Washington National Forest is also a favorite way to take in the trails and fall leaves. A unique lodging option here that also provides spectacular views of fall foliage is [Bear Lodge](#), located in Basye.

### **In Shenandoah County, here's a sampling of tree species paired with expected color transformation:**

*Birch (yellow), Black Gum (yellow to orange and red), Norway Maple (yellow), Red Maple (red), Red Oak (red to scarlet red), Sugar Maple (orange) and White Oak (yellow to brown).*



There are more than 600 total species with more than 1,500 tree varieties to see in Bowling Green, Kentucky.  
Photo Credit: VisitBGKY

#### **Mid- to Late October: [Bowling Green, Kentucky](#)**

Bowling Green is well known as the home to Corvette, but Kentucky's third-largest city is also gearing up for fantastic fall experiences. Within [Baker Arboretum](#), spectators can enjoy 115 acres of native Kentucky foliage, including several from the Threatened Species list. Visitors to the destination can also enjoy a stop at local favorite [Chaney's Dairy Barn](#) to enjoy the iconic six-acre corn maze, which has been a staple in the community for more than 20 years. [Mammoth Cave National Park](#), which boasts the world's longest cave system, also features brilliant fall foliage across more than 400 acres. Overnight guests of [Mammoth Cave Lodge](#) can marvel at the leaves and colors from the front door of their comfortable and rustic accommodations.

#### **In Bowling Green, here's a sampling of tree species paired with expected color transformation:**

*Conifer (older interior needles turn yellow, while needles further out in the canopy and tips of branches remain vivid green), Japanese Maple (green to scarlet red) and Eastern Native (native to Kentucky and turns from bright green to bright yellow).*



There are plenty of beautiful views to take in along the fall foliage driving tours in Branson.  
Photo Credit: Explore Branson

### **Mid- to Late October: [Branson, Missouri](#)**

Well known as an entertainment destination, Branson, Missouri, also offers plenty of adventure and family fun when it comes to seasonal experiences ... and fall is no exception. [Harvest Festival at Silver Dollar City](#) features thousands of illuminated pumpkins, visiting craftsmen from across the nation, a Cowboy Emporium, rides operating into the night and incredible food. This year's Harvest Festival runs from September 13 through October 26. For an aerial view of the destination, [Branson Helicopter Tours](#) offers fall foliage tours over Branson and the surrounding Ozarks. Home to 10,000 acres of rugged Ozarks landscape for walking, biking, horseback riding and tram tours, a visit to nearby [Dogwood Canyon Nature Park](#) provides visitors with an opportunity to learn about conservation through up-close interactions with nature. A stay at Branson's newest boutique hotel, [The Ozarker Lodge](#), allows guests to venture out into the natural beauty of the destination during their stay. The Lodge's "[Sip & Savor Fall](#)" package includes 10% off stays during select days and a complimentary s'mores kit for use at the property's firepits.

### **In Branson, here's a sampling of tree species paired with expected color transformation:**

*American Hornbeam (ranges from yellow to orange to red), Blackhaw Viburnum (showy foliage turns shades of red and purple), Dogwood (deep red), Eastern Wahoo (bright red) and Sassafras (gold, copper, orange, peach and burgundy).*

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