

Top 7 Reasons to Visit Monticello by Jon Meacham

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Jon Meacham, author of the newly released and highly praised *Thomas Jefferson: The Art of Power*, gives Fodor's his top reasons to visit Jefferson's home. "It's as close as you can get to a conversation with Thomas Jefferson."

7 Reasons to Visit Monticello

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By Jon Meacham, author of [Thomas Jefferson: The Art of Power](#)

[.https://monticelloshop.org/products/thomas-jefferson-the-art-of-power](https://monticelloshop.org/products/thomas-jefferson-the-art-of-power)



In Italian, the word means "little mountain," but for Thomas Jefferson no mountain ever mattered more. As a boy growing up in its shadow at his family's Shadwell plantation in Albemarle County, Virginia, Jefferson wandered the site of his future home, dreaming of what he might one day build here. And build he did, creating one of the great American houses and sites.

1. It's as close as you can get to a conversation with Thomas Jefferson.

To walk these rooms and gardens is to walk through the mind of the man who created it. The light symbolizes his devotion to reason; the underground pavilions his dependence on slavery. It's all here—complex, detailed, and real.



2. The decorations

The portraits and statues embody a noble ethos. Here you will see a bust of John Adams, Jefferson's "frenemy," and a bust of Alexander Hamilton, who was pretty much just an enemy. Jefferson wanted his house to offer visitors a view of the great players in American history whether he was allied with those players or not.

3. The views

Jefferson placed his house facing west, where he could seemingly see forever. We still can.



4. The gardens

Jefferson loved to grow things and found joy in the creation and maintenance of beauty. The grounds are still wonderfully maintained by a terrific staff.

5. The dining room

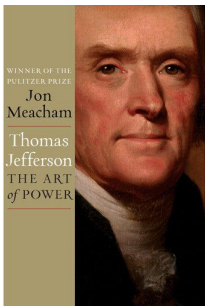
Recently restored to its brilliant Jeffersonian yellow, the room is breathtaking—a center of civilized discourse.



6. Mulberry Row

Monticello is open and honest about the central role slavery played in making Jefferson's life possible, and there are an abundance of resources about life on the plantation both on-site and online.

7. Did I mention that **going to Monticello is as close as you'll ever get to sitting down to talk to Thomas Jefferson?**



Jon Meacham, executive editor at Random House, is the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House* and the New York Times bestsellers *Franklin and Winston: An Intimate Portrait of an Epic Friendship* and *American Gospel: God, the Founding Fathers, and the Making of a Nation*. His book, *Thomas Jefferson: The Art of Power* (<https://monticelloshop.org/products/thomas-jefferson-the-art-of-power>), was published in 2012. He lives in New York City with his wife and children.

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