

# PLAN THE PERFECT GUYS' NIGHT OUT

## Bros: Can we have a word?

Look, we all know romance is tricky: From choosing whether to call or text (and when!) to picking the perfect first-date activity or dinner spot for a particular occasion. It's seriously easy to douse the fireworks before they can ignite, but when everything goes off without a hitch, it's a beautiful thing.

Thankfully, the same pitfalls do not apply to the ever-important pursuit of your bromance: You know, the titanium bond you have with your lifelong guy friends, the ones who will be there to dutifully ridicule your dating prospects or your marital bliss; the ones with whom you can have frank, unedited discussions on matters large and small.

Which is to say, bromantic partners are extremely important to a well-rounded life, and it's time you appreciated them as such: We've put together a list of our favorite bromantic excursions (granted, many are beer-related, but what can we say? This area has become a mecca for good — as in *good* — beer) to show the guys in your life just how much they mean to you.

— Alex Baldinger, Fritz Hahn and Justin Rude



Below, the authors, Alex Baldinger, left, Justin Rude, center, and Fritz Hahn, sample the beers on draft at Port City Brewing Co. in Alexandria.



Mike Smith, left, of Fairfax and Brian Clay of Chantilly talk to Mani Barajas-Alexander of Arlington while he practices his swing at TopGolf Alexandria.



PHOTOS, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: EYV MAGES FOR THE WASHINGTON POST; ASTRID RIECKEN FOR THE WASHINGTON POST; SEAN MCCORMICK FOR THE WASHINGTON POST; SEAN MCCORMICK FOR THE WASHINGTON POST; JONATHAN NEWTON/THE WASHINGTON POST

A Capitals game is perhaps an obvious guys'-night-out destination, but where to go for pregame drinks? Try nearby Redline, with taps at the table. Bonding over tacos is another no-brainer, but authenticity is key. Taqueria la Placita, center and right, offers a variety of top-notch tacos and tamales — even breakfast tacos starting at 5 a.m.

## BEHIND- THE-SCENES TOURS

It's safe to say that lots of guys are fascinated by beer.

But enjoying the taste of it, playing games with it and basking in the social currency that comes from knowing about obscure bottles of it are just the beginning: More and more, guys want to know how the stuff is made (and that's if they aren't already attempting to brew their own at home).

That's why a trip to Alexandria's brand-new Port City Brewing Co. is not just a great guys'-day-out activity, but an informative (and thirst-quenching) one as well.

Port City owner Bill Butcher leads tours

of the facility, inside a nondescript warehouse just west of Old Town, every Saturday at 12:30 and 2 p.m. For \$5, you'll see where Port City's four flagship brews — the Belgian-style Optimal Wit, the crisp Monumental I.P.A., the chocolatey Porter and the well-rounded Essential Pale Ale — are born, from the moment the ingredients are added to one of the 60-barrel stainless-steel fermentation tanks through the bottling and kegging process.

But let's be honest: The real point of a brewery tour is to sample the goods, so Butcher keeps the informational portion of the tour to about 20 minutes. From there, you're free to linger in the tasting room, where you can cash in your four tasting tickets to sample each of the beers in a tasting glass that's yours to keep.

It's also an ideal setting to do some mingling, which brings us back to our original point about males and beer: We're not alone, gentlemen. The male/female ratio on a recent tour was tilted heavily toward the female, so if you're looking to hit it off with a fellow hop-head, Port City should be on your radar.

Port City Brewing Co., 3950 Wheeler Ave., Alexandria. 703-797-2739. [www.portcitybrewing.com](http://www.portcitybrewing.com).

## HOME ON THE RANGE

Look, if it was May, we'd happily suggest a day trip to Whiskey Creek Golf Club in Ijamsville, where you can play 18 holes on one of the area's best-looking public

courses, followed by a nice Scotch or bourbon in the clubhouse. However, walking a golf course isn't as much fun in chilly, wet weather. That's why we like Top Golf in Alexandria. The outdoor driving ranges are covered and heated, so you don't have to worry about rain or bitter cold. The high-tech greens are equipped with targets that track the length and accuracy of your shots, so you don't have to argue about who hit the green the most (even if that is a lot of fun). And the servers will bring food and beers right to the "golf suite" on the range. A perfect day, and a good deal — \$4.80 buys 20 balls per player. Or head to the range on Wednesday nights for "Guys' Night" to save even more, with \$3 domestic beers and \$4 premium drafts from 7 to 9 p.m.

Top Golf, 6625 S. Van Dorn St., Alexandria. 703-924-2600. [www.topgolf.com](http://www.topgolf.com).

## MANLY MEALS

Beer dinners are a staple of the boys' night out — a chance to sit around, eat, drink some brews and maybe even learn something before it's done. But the underrated Leesburg beer bar at the restaurant Tuscarora Mill — fondly known as Tuskie's — takes it to the next level with its special themed menus. Earlier this month, Tuskie's hosted a meal in which each of the five courses contained bacon. (Think seared Irish bacon and polenta paired with Stone Smoked Porter, or spicy sausage bites with gouda cheese accompanied by Bell's Two Hearted Ale.) Dreamy.

The next dinners will feature manly meals to go with hearty, traditional Belgian ales from the Cooperstown, N.Y., Omme-gang Brewery (April 8), and the more experimental and hoppy brews from Athens, Ga.'s Terrapin Brewery (May 11). And then talk about manifest: On June 1, chef Patrick Dinh hosts his annual barbecue dinner in Leesburg. This year's menu features 'cue matched with beers from California's fantastic Lagunitas Brewery. Tickets are \$85, which includes food, drinks, taxes and gratuity.

Tuscarora Mill, 203 Harrison St., Leesburg. 703-771-9300. [www.tuskies.com](http://www.tuskies.com).

## TACO TIME!

Sure, taco love knows no race, age or sex, but both Taqueria la Placita in Hyattsville

and Tacos el Costalilla in Alexandria provide perfect opportunities for authentic gastronomic bro-bonding.

In Hyattsville, Taqueria la Placita serves amazing al pastor tacos — marinated pork cooked on a spit — served with slivers of fresh pineapple, as well as selections that include sliced cactus and classics like grilled beef and braised pork. Other items are enticing as well, including some of the best tamales you will find in the area. For the ultimate taco bro-trip, try to get there for a taco breakfast when owner Javier Martinez opens his shop in the wee hours, sometimes as early as 5 a.m.

Down Richmond Highway in Alexandria, in an unassuming and somewhat run-down strip mall, you can find La Placita's spiritual cousin, Tacos el Costalilla.

There, you can pick up Mexican favorites (including another great take on al pastor) as well as more adventurous selections such as tripe, tongue and brain tacos and pork skin in vinegar tostadas. I have yet to find something I would turn away.

Finally, for those bros in search of a hangover cure: On Saturdays and Sundays only, the restaurant serves steaming, spicy bowls of menudo soup, a traditional dish made with tripe. On a recent trip, the tables were full of haggard looking dudes.

Taqueria la Placita, 5020 Edmonston Rd., Hyattsville. 301-277-4477.

Tacos el Costalilla, 7862 Richmond Hwy., Alexandria. 703-704-9088.

BROMANCE CONTINUED ON 24