

Colonial Williamsburg

People Have Been Throwing Axes for Centuries; Now You Can, Too – at Colonial Williamsburg

Plus, Learn to Fire a Flintlock Musket



If you watch certain historical dramas, it seems everyone is throwing axes, from the Vikings to American colonists. We can't figure out why anyone would throw away their last means of self-defense, but we must admit that when you are not in a battle, it's rather fun.

Ax Throwing (It's not as easy as it looks)

At Colonial Williamsburg, visitors learn to toss an ax under the supervision of experts in the safest of environments. Guests with a program ticket enjoy a real hands-on experience and gain a greater appreciation for what people had to do for survival – and fun – back in the 18th century.

So-called “belt” axes were standard-issue in many units of the American Revolution, when they were used for clearing brush, cutting wood for heat or cooking, and as an unconventional weapon in battle. Contrary to fictional depictions, they were not thrown in combat, but they were during downtime, at wooden targets, as entertainment.

Guests of Colonial Williamsburg's Ax Range will receive a brief interpretive presentation on the history of throwing axes, followed by instruction on safe throwing at poplar wood stump targets. Participants will find that tossing an ax is more a test of skill and technique than of strength. The

final stage is to move into individual lanes with corresponding targets, where they can test their skill under the close supervision of site staff.

The Ax Range is open seven days a week, spring through fall, during scheduled sessions between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. A special ticket is required; \$10 and \$9 for members of the military. Participation is limited to guests ages 12 and older. Guests under 17 must be accompanied by a legally responsible adult 18 or older.

Tickets and additional information are available at Colonial Williamsburg ticketing locations, online at www.colonialwilliamsburg.com or by calling 855-296-6627 toll-free.

Learn to Fire a Flintlock Musket



We've all seen the image of the Minuteman with a flintlock musket, or watched documentaries in which colonists fight the world's superpower, Britain, in a battle for independence. But there are very few places where visitors can actually learn about and fire a reproduction 18th-century Brown Bess military musket and its domestic counterpart, the fowler. Colonial Williamsburg is one such place.

Participants learn about the weapons, their history, and receive safety instruction on use of 18th-century-style flintlock firearms. In addition to learning about the cumbersome process of how to even load one of these antiquated guns, they will also shoot at a target, all under the strict supervision of a safety instructor.

Everyone must be age 14 or older to participate in the Musket Range experience, and guests under 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian who is not shooting. Sessions include range instruction, safety equipment, targets and ammunition. Participants must bring valid photo ID, and required transportation is provided from the lobby of the Williamsburg Lodge.

The range is open seven days a week for sessions scheduled from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Space is limited and, through April 30, admission to Fire a Flintlock Musket: Spring Special is \$76 for a saving of \$43 per person.

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Additional information is also available by downloading the free Colonial Williamsburg Explorer app via the Apple App Store and Google Play, and by following Colonial Williamsburg on [Facebook](#) and @colonialwmsburg on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).