



Destination Guide: Washington DC



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AAA Destination Guide: Official AAA maps, travel information and top picks

AAA Destination Guide: Washington D.C. includes trip-planning information covering AAA recommended attractions and restaurants, exclusive member discounts, maps and more.

The nation's capital. Those three words neatly sum up Washington's global importance as governmental entity and its enormous appeal as a tourist mecca. John F. Kennedy once said "Washington is a city of Southern efficiency and Northern charm," and although his tongue was likely firmly in cheek, there's no denying the city's role in efficiently governing the nation while charming millions of visitors each year.

D.C.'s embarrassment of must-see riches—museums, monuments, memorials, galleries—makes putting together a sightseeing itinerary one truly daunting task. The United States Capitol and the White House define the jurisdictional entity known as the District of Columbia. The Mall, that green swath stretching from the foot of Capitol Hill west to the awe-inspiring statue of Abraham Lincoln, is where it's at for visitors, encompassing not only the National Gallery of Art, six memorials and one monument but many of the museums identified with one of the world's largest and most remarkable educational organizations, the Smithsonian Institution. But that's just part of the picture; Washington also has vibrant neighborhoods, a cosmopolitan diversity and cultural facilities second to none. With so much to see and do, spring's pale pink explosion of cherry blossoms is the lovely icing on a very special city.



Essentials

The seat of the federal government, the United States Capitol should be near the top of any visitor's must-see list. Its main ceremonial space, the Rotunda, is filled with paintings, frescoes and an encircling frieze that together present more than 400 years of U.S. history.

George Washington is the only president who never governed from the White House, but it is one of the few structures in today's city that he would probably recognize. Antique furnishings, presidential portraits and graceful decorative accents make this house a rich repository of Americana.

Climb the steps of the Lincoln Memorial and contemplate Daniel Chester French's powerful sculpture of our 16th president, serenely seated in a colossal armchair. Then turn around and look to the east for an inspiring view that takes in the Reflecting Pool and the green expanse of West Potomac Park.

Few cities are lovelier than Washington in springtime. Daffodils, tulips and dogwoods are all in bloom, along with the city's thousands of Japanese cherry trees. Take a walk around the Tidal Basin when the blossoms are at their glorious peak, normally early April.

Get dressed up and attend a concert, play, opera or dance performance at the world-class The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

Gaze upon the Rembrandts, Monets and other works that are part of the superlative collection of paintings in the West Building of the National Gallery of Art. Then take the underground concourse to see the ultramodern East Building's impressive exhibits of modern art.

Essentials Map



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Spend the afternoon hanging out in Georgetown. Home to some of Washington's most politically and socially prominent citizens, the city's oldest neighborhood has trendy shops and restaurants galore as well as that are a pleasure to stroll quiet, leafy streets lined with handsome brick residences.

Let your imagination soar like the wondrous array of aircraft at Washington's most popular museum, the [National Air and Space Museum](#) of the Smithsonian Institution.

Wander among the flowers, plants and trees in the conservatories of the [United States Botanic Garden](#). It's a restful, rejuvenating way to spend an hour in the middle of a hectic day of sightseeing.

Head to Nationals Park and check out Major League Baseball's newest team, the Washington Nationals—D.C.'s long-awaited successor to the much-loved Washington Senators.

Essentials Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](#)



- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*

1. United States Capitol

1st St & Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20001
Phone: (202) 226-8000



2. White House

1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500
Phone: (202) 224-3121



3. Lincoln Memorial

Washington, DC 20037
Phone: (202) 426-6841



4. The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

Rock Creek Pkwy &
New Hampshire Ave NW
Washington, DC 20566
Phone: (800) 444-1324



5. National Gallery of Art

4th St & Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20565
Phone: (202) 842-6176



6. National Air and Space Museum

7th St & Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20560
Phone: (202) 633-5285



7. United States Botanic Garden

100 Maryland Ave SW
Washington, DC 20001
Phone: (202) 225-8333



Washington D.C. in 3 Days

Three days is barely enough time to get to know any major destination. But AAA travel editors suggest these activities to make the most of your time in Washington, D.C.

Day 1: Morning

For visitors—and many Washingtonians—[The National Mall](#) is the epicenter of the nation's capital. You could spend three days alone just visiting all the museums and attractions that surround it. Street parking is limited and metered, so don't bring your car; everything is within easy

walking distance of Metrorail's Smithsonian station (Orange and Blue lines).

Your first stop should be the [Smithsonian Institution Building \(the Castle\)](#), which houses the Smithsonian Information Center. In addition to the all-important restrooms, the center has interesting exhibits and plenty of Smithsonian-related information. Pick up coffee at the Castle Café and then mosey through the [Enid A. Haupt Garden](#), with plantings of pansies and ornamental cabbages in winter, daffodils and tulips in spring and hanging baskets of multicolored annuals in summer.

Visit the [National Air and Space Museum](#) first; you'll beat the crowds if you arrive when it opens. The Air and Space is chock-full of iconic vessels, from the Wright Brothers' original 1903 flying machine to space-age craft. Next door is the [National Museum of the American Indian](#). The wampum belts, elaborate headdresses and primitive guns are fascinating, but what really makes the NMAI a must-see is the emphasis on human history and cultural pride.

Take a break at one of the benches lining the Mall's crisscrossing gravel paths before heading to the [National Museum of Natural History](#). It's packed with cool exhibits and always brimming with kids and school groups, so pick a few things rather than trying to see it all. Perennial favorites include the O. Orkin Insect Zoo's tarantulas and giant cockroaches, the dinosaur skeletons and the glittering diamonds, rubies and sapphires in the Janet Annenberg Hooker Hall of Geology, Gems and Minerals.

Afternoon

Your best bet for a convenient lunch is at one of the museums: the Air and Space's Wright Place Food Court, the Museum of the American Indian's Mitsitam Native Foods Café or the Museum of Natural History's Atrium Café. The Mitsitam Native Foods Café has out-of-the-ordinary items such as Indian fry bread and wild rice salad studded with dried cranberries, pine nuts and pumpkin seeds.

Switch from dioramas and airplanes to paintings and sculpture. The West Building of the [National Gallery of Art](#) has an outstanding permanent collection and a couple of bona fide masterpieces. Make sure you see Anthony van Dyck's regal works of portraiture; his well-heeled subjects are literally larger than life. Then take the underground concourse to the East Building, featuring Picasso, Matisse, Warhol and other modern masters.

There's more modern art on the other side of the Mall at the [Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden](#). Shaped like a drum, it has a series of curving galleries spotlighting such artists as Willem de Kooning and Alexander Calder, whose colorful mobiles literally hang by a thread. Also take a spin through the sunken outdoor sculpture garden to see abstract figure studies and a cast of "The Burghers of Calais," one of Auguste Rodin's most famous sculptures.

From the sculpture garden, walk back up the Mall toward the Smithsonian Castle. If museum fatigue threatens at this point, you're in luck. Vendor carts on wheels park along Constitution Avenue N.W. and the streets that bisect the Mall. Refuel with a hot dog, soft pretzel, ice cream or a popsicle. Equally ubiquitous are the souvenir stands, where you can pick up T-shirts, sweatshirts, pennants, postcards, you name it.

Back at the Castle, three more art museums are just steps away. The [Arthur M. Sackler Gallery](#) and the [Freer Gallery of Art](#) exhibit Asian art; the [National Museum of African Art](#) focuses on the ceremonial regalia, masks and pottery of sub-Saharan Africa. If you're really pressed for time, see American painter James Whistler's "Harmony in Blue and Gold: The Peacock Room" at the Freer; this interior design scheme is ornately embellished with gilded leather wall hangings and four resplendent golden peacocks painted on wall panels.

Day 1 Details - Get additional information on AAA.com;

AAA Diamond Rating information available on AAA.com/Diamonds



- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*

1. The National Mall
Washington, DC 20037

2. Smithsonian Institution Building (The Castle)
1000 Jefferson Dr SW
Washington, DC 20560
Phone: (202) 633-1000

3. Enid A. Haupt Garden
Washington, DC 20024
Phone: (202) 633-5285

4. National Air and Space Museum
7th St & Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20560
Phone: (202) 633-5285



5. National Museum of the American Indian
4th St & Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20560
Phone: (202) 633-1000



6. National Museum of Natural History
Constitution Ave & 10th St NW
Washington, DC 20560
Phone: (202) 633-1000



7. National Gallery of Art
4th St & Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20565
Phone: (202) 842-6176



8. Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden
Independence Ave & 7th St SW
Washington, DC 20560
Phone: (202) 633-5285



9. Arthur M Sackler Gallery
1050 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20560
Phone: (202) 633-1000



10. Freer Gallery of Art
12th St & Jefferson Dr SW
Washington, DC 20560
Phone: (202) 633-1000



11. National Museum of African Art
950 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20560
Phone: (202) 633-5285



12. The Capital Grille
601 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20004
Phone: (202) 737-6200

13. 701 Pennsylvania Avenue
701 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20004
Phone: (202) 393-0701

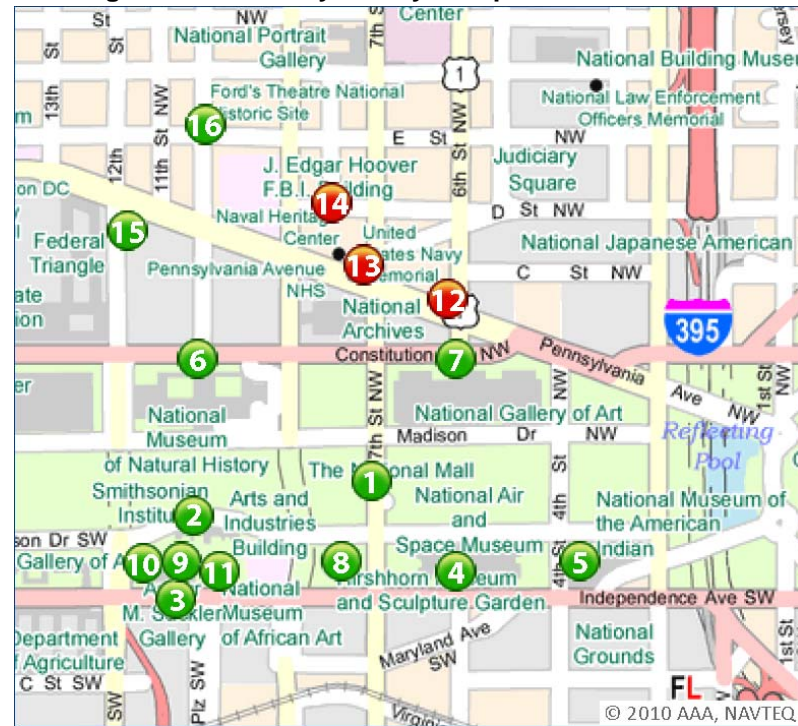
14. Cafe Atlantico
405 8th St NW
Washington, DC 20004
Phone: (202) 393-0812

15. Old Post Office Pavilion
1100 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20004
Phone: (202) 606-8691

16. Ford's Theatre National Historic Site
511 10th St NW
Washington, DC 20004
Phone: (202) 347-4833



Washington D.C. in 3 Days – Day 1 Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using [TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com](http://TripTik.com)

Evening

Keep it simple after all the sightseeing and have dinner at a restaurant a block or two off the Mall. The Capital Grille has a terrific view of the Capitol dome from the front door, plus steaks accompanied by indulgent sides, including fresh creamed spinach and parmesan truffle fries. 701 Pennsylvania Avenue has good fish and seafood (crab cakes, roasted mahi mahi, spice-crusted salmon) and marvelous service. Café Atlantico is a big, lively place that grooves to the rhythm of reggae and calypso music. Have a margarita, guacamole prepared to your order tableside and then perhaps sauteed scallops with coconut rice.

If you've still got energy to burn, walk up Pennsylvania Avenue to the Old Post Office Pavilion and browse around. After shopping, take in a performance at Ford's Theatre National Historic Site. The Shakespeare

Theatre Company (*see Performing Arts under Things to Do*) stages works by the Bard most of the year at the Lansburgh Theatre (450 7th St. N.W.) and Sidney Harman Hall (610 F St. N.W.) But if the weather's pleasant, we suggest just heading back to the Mall for a leisurely evening stroll.

Day 2: Morning

Many of D.C.'s monuments and memorials are clustered in West Potomac Park, an extension of the Mall. Spend the morning at a few of those that have a special resonance for you, whether it's the [Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial](#), the [Korean War Veterans Memorial](#), the [Lincoln Memorial](#), the [National World War II Memorial](#), the [Thomas Jefferson Memorial](#), the [Vietnam Veterans Memorial](#) or the [Washington Monument](#).

Riding the elevator to the observation room near the top of the Washington Monument is fun and the view of the city is panoramic, but a ticket is required and you may well end up waiting in line. If time is of the essence, skip it and take a bench break near the gushing fountains at the National World War II Memorial. Another spot to rest your feet for a few minutes is [Constitution Gardens](#); it's a peaceful little oasis in the middle of the city.

Some tips: If you're here in early April when the cherry blossoms are in bloom, the steps of the Jefferson Memorial are an ideal spot to experience springtime in Washington. Do your "Rocky" jog a la Sylvester Stallone up the Lincoln Memorial's steps, then turn around and behold the expansive view stretching all the way back to the Capitol. And in the midst of all this grandeur the Korean War Veterans Memorial has the most human and haunting scale of all—a squad of 19 men on ground patrol advancing warily, their faces a study in evocative details.

Cross Constitution Avenue N.W. and stop at the [Corcoran Gallery of Art](#). The Corcoran has an eclectic collection of American and European works, primarily paintings but in other media as well. Make sure you see Albert Bierstadt's "The Last of the Buffalo." Bierstadt specialized in romanticized depictions of the 19th-century American West, and this

painting—the last in a series of large landscapes—conveys a sense of drama that practically leaps off the canvas.

Afternoon

You don't need to leave to have lunch; [Café des Artistes](#), in the Corcoran's columned main atrium, has an airy elegance and a menu of salads, sandwiches and pizza. Have a house salad perked up with corn, pine nuts and dates or the "BLT & G," apple wood bacon, tomatoes, lettuce and a dollop of spicy guacamole on sourdough bread.

Touring the [White House](#) is fun, but you must have a group of ten people or more and make advance arrangements through a member of Congress. Instead, snap some souvenir photos with the Executive Mansion in the background and check out the exhibits at the White House Visitor Center, in the Department of Commerce Building between 14th and 15th streets N.W. Then walk through [Lafayette Square](#), stopping to view the equestrian statue of Andrew Jackson and the four monuments honoring Revolutionary War generals.

You can't miss the distinctive red facade of the [Renwick Gallery](#), the Corcoran's former home. It has exhibits of mostly contemporary American decorative arts and crafts—everything from glassware to avant-garde jewelry. Definitely worth a look is the Grand Salon on the second floor, which is like walking into a 19th-century art collector's private gallery; the high-ceilinged room is Victorian-era splendor incarnate, with rows of paintings hanging on the walls.

Evening

The [Old Ebbitt Grill](#) is a true Washington institution that opened for business in 1856. Slide into one of the comfortable mahogany and velvet booths and enjoy an expertly prepared New York strip steak or the rich *cannelloni di casa*, house-made pasta stuffed with spinach, mortadella ham and cheese. And save room for the banana bread pudding.

There are lots of bars and clubs in the vicinity of the Connecticut Avenue, 18th Street and M Street junction. Dupont Circle, a few blocks north, also has a hopping club scene. Wear black and get your attitude on while

Day 2 Details - Get additional information on AAA.com;

AAA Diamond Rating information available on AAA.com/Diamonds



- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*

1. Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial

Washington, DC 20024
Phone: (202) 426-6841



2. Korean War Veterans Memorial

Washington, DC 20037
Phone: (202) 426-6841



3. Lincoln Memorial

Washington, DC 20037
Phone: (202) 426-6841



4. National World War II Memorial

Washington, DC 20024
Phone: (202) 426-6841



5. Thomas Jefferson Memorial

Washington, DC 20024
Phone: (202) 426-6841



6. Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Constitution Ave & Henry Bacon Dr NW
Washington, DC 20024
Phone: (202) 426-6841



7. Washington Monument

15th St & Constitution Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20004
Phone: (202) 426-6841



8. Constitution Gardens

Washington, DC 20037
Phone: (202) 426-6841

9. Corcoran Gallery of Art

500 17th St NW
Washington, DC 20006
Phone: (202) 639-1700



10. Cafe des Artistes

500 17th St NW
Washington, DC 20006
Phone: (202) 639-1786

11. White House

1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500
Phone: (202) 224-3121



12. Lafayette Square

H St & 15th St NW
Washington, DC 20006

13. Renwick Gallery

17th St & Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20560
Phone: (202) 633-5285

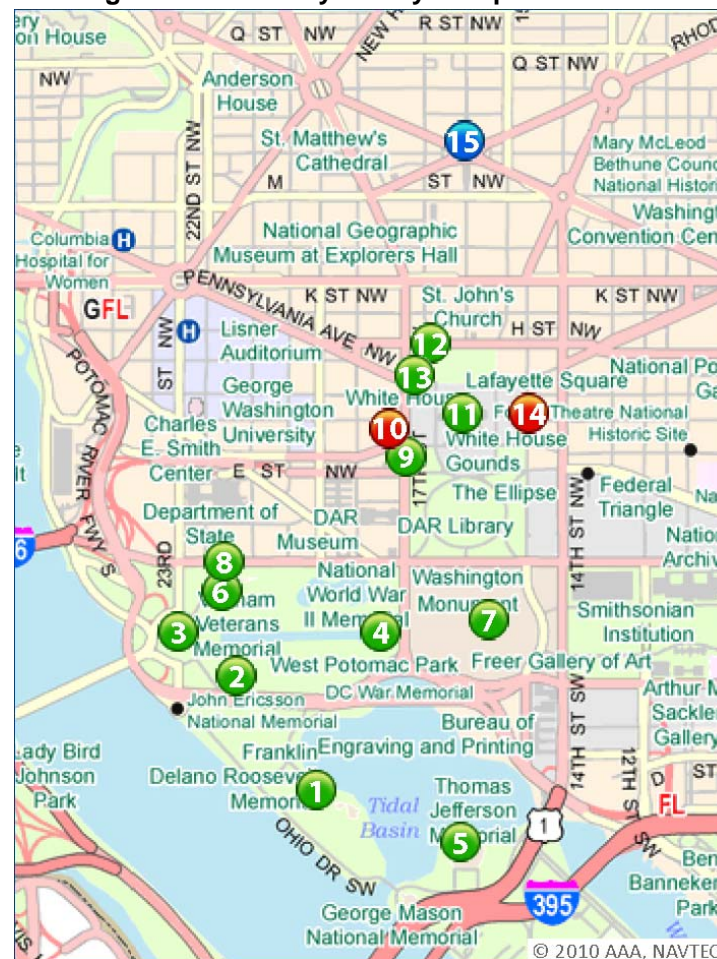
14. Old Ebbitt Grill

675 15th St NW
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: (202) 347-4800

15. Hotel Rouge

A Kimpton Hotel
1315 16th St NW
Washington, DC
Phone: (202) 232-8000

Washington D.C. in 3 Days – Day 2 Map



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you're waiting in line to get into Bar Rouge, 1315 16th St. N.W. (at Massachusetts Avenue N.W. and Scott Circle in the [Hotel Rouge-A Kimpton Hotel](http://HotelRouge.com). Hip with a capital "H," the long, narrow room throbs to beat-heavy world music. Dragonfly, 1215 Connecticut Ave. N.W. (at M Street), has a sushi bar and DJs that spin everything from old-school disco to cutting-edge electronic. Lucky Bar, a few doors up at 1221 Connecticut Ave. N.W. (at 18th Street), is more laid-back, with a mix of

live and DJ music and TVs tuned to soccer matches and college football games.

Day 3: Morning

Capitol Hill is one of D.C.'s most charming neighborhoods: walkable, tree-shaded and with ever-present glimpses of that unmistakable Capitol dome. Townhouses line the streets, many of them handsomely and expensively renovated, with tidy flower gardens enclosed by black wrought-iron fences.

You could grab a quick breakfast at Starbucks or Au Bon Pain, just two of the familiar names with Capitol Hill branches, but for a change of pace try little Le Bon Café (210 2nd St. S.E., just off Independence Avenue). Linger at one of the small marble-topped tables over espresso and a fresh-baked pastry or scone, and pick up a smoked turkey or mozzarella, tomato and pesto sandwich to eat later.

You need a ticket to go on the guided tour of the [United States Capitol](#). It's worth it to see the magnificent Rotunda, with its huge paintings, dome canopy and encircling frieze all depicting events in American history, but lines can be long. Do, however, walk around the grounds to fully appreciate the scope of this imposing structure. Then head over to the [Supreme Court Building](#), a white marble edifice anchored by lofty Corinthian columns.

Take the 1-hour guided tour of the [Thomas Jefferson Building](#), the most architecturally interesting of the three buildings that make up the [Library of Congress](#). The highlight is the Main Reading Room, a huge, octagonal-shaped, richly decorated space. Note the 12 seated figures painted around the collar of the 160-foot-tall dome; each one is 10 feet high.

Give your eyes a break from stone, marble and brick at the [United States Botanic Garden](#). The main conservatory (the "Jungle") is a climate-controlled refuge filled with exuberant tropical vegetation. The serene Garden Court, with its wooden benches, potted orchids and flowering shrubs, is an ideal spot to relax and luxuriate in the beauty.

Afternoon

From the United States Botanic Garden, walk along the Capitol Reflecting Pool to Constitution Avenue. Turn right and then turn left at Delaware Avenue, which will take you to Union Station (*see The Capitol AAA Walking Tour under Things to Do*). Have lunch at the food court on Union Station's lower level. It's a favorite with Hill office workers, and for good reason. You can get practically anything here: burgers, barbecue, burritos, pizza, sushi, salads, soup, pasta, deli sandwiches, hot dogs, wraps, Asian food, Greek food, Indian food, ice cream, smoothies, muffins and more. Afterward, take a spin around this grand Beaux Arts building, distinguished by a soaring barrel-vaulted ceiling.

Spend the rest of the day in Georgetown, Washington's oldest residential neighborhood and one of the most popular places in the city to shop, eat, party or just hang out. The only thing it lacks, in fact, is a convenient Metro station. The closest stops are Foggy Bottom-GWU (Orange line) and Dupont Circle (Red line); from each station it's a leisurely 20-minute walk. The Georgetown Metro Connection bus departs every 10 minutes from the Dupont Circle station and takes only a few minutes to reach Georgetown; the fare is \$1.50, or 35 cents with a Metrorail transfer.

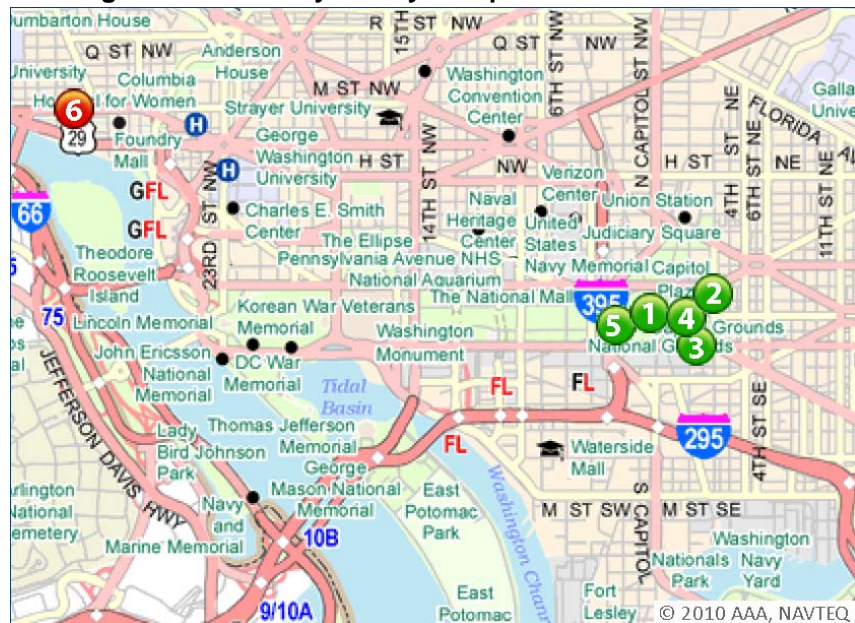
If you feel like malling it, hit The Shops at Georgetown Park (*see our Shopping article*), home to the usual high-end selection of specialty retailers. But the coolest shopping is along and just off Wisconsin Avenue. For punk chic go to Commander Salamander (1420 Wisconsin Ave. N.W.); the music is loud, the clientele young and scruffy and the clothes oh so *au courant*. Betsey Johnson (1319 Wisconsin Ave. N.W.) is equally hip, with an emphasis on psychedelic '60s-style fashions. A bit farther up is A Mano (1677 Wisconsin Ave. N.W.); from the whimsically painted tableware to fruit basket centerpieces to imported French stone fountains, it's like stepping into a European country garden.

Head back down Wisconsin Avenue and duck into Patisserie Poupon (near the Q Street intersection) for a late afternoon snack. The aroma of freshly ground coffee pervades this delightful little bakery. Have a flaky almond croissant, a macaroon (in flavors from lemon to chocolate) or

some traditional French fig ice cream while drooling over the display of cakes and fruit tarts.

Do some more food browsing at Dean & DeLuca (3276 M St. N.W., a block west of Wisconsin Avenue). This branch of the famed New York international food purveyors offers such regional specialties as Maryland-style crab cakes, corn chowder and organic, locally grown heirloom tomatoes, herbs and other produce. Get something from the espresso bar and then let sensory overload take over.

Washington D.C. in 3 Days – Day 3 Map



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Evening

You'll have a devil of a time picking a restaurant for dinner because there are so many good ones. For casual conviviality you can't beat Clyde's of Georgetown (3236 M St. N.W., just west of Wisconsin Avenue), a local watering hole for more than 40 years. From roasted pork loin to basil-marinated Chesapeake rockfish, Clyde's does refined American classics well.

You also can have dinner at Blues Alley (1073 Wisconsin Ave. N.W., below M Street), but most people come for the music. Washington's premier jazz club is yet another local institution, and the list of performers who have played here is legendary. The look is worn around the edges, but that's what makes it a classic. Seating is first-come-first-served, and reservations are essential; phone (202) 337-4141.

Most of Georgetown's bars are the friendly saloon type. There's Mr. Smith's (3104 M St. N.W., a block east of Wisconsin Avenue), the self-proclaimed "friendliest saloon in town." It has a long antique bar, a garden patio and a piano player who always draws an appreciative crowd of regulars.

Note: Metrorail operates until midnight Sun.-Thurs. and 3 a.m. Fri.-Sat., but the last train may depart before the system closes; final departure times are posted at the stations.

Day 3 Details - Get additional information on AAA.com;
AAA Diamond Rating information available on AAA.com/Diamonds



- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*

1. United States Capitol
 1st St & Independence Ave SW
 Washington, DC 20001
 Phone: (202) 226-8000



2. Supreme Court Building
 1 1st St NE
 Washington, DC 20543
 Phone: (202) 479-3211




3. Thomas Jefferson Building
 10 1st St SE
 Washington, DC 20540
 Phone: (202) 707-9779

4. Library of Congress
 1st St & Independence Ave SE
 Washington, DC 20540
 Phone: (202) 707-5000



5. United States Botanic Garden
 100 Maryland Ave SW
 Washington, DC 20001
 Phone: (202) 225-8333



6. Clyde's of Georgetown 
 3236 M St NW
 Washington, DC 20007
 Phone: (202) 333-9180

Restaurants

Being a politicians' town, Washington has its share of lively meeting places suitable for both power lunching and a sophisticated dinner out. Conveniently located about midway between the [White House](#) and



[Georgetown](#), [Kinkead's Restaurant](#) calls itself "an American brasserie." The restaurant occupies a town house, with a casual downstairs cafe/bar and a more refined upstairs section with tucked-away nooks and alcoves that nevertheless have a full view of the open kitchen. Chef Bob Kinkead changes the always-intriguing menu daily, emphasizing seafood dishes such as a

pepper-seared rare tuna steak with portobello mushrooms and a pinot noir sauce or chile-rubbed grilled swordfish paired with corn ragout and mango salsa. Carnivores can opt for filet mignon accompanied by double-stuffed new potatoes. The wine selection is very, very nice.

Another celebrated chef, Michel Richard, holds sway at [Michel Richard Citronelle](#). A few steps from [The Latham Hotel](#) lobby, this beautifully appointed dining room has a "mood wall" that changes color and a glass-walled kitchen where the artistry of Richard's staff is on full display. This is impeccably prepared, flavorful French with a California influence. Start with a vegetable salad or Monterey Bay abalone with cream of caviar before moving on to roasted salmon, a New York strip steak or duck with a black cherry-anise sauce. Finish with an aromatic plate of imported cheeses. The sommelier is eminently qualified to guide your wine selection. As befits the restaurant's elegant formality, jackets are required for gentlemen.

Georgetown is one of D.C.'s dining hot spots, and [Fahrenheit](#), in [The Ritz-Carlton, Georgetown](#), is one of the places diners in the know seek out. The room has a stylishly contemporary look: tall windows, a soaring ceiling and exposed brick that is softly illuminated (the building formerly housed an incinerator). The cuisine is regional American, and dishes vary

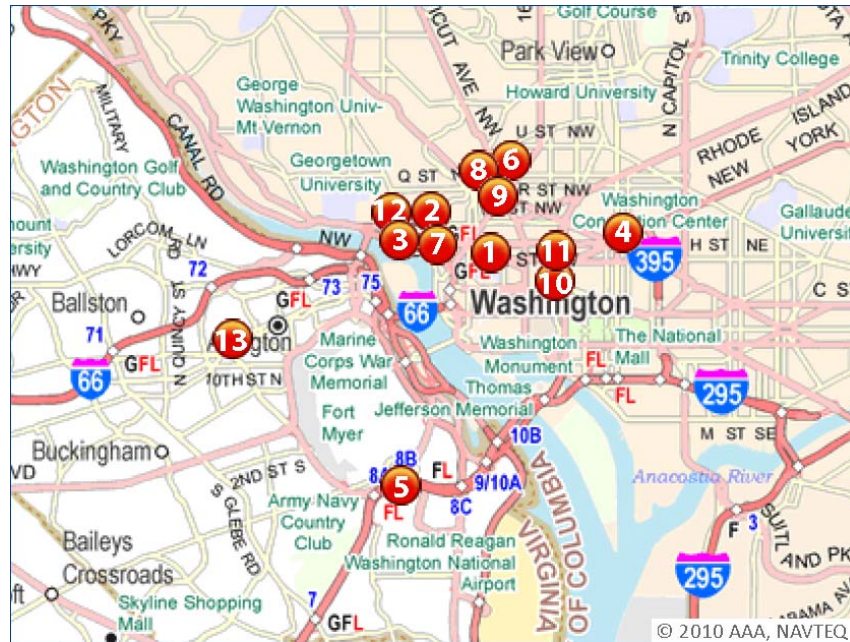
according to the season. Maryland crab cakes are paired with pesto sauce and a medley of autumn vegetables. A robust casserole of chicken sausage, white beans and fingerling potatoes is topped with parsley crostini. Pineapple upside-down cake with coconut cr me anglaise provides a sweet ending.

Diners searching for more exotic fare have all sorts of options in cosmopolitan D.C. For a full-blown experience try [Marrakesh](#), very popular among Washingtonians for special occasions. Plush Oriental tapestries, the sinuous rhythms of Moroccan music and a ritual hand washing with rose-scented water set the stage for a seven-course feast that you eat sans utensils. Subtle spicing enlivens the chicken with dates, marinated beef shish kebab and lamb with chickpeas and onions. For vegetarians there's couscous topped with vegetables, chickpeas and raisins, although non-meat eaters could make a meal of the salad platter featuring eggplant in tomato sauce, coriander-flavored carrots, and seasoned cucumbers and bell peppers. Enjoy your mint tea and Moroccan pastries while watching the belly dancers undulate.

Another local favorite is the [Lebanese Taverna](#), a family-owned place that's also family friendly. The courtyard-like dining space has domed ceilings, lushly upholstered seating and hand-carved walnut decoration. Many people make a meal of the mezzas, or appetizers; the hummus, couscous, spinach pies and stuffed grape leaves, accompanied by pita bread from a wood-burning oven, are all winners, as are the rotisserie chicken and chargrilled kabobs. If the weather's nice, angle for one of the sidewalk tables under the green umbrellas.

[Lauriol Plaza](#), in the culturally diverse Adams Morgan neighborhood, is consistently voted Washington's favorite Mexican restaurant (although the cooking also incorporates a number of other Latin influences). You could go the traditional route—tacos, enchiladas or fajita platters, all done well—but why bother when there are more interesting choices such as *camarones brochette*, six jumbo shrimp stuffed with cheese and jalape os, wrapped in bacon and served on a sizzling plate, or *lomo saltado*, tenderloin strips with tomatoes, potatoes, *jalape o* peppers and

Restaurants Map



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a special Peruvian sauce? Lauriol Plaza's vast, two-tiered, window-filled dining room is lovely, but the rooftop deck has an especially festive air. It's very popular, so be prepared to wait for a table.

Not all that many cities can claim an Ethiopian restaurant, let alone a number of them, but D.C. has a large and vibrant Ethiopian community. Zed's Ethiopian Cuisine is a good place to acquaint yourself with the distinctive cooking of this African nation. Stews and stew-like concoctions—both vegetarian and non-vegetarian—are served communal style on large round platters. Instead of a spoon or fork, scoop up a bite of food with the flat, spongy, porous pancake known as *injera*. Its sourdough-like flavor counters the heat of many dishes (you also can specify that they be prepared mild). *Wats* are spicy stews with chicken or lamb; *alechas* are similar but more mildly spiced. Vegetables, whether buttery chopped collard greens, pureed lentils or yellow split peas, are delicious. Service is leisurely, so Zed's is a good choice if you want to linger awhile.

**Restaurants Details - Get additional information on AAA.com;
AAA Diamond Rating information available on AAA.com/Diamonds**

- 1. Kinkead's Restaurant**

2000 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20006
Phone: (202) 296-7700
- 2. Michel Richard Citronelle**

3000 M St NW
Washington, DC 20007-3701
Phone: (202) 625-2150
- 3. Fahrenheit**

3100 South St
Washington, DC 20007
Phone: (202) 912-4110
- 4. Marrakesh**

617 New York Ave NW
Washington, DC 20001
Phone: (202) 393-9393
- 5. Lebanese Taverna**

2641 Connecticut Ave NW
Washington, DC 20008
Phone: (202) 265-8681
- 6. Lauriol Plaza**

1835 18th St NW
Washington, DC 20009
Phone: (202) 387-0035
- 7. Zed's Ethiopian Cuisine**

1201 28th St NW
Washington, DC 20007
Phone: (202) 333-4710
- 8. Nora**

2132 Florida Ave NW
Washington, DC 20008
Phone: (202) 462-5143
- 9. Obelisk**

2029 P St NW
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (202) 872-1180
- 10. Occidental Grill & Seafood**

1475 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20004
Phone: (202) 783-1475
- 11. Old Ebbitt Grill**

675 15th St NW
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: (202) 347-4800
- 12. Clyde's of Georgetown**

3236 M St NW
Washington, DC 20007
Phone: (202) 333-9180
- 13. Hard Times Cafe**

1404 King St
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: (703) 837-0050

Way back in 1979, Dupont Circle's Nora was one of the few restaurants in the country to feature a menu emphasizing ingredients from certified organic farmers, growers and suppliers. Owner-chef Nora Pouillon still abides by that principle, and everything from the coffee beans to the servers' uniforms is certified organic. The restaurant itself—in a 19th-century building that originally was a grocery store—is a cozy delight, with rustic brick walls, a beamed pine ceiling and handcrafted Mennonite and Amish quilt wall hangings. And if you equate “health food” with dull brown rice and endless legumes, think again: Nora's dishes are healthy, yes, but also delicious. Veal and cashew curry with lemon basmati rice, bok choy and apricot chutney or pan-seared sea scallops with roasted cauliflower, green beans, scallions and a vinaigrette made from blood oranges are monuments to creative cookery. Equally flavorful are such meatless entrees as Pouillon's vegetarian tasting menu or the Tokyo “hot pot” with tofu, udon noodles, crispy yams and shiitake mushrooms.

Another Dupont Circle standout is Obelisk. Have dinner here if you're passionate about Italian food. The restaurant, housed in an intimate and simply appointed townhouse, offers a five-course, fixed-priced menu that changes daily according to the whims of owner and chef Peter Pastan, who travels to the mother country for some of his ingredients. The antipasti course might include meltingly fresh burrata cheese showered with cracked black pepper, house-made sausages with pickled onions, octopus salad or tuna with garbanzo beans. Lamb chops, roasted quail with spinach or pappardelle tossed with chanterelle mushrooms and crispy bits of pancetta can show up as main courses. Be sure to save room for dessert, whether it's a simple but luscious chocolate pudding or spice cake with pears. Reservations are strongly advised.

Two D.C. favorites are within walking distance of the White House, The National Theatre and the Smithsonian Institution museums, making them convenient for afternoon sightseers or evening theatergoers. The Occidental Grill & Seafood has been in business since 1906, hence its whimsical status as “the second most famous address on Pennsylvania Avenue.” Chef Rodney Scruggs' seasonally changing selections emphasize boldly flavored contemporary cooking. This is a good choice

for lunch after a busy morning of sightseeing. Go simple—a Black Angus burger cooked to order with steak-cut fries—or try the grilled salmon accompanied by a ragout of roasted red and gold baby beets. A pre-theater three-course menu is offered during the season. Whenever you go, don't be surprised if a senator or congressional member shows up in the dining room; local best-ofs have voted the Occidental “best place for celebrity spotting.”

Another standby just around the corner from the White House is the Old Ebbitt Grill. Presidents Grant, Cleveland and Harding all dined here, and it's a favorite with journalists and political insiders. The ambiance is classic saloon: mahogany and velvet booths, brass and etched-glass panels, flickering antique gaslights. Although the menu changes daily to take advantage of the season—for example, a fall vegetable platter garnished with orange-cranberry relish and apple cider—you can always count on a couple of reliable choices. Regulars swear by the trout parmesan, cheese-crusting Virginia trout quickly fried and then topped with hollandaise sauce, and the homey roast chicken Dijon with pan gravy. *The Washington Post* has called Old Ebbitt's raw bar the best in town, and it's said to offer the city's largest selection of oysters. There's also a very popular weekend brunch.

D.C. has an abundance of Thai restaurants, but Duangrat's, in nearby Falls Church, has consistently stood out as one of the best since opening in 1987. The setting is casually elegant, with white table linens, crystal chandeliers, and Thai artwork and headdresses decorating the walls. The atmosphere is further enhanced by the servers, colorfully attired in silk gowns. Don't neglect appetizers; the lemongrass shrimp cocktail is light and refreshing, while plantain tempura, coated in a coconut and sesame batter, is sweet and rich. You can get standards such as pad Thai and beef or chicken Panang, but be creative instead and order one of their signature dishes. Grandma Duangrat's duck is half a bird, braised in five different spices and fried, then topped with lump crabmeat and a spicy-sweet sauce. Or try the Pad Kee Mao (drunken noodles), jumbo rice noodles, bean sprouts, basil, chilies and garlic pan-fried in a sweet soy sauce with your choice of beef, chicken or vegetables. The upstairs

dining area presents Thai classical dance or orchestral performances on occasional weekends.

Also in Falls Church is the Peking Gourmet Inn. The location, a nondescript strip mall, and the décor, red vinyl booths and Oriental hanging lamps, are not the attractions here—it's the Peking duck, plump, juicy, cooked to perfection and carved tableside. Another popular choice is Szechuan beef, crisply shredded, sautéed with celery, carrots and

Restaurants Map




Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using [TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com](http://TripTik.com)

Restaurants Details - Get additional information on AAA.com;
AAA Diamond Rating information available on AAA.com/Diamonds

14. Duangrat's 
 5878 Leesburg Pike
 Falls Church, VA 22041
 Phone: (703) 820-5775

16. L'Auberge Chez Francois 
 332 Springvale Rd
 Great Falls, VA 22066
 Phone: (703) 759-3800

15. Peking Gourmet Inn 
 6029 Leesburg Pike
 Falls Church, VA 22041
 Phone: (703) 671-8088

17. The Inn at Little Washington Dining Room 
 Business Rt US 211
 Washington, VA 22747
 Phone: (540) 675-3800

sesame seeds and awash in a deliciously spicy sauce. Many appetizers, including the leek dumplings and the snow crab asparagus soup, can be shared. The vegetables and jumbo spring onions that appear in most of the dishes are grown on the owners' own farm. The restaurant is always busy, but if you have to wait for a table you can spend time perusing the numerous framed, autographed photos of political and show business notables.

A little farther afield in Great Falls is L'Auberge Chez Francois. A drive along hilly, narrow, winding roads leads diners to this charming country French spot. The four dining rooms have wood beams, stained glass and floral embroidered table linens, and the accomplished wait staff sees to your every need. The kitchen focuses on Alsatian French cookery: Dover sole sauteed with lobster, asparagus, wild mushrooms, capers and brown butter, or roasted rack of lamb with herbs, a vegetable medley and tarragon sauce. The Alsatian feast is a groaning melange of sausages, duck, goose confit, foie gras, pork and sauerkraut. For the price of the entrée you also get soup or an appetizer, salad and dessert, making this a very good value for the experience. Just don't forget to walk off all that rich indulgence.

One renowned restaurant worth the 70-mile drive from the nation's capital is The Inn at Little Washington Dining Room, in the tiny village of Washington in Virginia's rolling countryside. Chef/owner Patrick O'Connell's uncompromising cuisine is a feast for the palate. Wild fish, game and impeccable vegetables are mainstays of the substantial four-course standard menu, which utilizes the freshest premium ingredients artfully prepared and beautifully presented. Signature dishes include crab cakes with pureed sorrel and red pepper, macaroni and cheese raised to sublime heights with the addition of black truffles, and bluefin tuna with foie gras. The inn's wine cellar boasts more than 14,000 bottles. The main dining area's plush banquettes, pink lampshades and vases of fresh flowers invite you to relax and stay awhile, so take the opportunity to tour the kitchen and outside garden area. Prices are understandably dear, but the sensory overload is worth the special occasion splurge.

D.C. dining isn't all about exotic cuisine and exquisite presentation. If you're shopping or just strolling away an afternoon around Georgetown, duck into [Clyde's of Georgetown](#) for a convivial bite. This is the original Clyde's, and it's a neighborhood institution. The atmosphere is quintessential American saloon: wood floors, oil paintings and a long oak bar. It's a cozy setting for settling down to such upscale comfort food as a roasted portobello sandwich with tomatoes, onions, sun-dried tomato pesto and fresh mozzarella or a hearty plate of Guinness beef stew served atop mashed potatoes. A full range of stouts, ales, lagers and bottled beers helps it all goes down smoothly.

For more old-fashioned comfort food, schlep across the Potomac to Old Town Alexandria and the original outpost of the [Hard Times Cafe](#) (there are other locations in the Virginia and Maryland suburbs). The staple menu item is chili, with authentic recipes borrowed from chili parlors throughout the Midwest. Choose your variety—Texas, Cincinnati, Terlingua Red or vegetarian—and your style—3-way (spaghetti, chili and cheese), 4-way (spaghetti, chili, cheese and onions) or 5-way (all of the above, plus beans). The accompanying cornbread is homemade. If you're not a chili hound, they also have grilled chicken sandwiches, hot dogs and so forth. Friendly staff, a jukebox full of country tunes and a Southwestern theme give this casual hangout just the right atmosphere.

Attractions

In a city with dozens of attractions, you may have trouble deciding where to spend your time. Here are the highlights for this destination, as chosen by AAA editors. GEMs are "Great Experiences for Members."

The Smithsonian Institution museums are as good a beginning point as any to launch a Washington sightseeing itinerary, with 10 of them conveniently clustered along the National Mall. Everyone has their preferences, of course, but you can't go wrong stopping at the [National Air and Space Museum](#) to see its array of air and spacecraft. Items range from the vintage (the Wright Brothers' 1903 Flyer) to the barrier breaking (lunar surface exploration vehicles and all sorts of rockets).

You might want to tackle the [National Museum of American History, Kenneth E. Behring Center](#) by concentrating on an area of personal interest rather than trying to take it all in at one time. But definitely visit the state-of-the-art display gallery for the Star-Spangled Banner as well as the collection devoted to popular entertainment, guaranteed to conjure up fond memories.

Next door is the [National Museum of Natural History](#), which presents an equally comprehensive overview of the natural world and human cultures. The O. Orkin Insect Zoo is a perennial favorite with kids. A brand-new exhibit, Partners in Evolution, depicts the mutually beneficial relationship between butterflies and plants and includes a walk-through butterfly pavilion. And remember to say hello to the African bull elephant as you pass through the Rotunda.

Across the Mall is the [Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden](#), the Smithsonian's showcase for modern art. This drum-shaped building raised a few eyebrows when it opened in 1974. The exhibits inside are just as intriguing; don't miss artist Nam June Paik's "Video Flag," a third-floor installation of 70 video monitors with flashing images that collectively take the form of the American flag. Behind the museum is a sunken sculpture garden with some interesting figure studies, especially Auguste Rodin's "The Burghers of Calais," a stirring depiction of ordinary men making a heroic sacrifice.

The Smithsonian's first art museum, the [Freer Gallery of Art](#) specializes in Egyptian, Islamic, Himalayan, Chinese, Japanese and Southeast Asian art. The objects on display include paintings, sculpture, ceramics, exquisite porcelains, bronze and jade pieces, folding screens and calligraphy. The Freer's best-known exhibit is "Harmony in Blue and Gold: The Peacock Room," a London dining room painted in opulent style by James McNeill Whistler, and the museum's permanent collection also features more than 1,300 other works by this celebrated American artist.

You'll immediately notice the undulating buff-colored walls of the [National Museum of the American Indian](#). Inside are exhibits that recall an often tragic history but also recognize the vibrant cultures of Native groups.

Many of the objects on display are part of a collection assembled by wealthy New Yorker George Gustav Heye at the turn of the 20th century. You'll see masks from the Northwest Pacific; painted hides and feather bonnets from the North American plains; baskets and pottery from the southwestern United States; Navajo weavings; archeological objects from the Caribbean; ceramics from Costa Rica and central Mexico; and carved jade from the Olmec and Maya civilizations. But the museum's focus is on people, which makes it particularly fascinating.

Also part of the Smithsonian is the [National Zoological Park](#) and its crowd-pleasing assemblage of tigers, lions, primates, seals, birds and numerous other animal residents. Among the zoo's various themed habitats is Amazonia, where red-tailed catfish, piranhas, poison arrow frogs, titi monkeys, a two-toed sloth and other denizens coexist in a tropical environment presided over by living avocado, kapok and cocoa trees. But the stars of the show are giant pandas Mei Xiang and Tian Tian, on extended loan from the China Research and Conservation Center for the Giant Panda.

Visit the classically designed West Building of the [National Gallery of Art](#) for its outstanding collection of western European paintings and sculpture. The galleries featuring Dutch, Flemish, Italian and Impressionist paintings are particularly noteworthy. Among the masterpieces here are Peter Paul Rubens' "Daniel in the Lions' Den," Pierre Auguste Renoir's "A Girl With a Watering Can" and Vincent van Gogh's "Self Portrait." The National Gallery of Art also mounts a variety of temporary exhibitions, including retrospectives devoted to major artists.

Then head across the paved plaza above ground or take the underground concourse to the I.M. Pei-designed East Building, which presents a striking architectural contrast—two sleek triangles (one isosceles and one right) housing 20th- and 21st-century art. "Untitled," a very cool Alexander Calder mobile, hangs from the ceiling of the central court at the ground level. Roy Lichtenstein, Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollock and Andy Warhol are some of the major artists represented.



Is there anyone who can't identify the [Washington Monument](#)? This white marble spire rises 555 feet above the city. The cornerstone for the monument honoring the nation's first president was laid July 4, 1848, but 5 years later a lack of funds stalled

construction at 152 feet; it was not completed until 1884. The view from the observation room at the 500-foot level is worth the inevitable wait in line. The surrounding grounds are usually filled with sightseers, joggers and frisbee throwers.

Just west of the Washington Monument is the [National World War II Memorial](#), dedicated in 2004. For such a global conflict—fought on six of the world's seven continents—it has a surprisingly intimate scale. There is a stark simplicity in the twin Pacific and Atlantic pavilions and the 56 pillars representing the U.S. states, territories and the District of Columbia, each adorned with a bronze wreath.

From the National World War II Memorial, walk past the two Reflecting Pools and climb the steps of the stately [Lincoln Memorial](#). The statue of Abraham Lincoln, 19 feet tall and 19 feet wide, radiates a quiet awe, and carved wall inscriptions from Lincoln's Gettysburg Address are an eloquent reminder of his dedication to freedom for all citizens. The view looking eastward from the top of the memorial steps is one of the city's finest, taking in West Potomac Park, the Washington Monument and, in the distance, the dome of the United States Capitol.

The [Vietnam Veterans Memorial](#) speaks to a particularly painful conflict in America's history. Its stark black granite walls, etched with the names of those killed and missing, retain every bit of their symbolic power nearly 4 decades later. Standing a short distance away in a small plaza of its own is the Vietnam Women's Memorial. This compelling sculpture depicts a servicewoman cradling a prone soldier in her arms, another holding his helmet, and a third standing with her face turned skyward as if crying out for help.

The Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial spreads out along the Tidal Basin shoreline. Shade trees, waterfalls, statuary and quiet little alcoves give it the feel of a secluded garden. The four open-air “rooms” chronicle FDR’s presidency and his two greatest achievements, guiding the nation through the twin challenges of the Great Depression and World War II. The 9-foot statue of a seated FDR in the third room radiates the strength and purpose shown by one of our nation’s greatest leaders.

From this outdoor setting it’s a short walk along the Tidal Basin to the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, a classical dome supported by graceful columns that was modeled on Rome’s Pantheon. Interestingly, the 19-foot bronze likeness of Jefferson, who wears a long coat and a button-down vest, was not installed until 4 years after the memorial was dedicated. When the cherry blossoms are at peak bloom—usually in early April—the most beautiful spot in the entire city may be from the steps of the Jefferson, looking out over the Tidal Basin.

The austere exterior of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum is certainly appropriate for suggesting the horrors of the Holocaust. The permanent exhibition, a narrative history depicting how millions of people were killed under the auspices of Nazi Germany, is an emotionally wrenching experience. The exhibition Remember the Children: Daniel’s Story presents Holocaust events in ways that younger visitors can understand.

In stark contrast to the atrocities of the Holocaust, a commitment to freedom stands at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. The White House symbolizes the power of the American presidency. French engineer Pierre-Charles L’Enfant’s plan for the new federal city called for two focal points: the Capitol and the President’s Mansion. The White House—renamed after British forces burned it in 1814 and the mansion was rebuilt and painted white—has periodically been enlarged, remodeled and redecorated, and the popular tour of its public areas continues to be a must-do sightseeing activity.

L’Enfant planned for the United States Capitol to be the nucleus of his visionary city plan. The seat of the federal government has about 550


rooms, but rest assured; the guided public tours don’t visit all of them. You will, however, be able to see the spacious Rotunda and view artist Constantino Brumidi’s fresco “Apotheosis of George Washington,” which decorates the inner canopy of the Capitol dome 180 feet above the floor. The parklike grounds surrounding the building were landscaped by Frederick Law Olmsted, creator of New York’s Central Park.

Nearby, the Library of Congress houses a staggering collection of more than 100 million items. As the name implies, it was founded in 1800 to serve the needs of congressional members. The Thomas Jefferson Building is the jewel of this three-building complex. Graced with beautifully detailed Italian Renaissance ornamentation, it also boasts a magnificent, octagonal-shaped Main Reading Room with elaborately painted vaulting, sculptural accents and lovely paintings, murals and mosaics.

Washington National Cathedral—officially the Cathedral Church of St. Peter and St. Paul—stands atop Mount St. Alban in upper Northwest D.C. Loosely based on the 14th-century English Gothic style, the exterior of this impressively large structure is distinguished by thousands of decorative stone carvings (look for the gargoyles). Enormous flying buttresses and stained glass accentuate a majestic interior. Afterward take a walk along the stone paths of the Bishop’s Garden, a medieval walled garden planted with yew trees, ancient boxwoods and rose bushes, and revel in the peace and quiet.

A different sort of majesty reigns at Arlington National Cemetery, just across the Potomac River from Washington: rows and rows of simple white headstones on more than 600 acres of rolling Virginia hills, interspersed with imposing stones and monuments that honor groups and significant individuals. Two presidents—William Howard Taft and John F. Kennedy—Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, William Jennings Bryan and numerous military leaders are among those buried here. One of the most visited sites is the Tomb of the Unknowns, in which lie the bodies of unknown servicemen from World Wars I and II and the Korean and Vietnam wars.

Attractions Details - Get additional information on AAA.com

 - GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*

1. National Air and Space Museum

7th St & Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20560
Phone: (202) 633-5285



8. National Gallery of Art

4th St & Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20565
Phone: (202) 842-6176



2. National Museum of American History, Kenneth E. Behring Center

14th St & Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20560
Phone: (202) 633-5285



9. Washington Monument

15th St & Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20004
Phone: (202) 426-6841



3. National Museum of Natural History

Constitution Ave & 10th St NW
Washington, DC 20560
Phone: (202) 633-1000



10. National World War II Memorial

Washington, DC 20024
Phone: (202) 426-6841



11. Lincoln Memorial

Washington, DC 20037
Phone: (202) 426-6841



4. Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

Independence Ave & 7th St SW
Washington, DC 20560
Phone: (202) 633-5285



12. Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Constitution Ave & Henry Bacon Dr NW
Washington, DC 20024
Phone: (202) 426-6841



5. Freer Gallery of Art

12th St & Jefferson Dr SW
Washington, DC 20560
Phone: (202) 633-1000



13. Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial

Washington, DC 20024
Phone: (202) 426-6841



6. National Museum of the American Indian

4th St & Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20560
Phone: (202) 633-1000



14. Thomas Jefferson Memorial

Washington, DC 20024
Phone: (202) 426-6841



7. National Zoological Park

3001 Connecticut Ave NW
Washington, DC 20008
Phone: (202) 633-4800

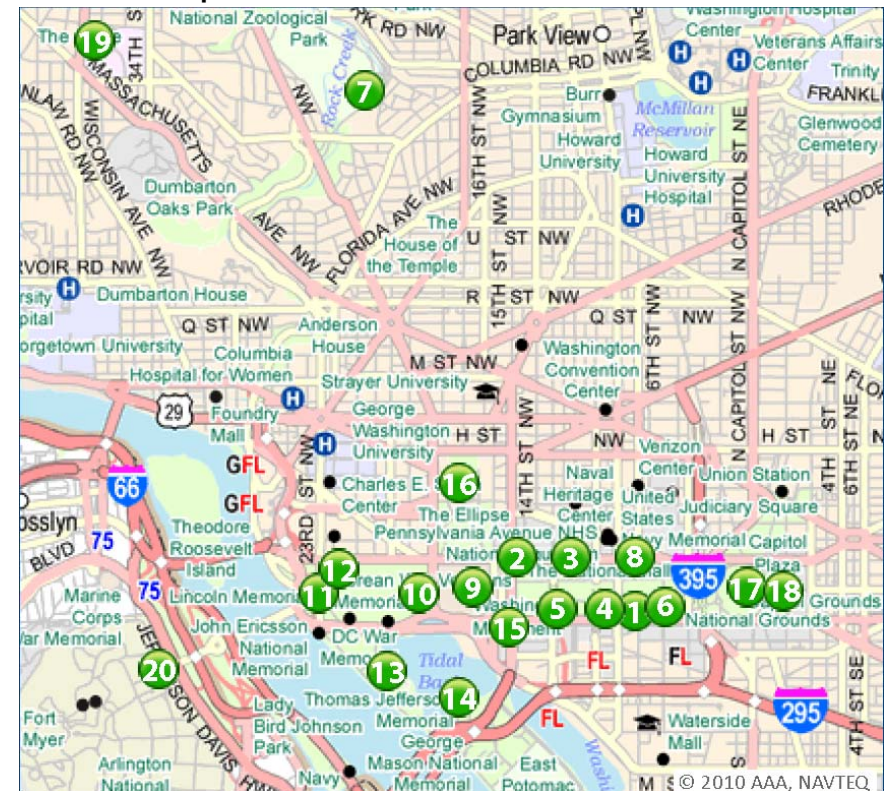


15. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

100 Raoul Wallenberg Pl SW
Washington, DC 20024
Phone: (202) 488-6100



Attractions Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using [TripTik Travel Planner](http://TripTik.com) on AAA.com

16. White House

1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500
Phone: (202) 224-3121



18. Library of Congress

1st St & Independence Ave SE
Washington, DC 20540
Phone: (202) 707-5000



17. United States Capitol

1st St & Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20001
Phone: (202) 226-8000



19. Washington National Cathedral

Massachusetts Ave & Wisconsin Ave NW
Washington, DC 20016
Phone: (202) 364-6616



20. Arlington National Cemetery

Phone: (703) 607-8000



If you have extra time for sightseeing, don't miss AAA GEM attractions in Alexandria, Chantilly, Great Falls, Leesburg, Lorton, Mount Vernon and Vienna, Va., and Largo, Md., all within a 30-mile radius of Washington.

Events

In addition to its many cultural and historic landmarks, this destination hosts a number of outstanding festivals and events that may coincide with your visit. GEMs are "Great Experiences for Members."

The nation's capital celebrates almost as many festivals, celebrations and commemorations as it has politicians. Hardly a week goes by without some sort of event appearing on the city's agenda; here are the high points.

Black History Month Celebrations are observed throughout February. Formal recognition of the achievements of black men and women was first proposed by scholar and historian Carter G. Woodson in 1926. Woodson designated the second week in February (falling between the birthdays of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln) as Black History Week; the tribute was extended to a full month in 1976. Special events take place at Smithsonian Institution museums, the African American Civil War Memorial and African American Civil War Museum, Madame Tussauds Washington D.C., the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site and the National Archives.

Although the Festival of St. Patrick takes up the entire month of March, the real celebration falls on the Sunday before Mar. 17, when The Nation's St. Patrick's Day Parade marches down Constitution Avenue N.W. Local pubs sponsor parade parties, and the Grand Marshal is often a noted Washingtonian (past marshals have included Helen Hayes and House speaker Thomas "Tip" O'Neill). In late March, the frequently gusty breezes of early spring are ideal for kites. The Smithsonian Kite Festival, held on the grassy expanse of The National Mall between 4th and 7th streets N.W., features flying, design and other competitions.

Another spring tradition is perhaps Washington's best-known and most cherished celebration, the National Cherry Blossom Festival. If the Japanese cherry trees ringing the Tidal Basin are in full glorious bloom at the same time the festivities take place, luck is with this AAA GEM event. That can be a delicate balancing act, but even when Mother Nature's timing is off there are plenty of activities and cultural events to enjoy, including the opening day ceremonies; music, dance and martial arts demonstrations; walking tours; a lantern-lighting ceremony; a Japanese street festival; and the grand finale, a parade along Constitution Avenue N.W. with marching bands, floats and giant balloons. The 2-week festival kicks off in late March.

The White House Easter Egg Roll, on the Monday following Easter Sunday (weather permitting), began back in 1878. The egg roll on the South Lawn is for children under 8, but kids of all ages can participate in egg decorating and other activities; for the entire family there's live music, stage shows and special guest readers. The National Park Service distributes free timed-entrance tickets on a first-come, first-served basis at the Ellipse Visitor Pavilion at 15th and E streets N.W. For details, phone the Visitors Office 24-hour information line at (202) 456-7041.

Sandwiched between Rock Creek Park and the Potomac River, Georgetown is Washington's oldest neighborhood and one of its most fashionable addresses. Handsome Federal-style townhouses line leafy, brick-paved streets, giving this compact urban enclave a sense of distinction. Private homes and gardens are open to the public for the Georgetown House Tour, normally held the last weekend in April. Sponsored by St. John's Episcopal Church, the tour includes afternoon tea in the church's Parish Hall. For information phone (202) 338-2287.



A time of reflection for those who gave their lives in defense of our country or its political principles, [Memorial Day Ceremonies](#) take on particular resonance in Washington. Among other locations, ceremonies are held at [Arlington National Cemetery](#), the [Vietnam Veterans Memorial](#) and the [United States Navy Memorial](#). And what better day to be a proud American than on July 4? D.C. exults in grand style with the [A Capitol Fourth—America’s Independence Day Celebration](#), a AAA GEM event. A noon parade down Constitution Avenue is followed by all sorts of entertainment and events on the National Mall, evening symphony concerts and, of course, rip-roaring fireworks bursting over the [Washington Monument](#).

The Mall also is the site of the [Smithsonian Folklife Festival](#), which begins in late June and runs into early July. Don’t miss this showcase for regional and international music, song and dance as well as the arts of cooking, crafting and storytelling. Better yet, the festival encourages active participation, whether it’s sampling traditional foods or talking with one of the many artisans or storytellers as they demonstrate their skills.

More cultural vitality is on tap at the [Adams Morgan Day Festival](#), usually on the second Sunday in September. Adams Morgan is one of the District’s most culturally diverse neighborhoods, and this lively street celebration percolates with live music and overflows with cool craft, jewelry and art booths and food stands featuring South American, Central American, Caribbean and African specialties. It runs along 18th Street N.W. between Florida Avenue and Columbia Road N.W. **Note:** Street parking in the area is extremely limited, but the festival site is easily accessible from the Woodley Park, Dupont Circle, U Street or Columbia Heights Metro stations.

The equestrian set hits downtown’s Verizon Center for the [Washington International Horse Show](#) in late October. It brings the nation’s top horses and riders for barrel racing and show jumping competitions and the Dressage Invitational Championship. But it’s not all about horses: The

Jack Russell terrier races are especially crowd-pleasing, and there’s also a performance by a big-name entertainer.

The grueling [Marine Corps Marathon](#), also in late October, tests the mettle of long-distance runners who start in Arlington and end at the [Marine Corps War Memorial](#) in Arlington National Cemetery. In between they navigate a 26.2-mile course through Arlington, Georgetown and the District. It’s known as “The People’s Marathon” because it welcomes first-timers as well as veterans, and the “Marathon of the Monuments” because it passes so many of them. If you don’t relish the physical challenge, pick a spot along the course and cheer on the participants. In addition to the main event there are 10-kilometer and kids’ runs.

Washington’s holiday season is ushered in by the [Pageant of Peace/Lighting of the National Christmas Tree](#), a AAA GEM event. On the first Thursday in December the national Christmas tree is illuminated—a living 40-foot Colorado blue spruce that was transplanted in 1978 from York, Pa., to the Ellipse, just south of the White House. The accompanying pageant features a message of peace from the president, famous entertainers and a military band. Model trains surround the base of the tree and run daily throughout the month. Specially decorated Christmas trees from each state, U.S. territory and the District brighten the Pathway of Peace and are lit each evening through Jan. 1. Performances by volunteer choirs and dancers add to the festivities.

Discovering D.C.

While Washington encompasses a number of distinctive and vibrant districts, we’ve highlighted the following for their abundance of scrapbook-worthy sights, lip-smacking eats and eye-opening experiences.

Capitol Hill

Approximate boundaries: F Street N.E. (northern), Virginia Avenue S.E. (southern), 14th Street S.E. (eastern), Capitol Complex (western)

Metro stops: Capitol South, Eastern Market, Union Station

Our travel editors' attraction picks: [Library of Congress](#), [Supreme Court Building](#), [United States Botanic Garden](#)

AAA Diamond-rated restaurants: [Cafe Berlin](#), [Charlie Palmer Steak](#), [The Monocle on Capitol Hill](#)

Although the [United States Capitol](#) is not located at the geographical center of Washington, D.C., the District's four quadrants are determined according to their physical relation to the inspiring domed structure. This is the city's hub, with the immediate neighborhood attracting both tourists and visiting locals. Here you'll observe families unwinding in Capitol Hill's nearly 60 urban parks; young couples perusing the *Hill Rag's* community events calendar; and off-duty journalists dining *al fresco* along Barracks Row (8th Street S.E.).

Home to national museums, expansive libraries and impressive, small-scale edifices, this locale exudes a prim gracefulness in the shadow of the Capitol building. Even on rainy days, when the wind shakes the throngs of sycamores and magnolias planted neatly along brick-paved sidewalks, the seemingly methodical scattering of leaves and blossoms effectively adds to the area's loveliness. Juxtaposed against blue skies, the clustered turrets of its brightly painted Queen Anne residences form an impeccable man-made skyline in D.C.'s largest historic residential district. On the ground, weekend merchants peddle hand-painted wares and vibrant potted flowers at Eastern Market, where even members of Congress, lobbyists and others who can afford Capitol Hill's steep home prices wait in line for a few of Market Lunch's tasty crab cakes. Phone (202) 547-8444 for Market Lunch.

Downtown D.C. & Mall Area

Approximate boundaries: M Street N.W. (northern), Independence Avenue S.W. and Pennsylvania Avenue N.W. (southern), North Capitol Street (eastern), White House grounds and 21st Street N.W. (western)

Metro stops: Archives-Navy Memorial, Farragut North, Farragut West, Federal Triangle, Gallery Place-Chinatown, Judiciary Square, McPherson

Square, Metro Center, Mount Vernon Square/7th Street-Convention Center

Our travel editors' attraction picks: [National Museum of Crime & Punishment](#), [National Portrait Gallery](#), [Newseum](#)

AAA Diamond-rated restaurants: [The Capital Grille](#), [Georgia Brown's](#), [TenPenh Restaurant](#)

In the "City of Trees," pockets of green warm up the gray sterility of Downtown D.C., which roughly unfolds north and east of the White House. Also spicing up the urban expanse are the ethnic eateries and



trendy nightlife establishments of its mushrooming Penn Quarter. Encircling the Verizon Center—the city's sports and entertainment arena at 7th and F streets N.W.—this downtown neighborhood encompasses Washington's shrinking Chinatown. Do a little shopping around H Street N.W.'s [Chinatown Friendship](#)

[Archway](#), richly adorned with seven tiled roofs and more than 200 painted dragons. About a block east, on 6th Street N.W., you can watch aproned noodle masters hard at work. Behind a picture window imprinted with big, black letters that shout "Fresh Noodle Made on the Spot," floured hands swing long globs of dough, captivating spectators standing outside Chinatown Express; phone (202) 638-0424.

Afterward, study methods of stealth and persuasion at the [International Spy Museum](#), or soak up the new classics presented at The National Theatre. Washington's oldest continually operating theater is on Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.; the thoroughfare, along with Constitution Avenue and 15th Street N.W., frames the Federal Triangle historic district. Several edifices featuring red-tiled roofs and stately colonnades enhance the landscape, while the United States Department of Justice building showcases Art Deco design elements.

In addition the striking [Old Post Office Pavilion](#), the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center and the Department of Commerce building contain exhibits, visitor information centers, shops and eateries. Entertainment programs are held as well. Conveniently located just south of the Federal Triangle district are the prominent museums and art galleries (and many food courts and gift shops) of [The National Mall](#).

Dupont Circle

Approximate boundaries: Florida Avenue N.W. (northern), M Street N.W. (southern), 16th Street N.W. (eastern), 22nd Street N.W. (western)

Metro stops: Dupont Circle

Our travel editors' attraction picks: [Anderson House](#), [National Museum of American Jewish Military History](#), [St. Matthew's Cathedral](#)

AAA Diamond-rated restaurants: [La Tomate](#), [Nora](#), [Raku-An Asian Diner](#)

In Dupont Circle, long a hub for D.C.'s gay and lesbian community, same-sex couples skim bestsellers at pioneering bookstore Lambda Rising (1625 Connecticut Ave. N.W.), in operation since the 1970s, while gay-friendly bars and upscale clubs blink to life after dark. Along Massachusetts Avenue N.W., bike messengers whiz past Armani-clad pedestrians on Embassy Row, where retrooled mansions and row houses display colorful national flags.

At the heart of this vivacious urban neighborhood in northwest Washington is a tulip-speckled green space, frequently the starting point for gay pride parades and celebrations. Daniel Chester French, sculptor of the [Lincoln Memorial](#), designed the park's centerpiece: the Dupont Memorial Fountain. Pigeons flying overhead land atop its dribbling basin, while residents, lounging before the white marble memorial's three carved figures, greet friends out browsing Connecticut Avenue's many boutiques and art galleries. This is the epicenter of activity—it's where pensive chess players huddle over checkered boards and crooning guitar players perform in front of signs that read "Tips Appreciated!"

With fingers still sticky from a stop at Krispy Kreme Doughnuts (near the Dupont Circle Metro station), tourists snap pictures of the action before visiting such historic and cultural landmarks as [The House of the Temple](#): The Brewmaster's Castle, an imposing late-Victorian structure on New Hampshire Avenue N.W.; and [The Phillips Collection](#) museum.

Foggy Bottom

Approximate boundaries: Pennsylvania Avenue N.W. (northern), Constitution Avenue N.W. (southern), 17th Street N.W. (eastern), Potomac River (western)

Metro stops: Foggy Bottom-GWU

Our travel editors' attraction picks: [The Albert Einstein Memorial](#), [Department of the Interior Museum](#), [Department of State](#)

AAA Diamond-rated restaurants: [Cafe des Artistes](#), [Marcel's](#), [Dish](#)

Even with all its 20th-century additions, Foggy Bottom retains much of its old-world charm. Before dining at the [Roof Terrace Restaurant & Bar](#) at [The Kennedy Center](#) or attending a Tony Award-winning play at the renowned cultural center, spend the day exploring the neighborhood's historic sites. Read up on its architectural jewels at The American Institute of Architects Bookstore, on New York Avenue N.W. near Federal-style [The Octagon Museum](#), then peruse the collections of the [DAR Museum](#) and the [Corcoran Gallery of Art](#).

In the 18th century, fog rolling in from the Potomac River often blanketed this low-lying, swampy area situated just west of the [White House](#) grounds. Also contributing to the haze—and, consequently, to the district's name—were the industrial enterprises that moved in during the next century. Like Georgetown, this neighborhood of forgotten row houses underwent a transformation beginning in the 1950s. Government buildings and new facilities for The George Washington University (located here since 1873) replaced dilapidated factories and warehouses, while an old brewery building was demolished to make way for [The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts](#).

With the advent of this “living memorial” to JFK, other modern amenities quickly followed, including the ritzy shops, condominiums and offices of the now-infamous Watergate complex. Only *slightly* less notorious are the diet-breaking marble mousse cakes and fruity tortes of Watergate Pastry, which has operated in the compound since 1966; phone (202) 342-1777.

Georgetown

Approximate boundaries: R Street N.W. (northern), Potomac River (southern), Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway N.W. (eastern), Georgetown University (western)

Metro stops: Closest stations are Rosslyn and Dupont Circle. The Georgetown Metro Connection picks up every 10 minutes from the aforementioned stations; fare is \$1.50 or 35c with a Metrorail transfer. Also, the DC Circulator offers a Georgetown-Union Station Route, which runs along Wisconsin Avenue and M Street N.W. in Georgetown daily from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.; fare is \$1.

Our travel editors' attraction picks: [Tudor Place Historic House and Garden](#), [Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park](#), [C & O Canal Boat Trips](#)

AAA Diamond-rated restaurants: [1789 Restaurant](#), [Mie N Yu](#), [Zed's Ethiopian Cuisine](#)

The District of Columbia absorbed the thriving Maryland port town of Georgetown in 1871; however, this district's now-renowned status of affluence wasn't secure until the 1950s, when one high-profile resident—a charismatic young John F. Kennedy—helped boost the neighborhood's appeal and, subsequently, its real estate values. (Before Kennedy moved into a *very* exclusive Pennsylvania Avenue abode, his Georgetown addresses included 3271 P St. N.W. and 3307 N St. N.W.)

Today tour guides detail the quarter's rich history and architecture, pointing out Georgian mansions, Federal-style structures and Richardsonian Romanesque arches to enthralled sightseers. This elegant district is home to such sites as the [Old Stone House](#) (part of [Rock Creek](#)

[Park](#)), thought to be Washington's oldest edifice, and the tranquil gardens of [Dumbarton Oaks](#); however, fashion-conscious visitors typically remain focused on Georgetown's multitude of glossy storefronts. University students are known to troll for happy-hour specials at such area haunts as Martin's Tavern (264 Wisconsin Ave. N.W.) and Mr. Smith's (3104 M St. N.W.), whereas joggers often can be seen sprinting to (and on) a different type of haunt—a 75-step staircase used in the horror classic “The Exorcist.” (The stairs connect Prospect Street with M Street N.W. near the end of 36th Street N.W.) Phone (202) 333-7370 for Martin's Tavern or (202) 333-3104 for Mr. Smiths.

Things to Do

Shopping

If you're like most D.C. visitors, your laundry list of must-sees and must-dos began forming long before you stepped foot on the National Mall or snapped your first photo of the Capitol building's cast-iron dome. With so many renowned attractions, the best bet for acquiring just the right memento to commemorate your trip is simply to see the city!

The Washington metropolitan area is one of the country's most affluent areas, and as a result, there are more malls and specialized shopping districts than one could imagine. Shop for rare treasures in museum gift shops, browse exclusive boutiques inside refurbished historic structures, or try on locally designed garments in a myriad of eclectic neighborhoods. Whether you're a bargain hunter, a fashionista or a casual souvenir buyer, as long as you know where to reach for your wallet, you'll find the capital's collective shopping scene very rewarding.

Due to heightened security in Washington, you won't spot many street-side souvenir stands near the various federal government buildings. For a few “official” keepsakes from the Executive Mansion (ones that won't have the Secret Service chasing after you), stop at the gift shop in either the White House Visitor Center at 1450 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W. or the White House Historical Association at 740 Jackson Pl. N.W. The latter is in a beautiful townhouse off Lafayette Square, a picturesque 7-acre

public park opposite the north lawn of the White House; phone (202) 737-8292.

South of the Ellipse, you won't have trouble unearthing the purchasable art, gems and specimens of the Smithsonian Institution. The world's largest complex of museums, art galleries and research facilities shelters an immense collection of quality merchandise. Procure crafts and ornate jewelry from around the world, thumb through books about astronomy and historic expeditions, or pit troops of snarling dinosaur toys against cuddly "Teddy" Roosevelt commemorative teddy bears.

Want to show your support—or disdain—for a certain government figure? Sort through fervent political buttons, opinionated bumper stickers and reproduction peace medals at Political Americana, 1331 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W., close by to the White House and The National Theatre; phone (202) 737-7730.

Just a few steps away is The Shops at National Place (M: Federal Triangle), an indulgent harbor in a sea of spartan office buildings. The mall extends from the National Press Building to the J.W. Marriott Pennsylvania Avenue (you can enter the shops through the hotel); phone (202) 662-1250. If your feet are aching after a few hours of sightseeing, track down some boots/sneakers/sandals made for walking at Filene's Basement, one of the shopping center's anchors at the National Press Building on 14th Street N.W. The Massachusetts-based discount chain is a great place to purchase inexpensive, yet stylish essentials, including sunglasses, hats and jackets; phone (202) 638-4110. Just a few blocks east at 999 E St. N.W. you can find rock 'n' roll merchandise at the Hard Rock Café.

Save a few \$1 notes for the nearby National Portrait Gallery, where you can compare your George Washington to the painting used to create the dollar bill's likeness of the president. Afterward, visit the museum gift shop for urbane replicate portraiture. For goods highlighting the government's clandestine operations, venture to the International Spy Museum and splurge on such top-secret souvenirs as a document-scanning pen or a fingerprint scanner. Or, dole out a few bucks for a fake

moustache kit and a pair of mirrored rearview sunglasses, then wear your gag gifts as you investigate the immediate area now known as Penn Quarter (M: Gallery Place-Chinatown). Encompassing D.C.'s small Chinatown, this downtown district is filled with vibrant signs—including those of Urban Outfitters and Aveda—that lure potential customers in both English and Chinese.

It's difficult to miss the Old Post Office, at 12th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue N.W. Formerly housing both the D.C. and U.S. post offices, this stylishly renovated Romanesque Revival structure now holds specialty stores, a food court and an observation deck.

Another historic edifice, Union Station (M: Union Station), is one of the city's most elegant settings for indoor shopping. Found along Massachusetts Avenue N.E. in the Capitol Hill neighborhood, the restored 1907 train station contains not only Amtrak's headquarters and a working train station, but more than 100 shops and restaurants and a multiscreen movie complex.

Transporting you to a bygone era are the station's barrel-vaulted ceilings, Romanesque columns, spiral staircases, and intricate decorative painting and gold leaf. Greeting visitors who arrive by train is a bronze statue of A. Philip Randolph, founder of the Sleeping Car Porters Union and orchestrator of the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. An amber glow bathes three levels of stores, including such retailers as The Body Shop, Pendleton and Victoria's Secret. In the East Hall examine expensive, high-quality items—from collector postage stamps to handcrafted kaleidoscopes—in a plush atmosphere accented by potted palms and mahogany kiosks.

Just as the enticing smell of candied nuts hits your nose, the sight of a family nibbling on cone-shaped crepes furling in newsprinted paper makes your stomach grumble. Across the pedestrian-filled street a saxophone moans in response; its soulful player—his eyes clenched shut as he blows—sits beside a brick building at Eastern Market (M: Eastern Market). The best days to amble along the tree-lined streets of Capitol Hill are the weekends, when this lively market, in operation since 1873, is

in full swing at 7th Street and North Carolina Avenue S.E. Although many food vendors are open throughout the week, craft booths and a flea market are added features on Saturdays and Sundays.

A gleaming mecca for serious spendthrifts, the four-level Mazza Gallerie (M: Friendship Heights) is anchored by fashionable Neiman Marcus and supplemented by such retail outlets as the Saks Fifth Avenue Men's Store and Williams-Sonoma. Get a breath of fresh air wandering through the surrounding neighborhood (known as Friendship Heights on the D.C. side and Chevy Chase on the Maryland side), but don't forget to stop for accessories—pore over the polished bracelets, brooches, watches and rings at Tiffany & Co. and Cartier (5481 and 5471B Wisconsin Ave., respectively). If the hefty price tags at such posh shops make you shudder, check out Loehmann's, also on Wisconsin Avenue; this New York-based off-price retailer has been in business since 1921. Head straight to the store's Back Room for big savings on designer threads; phone (202) 362-4733.

There also is a Filene's Basement in Mazza Gallerie, while Chevy Chase Pavilion, situated above the Friendship Heights Metro station, offers more mall-oriented retailers, from Ann Taylor Loft to Pottery Barn. After patronizing the aforementioned shops and malls of Wisconsin Avenue N.W., sojourn at Lord & Taylor, located near Jenifer Street at 5255 Western Ave. N.W.; phone (202) 362-9600.

Despite the crowds, a severe shortage of parking and the absence of a convenient Metro station, Georgetown is many Washingtonians' favorite place to shop. Stores along and just off Georgetown's two main thoroughfares—Wisconsin Avenue and M Street N.W.—boast everything from voguish Betsey Johnson apparel (1319 Wisconsin Ave. N.W.) to snakeskin boots itching for a bit of two-stepping (Cowboy Western Wear, 3147 Dumbarton Ave. N.W.); phone (202) 338-4090 and (202) 298-8299, respectively.

Stroll the charming cobblestone streets of this affluent neighborhood, passing chicly shabby brick buildings as you accumulate bags from both national retailers and unique, locally owned shops. If following the latest

fashion trends isn't your style, stop in at funky Commander Salamander, 1420 Wisconsin Ave. N.W., which offers Goth-gear and kitschy gifts (where else can you buy a voodoo doll toothpick holder and a pair of black fishnet stockings?); phone (202) 337-2265.

For distinctive looks of a different variety, try piecing together a "new" outfit at Annie Creamcheese, 3279 M St. N.W.; Inga's Once is Not Enough, 4830 MacArthur Blvd. N.W.; or Secondhand Rose, 1516 Wisconsin Ave. N.W. These upscale resale stores feature quality couture frocks and accessories from such brands as Chanel, Gucci and Prada.

For a break from the hustle and bustle of Georgetown's busy sidewalks, head indoors to The Shops at Georgetown Park, encompassing an entire block at 3222 M St. N.W. adjacent to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. Its brick exterior adheres to the Federal style characteristic of much Georgetown architecture. The interior, however, is elaborately Victorian, with such shops as Christian Bernard, for jewelry and fine watches, and gourmet food purveyor Dean & DeLuca situated amid wrought iron, potted parlor palms and grand chandeliers. Rest your feet in the sun-drenched atrium beside the babbling fountain before combing for deals at Ann Taylor, Anthropologie, H&M and J. Crew.

On your way to Dupont Circle (M: Dupont Circle), pose for photos on Massachusetts Avenue N.W., where you'll come across many of Embassy Row's architecturally striking mansions and row houses. Walk along Connecticut Avenue N.W. to peruse time-honored classics at such retailers as Brooks Brothers, Talbots and Burberry, then, if the weather is pleasant, put down your shopping bags and people-watch by the Dupont Memorial Fountain. Just up the street is neighborhood institution Lambda Rising, serving D.C.'s gay and lesbian community since 1974. In addition to its literary selections, the bookstore carries CDs and DVDs, T-shirts, greeting cards, jewelry and an assortment of gay-pride merchandise. On display at Kramerbooks & Afterwords Café, 1517 Connecticut Ave. N.W., are quirky titles such as "Nancy Drew Mad Libs," along with quick-reference guides relating everything from Buddhism to physics; phone (202) 387-1462.

If there's time, roam a few of D.C.'s other colorful neighborhoods. Although Adams Morgan is well known for its bars and nocturnal carousing masses, it also is home to several stores selling odd knickknacks and funky home decor. Along 18th Street N.W., between Columbia Road and Florida Avenue, reggae and world music seep out shop entranceways proffering hookahs or Caribbean- and African-inspired clothing. From the junction of 18th Street and Florida Avenue, the U Street Corridor shopping district stretches east to the U Street/African-Amer Civil War Memorial/Cardozo Metro station at 13th Street N.W. This developing quarter is likewise a hot nightlife area, but several bohemian merchants, their tiny boutiques stacked haphazardly within refurbished row houses, have made this strip popular with trendy local shoppers.

Just south of Washington, D.C., in nearby Virginia is Old Town Alexandria, an enchanting place to window-shop. From the King Street Metro station, hop on a DASH city bus to get around town (fare is \$1.25), or take the free King Street Trolley east toward the Potomac River waterfront. There are trolley stops every 2 to 3 blocks; get off at the last one to browse the paintings, handcrafted jewelry and ceramics at the Torpedo Factory Art Center and meet the artists responsible for such lovely wares.

Walk along King Street's brick-paved sidewalks, where Old Glory flaps gently above crammed antique galleries, ethnic boutiques and high-end urban home goods stores. Sightseers peer in storefront windows framed by colorful flower boxes and wooden shutters as shop owners tend to inspired displays. Here you'll happen upon mazelike showrooms trading whimsical stationery and unusual trinkets, patriotic T-shirts and handwoven Tibetan rugs.

The heart of Old Town is the intersection of King and Washington streets, but veer off the beaten path now and then to discover Alexandria's many historic sites, picture-perfect row houses and additional shopping opportunities. On Saturday mornings search for one-of-a-kind keepsakes

(and a few delicious baked treats) at Market Square by City Hall, the steeped brick edifice on King Street between Fairfax and Royal streets.

For serious shopaholics, nearby Virginia's legion of suburban malls provide a bounty of supplementary shopping possibilities. Just across the Potomac in Arlington, Va., is Fashion Centre at Pentagon City, one of the few shopping areas outside the city with its own subway stop (M: Pentagon City). A spectacular glass atrium encloses some 170 stores on four levels, among them Macy's and Nordstrom.

One of the first major malls to open in the suburbs was Tysons Corner Center, just off the Beltway on SR 7 (Leesburg Pike) in McLean, Va. It contains four major department stores—Bloomingdale's, Lord & Taylor, Macy's and Nordstrom—and more than 250 smaller shops. A slightly more upscale neighbor is Tysons Galleria, 2001 International Dr. (across Chain Bridge Road/SR 123 from Tysons Corner Center). Macy's, Neiman Marcus and Saks Fifth Avenue anchor more than 100 specialty boutiques.

Almost everyone, it seems, goes to Potomac Mills, just off I-95 (Potomac Mills exit 156), 25 miles south of Washington and about a 45-minute drive (depending on traffic). More than a mile long, it attracts busloads of D.C. area shoppers and regional bargain hunters from as far away as Pennsylvania, a popularity that leads Potomac Mills to bill itself as Virginia's biggest tourist attraction. Snatch up the bargains at Saks Fifth Avenue—OFF 5TH, Nordstrom Rack and the Banana Republic Factory Store.

Nightlife

As night falls over the District of Columbia, red neon illuminates the long lineup outside a throbbing Adams Morgan club packed full of gyrating twentysomethings. On U Street, saxophones and clarinets complement a velvety voice singing to enchanted off-duty congressional aides. Meanwhile, scruffy-faced college students talk politics at a Georgetown watering hole, unaware the government leader they're discussing is just a few blocks away, enjoying his own night on the town.

Ranging from subdued to frenzied, the nightlife scene in Washington is as varied as the city's residents. At one extreme is Adams Morgan, one of D.C.'s most well-known (and notoriously unruly) areas for clubbing and bar hopping. Friday and Saturday nights, the sidewalks along 18th Street N.W. are jammed with locals—casually dressed in jeans and lighthearted T-shirts—who linger beneath colorful awnings and windows bedecked with twinkling lights and glowing beer signs. Before heading indoors, take in the district's plentiful open-air artwork; several wall paintings embellish Columbia Road N.W., another of Adams Morgan's café-and-bar-festooned thoroughfares, while a mural of French cabaret singer Aristide Bruant seemingly relishes the wild goings-on of 18th Street.

Nearby, a voluptuous, red-haired maiden presides over the debauchery at Madam's Organ Blues Bar, 2461 18th St. N.W., a bawdy saloon offering live music nightly, free billiards and, in honor of "The Madam," half-priced Rolling Rocks for redheads. For something a tad less rowdy, people-watch from a seat in open-fronted The Diner, 2453 18th St. N.W., a surprisingly luminous 24-hour greasy spoon. Or, head to sister eatery Tryst Coffeehouse, 2459 18th St. N.W., and pair a candy-flavored cocktail with a grilled cheese sandwich or a Pop-Tart. Phone (202) 667-5370 for Madam's Organ Blues Bar, (202) 232-8800 for The Diner or (202) 232-5500 for Tryst Coffeehouse. The culturally diverse Adams Morgan neighborhood also is home to a multitude of ethnic businesses, several of which transform into after-hours hotspots clouded by exhaling hookah smokers or pulsing with spirited reggae beats.

Situated in what was once the largest urban African-American community in the nation, laid-back jazz clubs and tiny, sultry lounges line the U Street Corridor roughly from 15th Street to 9th Street N.W. (though, east of 11th Street, this ever-evolving district can get gritty). Evening pursuits in this quarter also extend south of U Street along 14th Street, where you can relax over coffee and bestsellers at Busboys and Poets, (202) 387-7638, a progressive bookstore café, or nibble on *tapas* in one of the thoroughfare's many bohemian restaurants.

For *really* late-night eats, head to Ben's Chili Bowl, 1213 U St. N.W., which stays open until 4 a.m. Fridays and Saturdays. Doling out chili-garnished hot dogs and burgers, this enduring neighborhood icon hasn't changed much since its opening in 1958. During U Street's heyday, jazz luminaries and other top entertainers frequented the eatery; phone (202) 667-0909.

Just a few hundred feet from "The Bowl" you'll notice a dramatic mural of Washington native Duke Ellington. The influential composer, pianist and bandleader regularly graced the area's once-renowned music halls, including a soulful 11th Street club now known as Bohemian Caverns; phone (202) 299-0800.

But, improvising sax players and trumpeters aren't the only musicians you might discover around this burgeoning locale. Bang your head at the Black Cat, 1811 14th St. N.W., where local indie bands and a wide-range of national acts—everyone from the rocking New York Dolls to genre-transcending The Roots—thrash about onstage. All-ages shows are held in two concert rooms as well as in the Red Room Bar, a no-cover-charge dive where you can play pinball 'til your thumbs go numb and socialize with Black Cat regulars over a variety of Belgian beers; phone (202) 667-4490.

No matter what your taste or budget, you're bound to have an enjoyable time in Georgetown—whether you challenge Georgetown University undergraduates to a buffalo wing-eating contest at The Tombs, 1226 36th St. N.W., or simply stroll beneath the stars in this lively, historic neighborhood. Walk along M Street N.W. for a bevy of nighttime choices, including Clyde's, a casual, yet classy landmark known for its tasty burgers. Since its opening in 1963, the tavern has spawned several spin-offs in the Washington metropolitan area. Phone (202) 337-6668 for The Tombs or (202) 333-9180 for Clyde's.

As evidenced by U Street's fare, the epicenter of the nation also is a hub for jazz and blues. As you enter a little 18th-century carriage house off Wisconsin Avenue N.W. in Georgetown, listen closely and you'll hear the faint murmur of such bygone musical greats as Charlie Byrd, Dizzy

Gillespie and Sarah Vaughan. Snapping you back to modern times are the wailing Blues Alley singers of today, their lips forming perfect “O’s” as they belt out tunes against a backdrop of exposed brick walls. The intimate supper club is said to be the oldest in continuous operation in the country; phone (202) 337-4141.

A budding downtown nightlife area known as Penn Quarter surrounds the ornate, gilded Chinatown Friendship Archway, elegantly extending over H Street at 7th Street N.W. Buffed steel and frosted glass dominate sleek clubs catering to high-rolling, well-coifed young professionals, while several chic dining establishments offering music, wine and martinis entertain revelers well into the wee hours. Blurring your vision even before you order is R.F.D. Washington’s ridiculously long tap list, which spans the alphabet from Abita Amber, a lightly caramel-flavored Munich-style lager, to Zywiec, a brand of Polish beer. Or, if you prefer to keep things simple, grab a pint of Guinness next door at Fadó Irish Pub & Restaurant, 808 7th St. N.W., and join the raucous locals cheering at simulcast rugby and Gaelic football matchups. Phone (202) 289-2030 for R.F.D. Washington or (202) 789-0066 for Fadó Irish Pub.

If watching games isn’t your style, head down 7th Street to Lucky Strike Lanes in Gallery Place. Not your typical, humdrum bowling alley, this flashy activity center exudes a suave blend of kitsch and urban sophistication. With DJs spinning nightly until 2 a.m., hip Washingtonians chill by the vintage-inspired bar, pricey frou-frou drinks in hand. Beguiling artwork images are showcased on floor-to-ceiling video screens at the ends of shimmering alleys, providing the perfect excuse for rolling one too many gutter balls; phone (202) 347-1021.

During the witching hour, get your kicks in Dupont Circle, a vibrant neighborhood where you’ll encounter a diverse nightlife scene offering everything from 24-hour bookstore cafés to after-hours dance clubs. Both upscale and laid-back establishments line Connecticut Avenue N.W., with the party stretching north to S Street N.W. and as far south as K Street N.W.

Encircling Dupont’s charming core—where you’ll find unsung street performers and reflective residents assembled around an eye-catching fountain—are numerous bars and lounges that have long accommodated D.C.’s gay and lesbian population. Affording mingling opportunities are the varied establishments on P and 17th streets N.W. Gay-friendly mainstays on the latter thoroughfare range from bold to conservative.

If your plans don’t include all-night clubbing in Dupont Circle, add a dash of entertainment to your evening meal. Dine in style as singing waiters tempt you with decadent chocolate soufflés and bubbling glasses of Dom Pérignon at Stars Bistro & Bar, a popular cabaret-style restaurant on P Street. Wednesday through Saturday evenings you can listen to live music while sipping a foamy cappuccino or a Chocolate-Covered Cherry-tini at Kramerbooks & Afterwords Café on Connecticut Avenue. Phone (202) 464-6464 for Stars Bistro & Bar or (202) 387-1400 for Kramerbooks & Afterwords Café.

The D.C. vicinity features a multitude of both established nightlife districts (Wilson Boulevard in Arlington, Va.) and up-and-comers (H Street N.E. and K Street N.W.)—so many, in fact, there’s not enough room to describe them all here. You’ll find the *City Paper* and *The Washington Post* additionally helpful for nighttime planning.

The Metro, which can transport you to many of these hotspots, operates until 3.a.m. Friday and Saturday nights; trains run until about midnight Sunday through Thursday. However, when heading into unfamiliar territory after dark, rather than emerge from a subway station without a clear sense of direction, spend a few extra dollars and simply hire a taxi before heading out for a fun-filled evening in the nation’s capital.

Spectator Sports

D.C. is not usually thought of as a sports-crazy town in the sense that Chicago or Pittsburgh are. However, the city still goes wild for the Washington Redskins. The three-time Super Bowl champions draw strength from an across-the-board contingent of fans. And major league baseball returned to the District in 2005 when the Montréal Expos moved south and became the Washington Nationals.

Spectators also can choose from four additional professional sports teams—basketball's Washington Wizards, the WNBA's (Women's National Basketball Association) Mystics, hockey's Washington Capitals and soccer's D.C. United. In addition, six area universities—American, Georgetown, George Washington and Howard in the District, George Mason University in Virginia and the University of Maryland—offer intercollegiate sports action.

Baseball

The Washington Nationals play ball at 41,000-seat Nationals Park (M: Navy Yard), which opened in time for the beginning of the 2008 season. The stadium site, about a mile south of the United States Capitol and just west of the Anacostia River, is bounded by Potomac Avenue S.W., 1st Street S.W. and S. Capitol Street S.W. Single-game tickets range from \$5 in the grandstand to \$325 for the president's seat level; phone (202) 397-7328 or (888) 632-6287.

Basketball

Legions of local fans head to the Verizon Center, 7th and F streets N.W. (M: Gallery Place-Chinatown), to take in a Washington Wizards game. The Wizards are four-time Eastern Conference champs and walked away victorious over the Golden State Warriors in the 1977-78 NBA finals. The action takes place from November to April; phone (202) 628-3200 or (202) 661-5050. The Verizon Center also is home to the WNBA Mystics, who began play in 1998.

Impressive NCAA champions the Hoyas hail from Georgetown University and are widely known by hometown rooters as well as by those who

follow the Division IA circuit. Basketball fans also should check out the American University Eagles, The George Washington University Colonials, the Howard University Bison, the University of Maryland Terrapins (the Terps) and the George Mason University Patriots. The D.C. Armory, 3rd and M streets N.E., offers exhibition basketball games.

Football

The Washington Redskins—who won the Super Bowl in 1983, 1988 and 1992—have an army of followers notorious for their zeal. Hear that whooshing noise? It's the sound of fans sucking up every last home game ticket in town. They are more precious than gold; sports fans interested in seeing the Skins play would be better served trying to track down some preseason tickets instead.

FedEx Field, off I-495/I-95 exit 15A (Central Ave. East) or 17A (Landover Rd. East) in nearby Landover, Md. (M: Morgan Boulevard), is packed with fans from September to December; phone (301) 276-6050 for ticket information. Meanwhile, the University of Maryland's football team, the Terrapins, play their home games at Byrd Stadium.

Hockey

The Washington Capitals have been around since the 1974-75 season and waged a division-winning campaign in 1999-2000. The season runs from October through April at the Verizon Center. Various season ticket plans are offered; for information phone Capitals Guest Services at (202) 266-2350.

Horse Racing

Several tracks around the District offer horse racing; Rosecroft Raceway in Fort Washington, Md., (301) 567-4000, and Laurel Park, (301) 725-0400, in Laurel, Md., are the closest. All programs are flat races unless otherwise noted; dark days—days when no live racing is scheduled—are announced during the meets.

Public transportation is available from downtown D.C. to the tracks. For information contact the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA); phone

(410) 539-5000, (866) 743-3682 or TTY (410) 539-3497 Mon.-Fri. 6 a.m.-7 p.m.

Track seasons are usually from early October through March at Laurel; mid-January to mid-December (for three nights a week) at Rosecroft; from mid-March to early June at Pimlico, near Baltimore, (410) 542-9400; during the state fair from late August to early September at Timonium, also near Baltimore; and from early January to mid-December at Charles Town, W.Va., (800) 795-7001.

Note: Policies concerning admittance of children to pari-mutuel betting facilities vary. Phone for information.

Soccer

D.C. also is home to Major League Soccer's D.C. United, a professional team that plays at RFK Stadium. For ticket information contact D.C. United customer service; phone (202) 587-5000.

Recreation

No matter what the season, activities in the Washington metropolitan area are plentiful. And who knows: You may find yourself jogging, bicycling or fishing not only with the locals but with a congressional power broker as well. For information contact the D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation; phone (202) 673-7665.

Bicycling

Bicycling can be enjoyed along the C&O Canal towpath and on Rock Creek trails. The Washington and Old Dominion Trail (W&OD or "WOD" to locals) is an excellent 45-mile paved, multiuse path that runs from I-395 at Shirlington near the Potomac River through Leesburg, Va., meandering through the cities of Falls Church, Vienna and Herndon, Va., to Purcellville, Va. Close to the city, the WOD overlooks busy I-66 as it winds through Arlington, Va., residential areas; the farther west you go the less crowded the trail becomes. Once past Herndon, the rural landscapes and flat terrain offer great bicycling.

The scenic 18.5-mile paved, multiuse Mount Vernon Trail runs south along the Potomac's banks from Theodore Roosevelt Island, past Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, through Old Town Alexandria, Va., and ends at Mount Vernon, Va. The trail can be very crowded on weekends. The partially paved 11-mile multiuse Capital Crescent Trail runs north along the Potomac's banks starting in Georgetown and ending in Bethesda, Md. The last 4 miles consist of crushed stone and continues into west Silver Spring, Md. This trail once served as the right-of-way for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. For a free map of the trail, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail, P.O. Box 30703, Bethesda, MD 20824.

Bicycles can be rented at Fletcher's Boat House, at the intersection of Reservoir and Canal roads N.W. It is open from early March through October; phone (202) 244-0461. Another in-town outlet is Thompson's Boat Center, Rock Creek Parkway and Virginia Avenue N.W. in Georgetown. Bikes can be rented from March through November; phone (202) 333-9543.

Bike and Roll Washington D.C offers bicycle, children's bicycle trailers and stroller rentals as well as guided bicycle tours. Safety equipment is included. Rental hours are Mon.-Sat. 9-6, Sun. 9:30-6 (also Thurs.-Tues. 6-9 p.m., June-Aug.); phone (202) 842-2453.

Fishing

The area's best fishing is in the Chesapeake Bay, the ocean and in Shenandoah mountain streams. Anglers need not be afraid to cast a line along the Maryland shore of the Potomac River from the Wilson Bridge south to Fort Washington Park; this once-polluted river has made a remarkable comeback. A trip to Fletcher's Cove on the Potomac, about a mile above Key Bridge, or to the rocky gorge at Chain Bridge might net a catch of white shad or herring.

Golf

Public golf courses can be found at three locations in the District. Tee times are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Langston Golf Course is at 2600 Benning Rd. N.E.; phone (202) 397-8638. East

Potomac Golf Course, 972 Ohio Dr. S.W., (202) 554-7660, has two nine-hole courses and one 18-hole course. Rock Creek Public Golf Course, 6100 Rittenhouse St. N.W., has one 18-hole course that can be played as two nine-hole courses; phone (202) 882-7332 for greens fees.

Outside the District, public 18-hole golf courses include: Falls Road Golf Course, 10800 Falls Rd., Potomac, Md., (301) 299-5156; Greendale Golf Course, 6700 Telegraph Rd., Alexandria, Va., (703) 971-6170; Herndon Centennial Golf Course, 909 Ferndale Ave., Herndon, Va., (703) 471-5769; Redgate Municipal Golf Course, 14500 Avery Rd., Rockville, Md., (240) 314-8730; Reston National Golf Course, 11875 Sunrise Valley Dr., Reston, Va., (703) 620-9333; and the University of Maryland Golf Course, University Boulevard, College Park, Md., (301) 314-4653.

Horseback Riding

Horseback riding is possible on the shady bridle paths in northern Rock Creek Park. Horses can be rented for guided rides at Rock Creek Park Horse Center, 5100 Glover Rd.; phone (202) 362-0117 for fees and schedule. Other nearby stables are listed in the telephone directory.

Jogging and Walking

Using your own two feet in Washington goes beyond just the sightseeing sense; jogging and walking are almost a way of life for residents and workers. The most popular spot by far is the Mall—specifically the rectangle between 3rd and 14th streets and Constitution and Independence avenues N.W.—where you might see senators and other members of Washington’s political elite burning off some extra calories and stress on this 4-mile sightseeing route. Joggers also traverse Memorial Bridge between the Lincoln Memorial and Arlington National Cemetery; the visual attraction is the Potomac and its grassy banks.

The Mount Vernon Trail provides two running courses. The shorter one begins near the pedestrian walkway leading to Theodore Roosevelt Island and runs south past Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (this stretch is about 6.5 miles) to Old Town Alexandria (a little over 3 miles). For the truly fit, a delightfully scenic 9-mile path follows the Potomac’s banks from Alexandria south to Mount Vernon. Also running

along the Potomac’s bank is the Capital Crescent Trail, which once served as right-of-way for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. This 11-mile path runs north from Georgetown to Silver Spring, Md.

For a breathtaking outing camouflaged by nature, try the 15 miles of trails crisscrossing Rock Creek Park. One of the best runs is a 4-mile stretch paralleling the creek from Georgetown to the National Zoological Park. The gravel- and dirt-packed C&O Canal towpath offers a serene, wooded setting for short runs (about 4 miles round trip between Georgetown and Fletcher’s Boat House) or really serious training—well into Maryland, if you are so inclined.

Tennis

The city offers a number of public outdoor courts to choose from. Some, however, are in less-than-desirable locations, so check out neighborhoods in advance. National Park Service courts, which do not require permits but charge a fee, are at Hains Point in East Potomac Park, 1090 Ohio Dr. S.W., and in Rock Creek Park near 16th and Kennedy streets N.W. Reservations are suggested.

For a complete list of court locations and information about fees and permits, write the D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation, 3149 16th St. N.W., Washington, DC 20010; phone (202) 673-7646.

Water Sports

The Potomac River is good for an invigorating powerboat ride or a soothing sail. Boats and canoes can be rented at Fletcher’s and Thompson’s, mentioned in the Bicycling section, and at Jack’s Boathouse, 3500 Water St. (at the end of K Street in Georgetown, beneath the intersection of Key Bridge and the Whitehurst Freeway), (202) 337-9642; rental season is April through October. Paddleboats can be rented on the Tidal Basin’s east side in front of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial.

Riding the rapids of Great Falls as they course between Virginia and Maryland will appeal to those with an adventurous side. Although no river wild, the Potomac does work up quite a bit of white water nevertheless.

The bluffs above the river offer a fine vantage point for those who would rather watch than participate. For information, contact the ranger station at Great Falls, Va.; phone (703) 285-2966.

Swimming is available at the 34 outdoor and six indoor pools of the D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation; local YMCA and YWCA branches also have facilities. For more information contact the department's Aquatics Division at (202) 671-1289. Swimmers with more time on their hands can try the Atlantic Ocean or Chesapeake Bay beaches, a 3- to 4-hour drive.

Winter Sports

When sightseeing becomes a bone-chilling proposition during Washington's occasional frigid winter days, spend some time ice-skating at one of several area rinks. Two of the nicest spots are the Sculpture Garden Outdoor Rink, on Constitution Avenue between 7th and 9th streets N.W., and the Pershing Park Ice Rink, (202) 737-6938, on Pennsylvania Avenue between 14th and 15th streets N.W.

Performing Arts

Although the opening of The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts more than 3 decades ago was a major catalyst in heating up Washington's fine arts scene, the city is home to all sorts of venues. The Kennedy Center is the star, with its eight concert, opera and drama halls, but there are many other fine facilities.

University groups, dinner theaters and open-air facilities like Virginia's Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts offer live entertainment throughout the year. And a number of performances are free, such as the National Park Service's military band concerts at various monuments during the summer months and the chamber music concerts offered by the Library of Congress.

Weekend magazine, published in the Friday edition of *The Washington Post*, gives complete listings for current and upcoming cultural events in the Washington area. *City Paper*, a free weekly available at local

bookstores, newsstands and curbside vending machines, also has detailed listings for theater, music, film, dance, gallery and performance art events.

For bargain hunters, TICKETplace, 407 7th St. N.W., around the corner from the Woolly Mammoth Theatre (M: Archives or Gallery Place), sells half-price (plus a service charge equal to 12 percent of the ticket's face value) advance tickets to a variety of performing arts events in the D.C. area. Full-price, advance-sale tickets to some events are available as well. Only credit cards are accepted. The booth is open Wed.-Fri. 11-6, Sat. 10-5 and Sun. noon-4.

Dance

The Washington Ballet presents works both classical and contemporary, mostly at the Kennedy Center Opera House but also at the center's Eisenhower Theater and other venues. Each December the company stages the holiday classic "The Nutcracker." Such prestigious companies as the Bolshoi Ballet and the American Ballet Theater give frequent Washington performances. The Howard University Dance Ensemble and the annual dance series presented by Mount Vernon College provide opportunities for visitors to attend a wide variety of modern and ethnic dance performances. The Smithsonian Institution frequently presents national and international dance troupes; for information phone (202) 633-1000.

Film

First-run movie theaters are plentiful in the District, although parking is not. The most readily available parking is at theaters on upper Wisconsin and Connecticut avenues. The AMC Loews Uptown 1, 3426 Connecticut Ave. N.W. (M: Cleveland Park), and the AMC Mazza Gallerie 7, 5300 Wisconsin Ave. N.W. (M: Friendship Heights), are good places to see current hits; phone (888) 262-4386. In nearby Old Town Alexandria, the Old Town Theater, 815 1/2 King St., screens independent and art house fare as well as current mainstream films; phone (703) 683-8888.

The AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center, 8633 Colesville Rd. in Silver Spring, Md. (M: Silver Spring), includes a restored 1938 movie house and

two contemporary stadium theaters providing state-of-the-art presentation facilities for a variety of screenings, from classics to cult films to new releases; for recorded program information phone (301) 495-6700.

Documentaries and experimental films are often shown at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden and the National Gallery of Art's East Building; for information about programs, contact the individual museums.

Music

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts presents a variety of nationally and internationally acclaimed artists. Under the direction of Leonard Slatkin, the National Symphony Orchestra performs in the center's spacious Concert Hall. The season runs from September to June. Chamber music societies, choral groups and symphony orchestras from around the world perform here as well; for information phone (202) 467-4600. In the summer months the orchestra performs outdoors at Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts.

Lisner Auditorium of The George Washington University, 21st and H streets N.W., is the scene of a variety of concerts, recitals and sometimes opera and ballet. For information phone (202) 994-6800.

One of Washington's best bargains is the series of free chamber music concerts given by the Library of Congress at different theaters and auditoriums. For schedule and ticket information phone (202) 707-5502. The Juilliard String Quartet is in residence during October, November and December, performing on the library's rare Stradivarius instruments.

The airy West Garden Court in the National Gallery of Art is the scene of free concerts Sunday evenings at 7 from October through June. Programs consist of a variety of guest artists and the National Gallery Orchestra. Four concerts in March or April constitute a festival of American music. For program information phone (202) 842-6941.

From September through May, Sunday afternoon chamber concerts take place in the paneled Music Room at The Phillips Collection, 1600 21st St. N.W. (at Q Street). They begin promptly at 5 (early arrival is

recommended); phone (202) 387-2151. Free lunchtime jazz concerts take place at the Frances and Armand Hammer Auditorium in the Corcoran Gallery of Art on the first and third Wednesday of the month at 12:30. Tickets are not required; for information phone (202) 639-1770.

From October to May, the Folger Consort, the resident Renaissance music ensemble at the Folger Shakespeare Library, presents a series of instrumental and vocal performances in the library's Elizabethan Theatre, 201 E. Capitol St. S.E. (M: Capitol South or Union Station); phone (202) 544-7077. Chamber music groups perform on selected Sundays from October through April at the National Academy of Sciences auditorium, 2101 Constitution Ave. N.W. (M: Foggy Bottom-GWU), which is celebrated for its fine acoustics. A photo ID is required to enter the building. For schedule information phone (202) 334-2436.

During summer, visitors enjoy outdoor performances at Carter Barron Amphitheatre, in upper northwest Washington at 16th Street and Colorado Avenue N.W. in Rock Creek Park (near the Maryland line). Events range from funk, jazz and blues bands, R & B and gospel singers, and oldies groups to performances by dance companies, the National Symphony Orchestra and the Shakespeare Theatre Company. Some shows are free, but all require tickets; phone (202) 426-0486 for information or (202) 397-7328 for advance tickets.

Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts is D.C.'s premier destination for "music under the stars," and it is the summer home of the National Symphony Orchestra. About half of the seats in the Filene Center are uncovered; the stage and open-sided canopy are built to take advantage of a natural slope. Less expensive and unprotected seating is available on the lawn. Children's Theatre-in-the-Woods runs late June through early August. These 45-minute family-friendly shows feature dance, music, puppetry, storytelling and theater and are presented Tuesdays through Saturdays at 10 and 11:15; phone (703) 255-1824 or (703) 255-1868. From October to mid-May, performances move inside to the smaller The Barns at Wolf Trap, three-quarters of a mile south of the park at 1635 Trap Rd. The 350-seat theater features everything from

chamber music and opera to folk, jazz, country and bluegrass. For ticket information phone the box office at (703) 938-2404. Tickets for Wolf Trap can be purchased by calling (877) 965-3872.

Warm weather also ushers in the National Park Service's free weekly concert series, held by military bands on the steps of the United States Capitol and the national monuments. The U.S. Air Force Band presents a free guest artist concert series with nationally known performers at Constitution Hall, 18th and D streets N.W., Sunday afternoons during February; phone (202) 628-4780 for schedule and ticket information.

The U.S. Marines schedule their own free parade, including band, drum and bugle corps and silent drill team, at the Marine Barracks, 8th and I streets S.E. (M: Eastern Market), on Fri. at 8:45 p.m. from the first weekend in May through the last weekend in August. Parking is available at Maritime Plaza, 12th and M streets S.E.; a free shuttle bus provides transportation from the plaza to the barracks and back. Reservations should be made at least 3 weeks in advance; phone (202) 433-6060 for recorded information.

For something less formal and with no reservations required, the Marine Drum and Bugle Corps and Silent Drill Team present a 1-hour Sunset Parade every Tuesday at 7 p.m. from the first Tuesday in June to the last Tuesday in July and at 6:30 p.m. the first two Tuesdays in August at the Marine Corps War Memorial. Take a blanket or lawn chair; no seats are provided. Shuttle bus service to this free performance is provided from the parking lot next to the Arlington National Cemetery Visitor Center from 5:30-6:30 and 8-9 p.m.; the parking fee is \$1.75 per hour for the first 3 hours, then \$2 per hour.

Twilight Tattoo, another sunset parade, is performed by the U.S. Army Band and The 3rd U.S. Infantry most Wednesdays (weather permitting) at 7 p.m., May through late June at 4th Street and Maine Avenue S.W. (M: Waterfront-SEU); phone (202) 685-2888.

Another great deal is the free summer concert series given Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend by military bands of the U.S.

armed forces. Many of them take place on the lower West Terrace of the United States Capitol. These traditional concerts feature occasional vocalists and include stirring patriotic marches as well as pops and classical selections. The Navy performs Mondays, the Air Force on Tuesdays, the Marines on Wednesdays and the Army on Fridays. On holidays the National Symphony Orchestra performs in place of a military band. All concerts begin at 8 p.m. On Thursday evenings, the U.S. Marine band performs at the outdoor Sylvan Theatre, just off 15th Street N.W. near the Washington Monument. The theater also hosts other free concerts, puppet shows and plays; phone (202) 619-7222. For schedule information phone (703) 696-3399 (Army), (202) 433-2525 (Navy), (202) 767-5658 (Air Force) or (202) 433-4011 (Marines).

LIVE! On Woodrow Wilson Plaza is a free concert series that runs Monday through Friday noon-1:30, early June through Labor Day. The concerts are conducted on the Woodrow Wilson Plaza at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center, at the entrance of the Federal Triangle Metro station.

Opera

The Kennedy Center Opera House has three levels and a stage curtain of gold and red Japanese silk. The plush setting is utilized for seasonal performances by the Washington Opera that take place from November to March. Seven productions are performed in their original languages, with English supertitles. Standing-room-only tickets go on sale at the Kennedy Center box office on Saturday beginning at 10 a.m. for performances the following week. For performance and ticket information phone (202) 467-4600 or (800) 444-1324.

Theater

Washington is a theatergoer's delight. Broadway-bound plays often have their last tryouts here, and there are several excellent repertory companies. Among the Kennedy Center's venues is the Eisenhower Theater, where smaller-scale dramas are presented, while lavish musicals play the 2,300-seat Opera House. The Theater Lab features free children's programs and in the evening the long-running play "Shear

Madness,” a humorous murder mystery that differs every time it is presented.

The center’s intimate Terrace Theater has a varied menu of chamber music concerts, opera, choral recitals, comedy revues and theater offerings, along with solo performances from classical violinists to multimedia performance artists. For Kennedy Center show and ticket information phone (202) 467-4600 or (800) 444-1324.

The Warner Theatre, 513 13th St. N.W. between E and F streets (M: Metro Center), opened in 1924 as a vaudeville house, was an old-fashioned movie palace during the 1960s and functioned mainly as a rock concert venue in the 1970s and ’80s. Shut down and then reopened in 1992 following extensive renovations, it now provides an ornately decorative setting for dance performances, touring Broadway and off-Broadway shows, and popular headlining entertainers and musicians. For general information phone (202) 783-4000 Mon.-Fri. 9-6.

Ford’s Theatre has a tragic past—it was where President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated in 1865. An October-to-July schedule of contemporary plays and musicals takes place in the theater itself, which has been carefully restored to its former appearance—although the 1860s-style chairs are of questionable comfort. Phone (202) 347-4833 for more information.

Razzle-dazzle hits appear at The National Theatre, 1321 Pennsylvania Ave. (M: Metro Center), which has operated continuously since 1835. It was lavishly renovated in the early 1980s and is managed by New York’s Shubert Organization, making the National Washington’s closest thing to a big, Broadway-style theater. The Helen Hayes Gallery hosts free performances (mostly geared toward children) on Monday evenings at 6 and 7:30 p.m. March through April and Saturday morning shows at 9:30 and 11 a.m. September through April. Seating is limited and tickets are distributed a half hour before the performance begins on a first-come, first-served basis. For ticket information phone (202) 628-6161 or (800) 447-7400.

The Arena Stage complex, at 6th and Maine streets S.W. (M: Waterfront-SEU), is home to D.C.’s most lauded ensemble company. Founded by now-retired director Zelda Fichandler in 1950, the Arena over the years has nurtured the stage careers of such luminaries as Jane Alexander and James Earl Jones. New plays and emerging playwrights are emphasized during the September-to-June season. The facility has three stages: the Arena, a theater-in-the-round; the Kreeger, a proscenium; and the Old Vat Room, a cabaret-style space; phone (202) 488-3300.

In the Lansburgh Theatre at 450 7th St. N.W., the Shakespeare Theatre Company specializes, naturally, in the Bard’s works. Premium productions of Shakespearean plays and other classical works also are presented in Sidney Harman Hall, 6th and F streets N.W. Backstage tours of the performance facilities are available by appointment; phone (202) 547-5688. Also offered are educational programs and special events, including the Shakespeare Theatre Company Free For All, a free production held late August through September. Tickets for regular performances sell out quickly; for performance information or tickets phone (202) 547-1122, (877) 487-8849 or TTY (202) 638-3863.

The Washington political scene is the inspiration for the 2-hour theatrical comedy based on politics that the Capitol Steps puts on Friday and Saturday evenings at 7:30 in the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center. The group consists of many current and former Congressional staffers; phone (202) 397-7328 for ticket information.

Smaller professional resident theaters abound. Contemporary plays—including new productions—are presented at The Studio Theatre, 1501 14th St. N.W. (M: Dupont Circle). For box office information phone (202) 332-3300, or TTY (202) 667-8436.

The Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, 641 D St. N.W. (at 7th Street) has a reputation for staging some of the city’s most artistically provocative productions. For ticket information phone the box office at (202) 393-3939. The GALA Hispanic Theatre, 3333 14th St. N.W. (M: Columbia Heights), presents works by classic and contemporary Latin

and Latin-American playwrights; phone (202) 234-7174 for the theater or (800) 494-8497 for ticket information.

The African Continuum Theatre Company brings to life African and African-American themes at the Atlas Performing Arts Center at 1333 H St. N.E.; phone (202) 529-5763 for the theater company or (202) 399-7993 for the performing arts center.

A growing number of small professional resident theaters are developing solid reputations and provide a variety of performances year-round. The Round House Theatre has two locations—in Bethesda and Silver Spring, Md.—offering new plays as well as classics. For ticket information phone (240) 644-1100.

Several theaters participate in Stages for All Ages, a program designed to introduce children to live theater. With the purchase of a full-price adult ticket for select shows, theatergoers get one free children's ticket, good for persons age 17 and younger. The program normally runs March through May. When contacting a theater, inquire about program participation.

AAA Walking Tours

A walk among the monuments and monumental buildings of Washington, D.C., is sure to leave a lasting impression on all but the most jaded traveler. The District's imposing white-columned facades have come to symbolize the United States, its government and its principles. America's founding fathers chose this classical motif as befitting a young republic committed to the ancient Greek ideal of democracy.

The following three tours focus on the United States Capitol and vicinity, the museums surrounding the Mall, and the White House and vicinity. Each tour should take 3-4 hours, depending on your pace and the number of listed sites you visit along the way. Because parking in the District is difficult even on a good day, avoid driving whenever possible. The easiest way to get around is to use Washington Metrorail.

Dramatic spotlighting illuminates many public buildings after dusk, although most of them aren't open at this time. In good weather early evening is a pleasant time to stroll around the Capitol, the Mall museums or the White House, when otherwise stark white or gray edifices are bathed in a mellow glow.

Note: Although restrooms can be found within most public buildings around Capitol Hill and on the Mall, they may not always be convenient. It's a good idea to take advantage of the facilities whenever you get a chance.

The Capitol

From the Capitol South Metro station at 1st Street S.E. between C and D streets S.E., go north up the hill on 1st Street and cross C Street. The austere marble facade on your right belongs to the James Madison Memorial Building of the Library of Congress, which comprises three buildings (named for Presidents Adams, Jefferson and Madison).

By far the most elaborate of the three is the Italian Renaissance-style Jefferson Building, which will be on your right after you cross Independence Avenue. Completed in 1897 and renovated for its centennial, the building features an ornate exterior that is but a foretaste of the splendor inside.

The golden Torch of Learning atop a central cupola indicates the building's purpose. A beautiful fountain along 1st Street features the Roman god Neptune and his court. As you approach the main entrance, notice the faces set in the keystones above several first-floor windows. There are 33 in all, and each represents a different ethnic group. A little higher up, framed by circular windows, are the busts of nine important authors: Dante, Demosthenes, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Benjamin Franklin, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Washington Irving, Thomas Babington Macaulay and Sir Walter Scott.

Three pairs of decorative bronze doors originally served as the building's main entrance, but now these are opened only for special occasions. Visitors must enter via the ground-floor doorway below, where stairs lead back up to the first floor's Great Hall vestibule. Here you may have to remind yourself that you're standing in a library and not a European-style palace.

Constructed of white Italian marble, this vast room features stained-glass skylights 75 feet above the multihued, brass-inlaid marble floor. The ornamental touches are almost too numerous to take in: stucco ceilings accented with gold leaf, murals, mosaics, Corinthian columns, sweeping arches and classical statues. Don't overlook the Great Hall's East Corridor, which contains two of the library's most precious items: the Giant Bible of Mainz and the Gutenberg Bible, one of only three vellum copies in existence.

Beyond the Great Hall is the Main Reading Room, which is accessible only by way of the library's free public tours during the height of tourist season in spring and early summer. Even then you are limited to seeing the room from behind the Visitors Gallery's transparent, sound-dampening walls. The view, however, is worth it.

From the base of its massive columns to the domed ceiling 160 feet above, the Main Reading Room is richly detailed. Octagonal in shape, it has walls and columns made of brown, red and cream-colored marble from three continents. Semicircular, stained-glass windows bear the seals of the 48 contiguous states. Between these windows stand eight larger than life-size statues of female allegorical figures representing religion, commerce, history, art, philosophy, poetry, law and science.

A few feet below and on either side of the figures stand 16 bronze statues of men who have distinguished themselves in those eight fields, including Moses, Christopher Columbus, Ludwig van Beethoven, William Shakespeare and Sir Isaac Newton. Murals, bas-reliefs, plaster rosettes, balustrades and baroque molding complete this impressive chamber.

If the other two library buildings look newer than the Jefferson Building, that's because they are. The Adams Building was completed in 1939, the Madison Building in 1981. Together the three contain more than 120 million items, making the Library of Congress the world's largest.

From the library's main exit on 1st Street, go right around the corner onto E. Capitol Street and cross 2nd Street S.E. Just south is the Folger Shakespeare Library, which houses rare books and manuscripts, paintings, engravings, costumes and musical instruments. Henry Clay Folger, who founded the library with this wife Emily, was a president of Standard Oil Co. and a devotee of all things Shakespearean for most of his life. The neoclassic building was completed in 1932 to house the Folgers' collection; it is adorned with nine bas-reliefs showing scenes from Shakespeare's plays.

Leaving the library, return to E. Capitol Street and turn left, following it 2 blocks to the entrance of the United States Capitol. George Washington laid the cornerstone of this familiar landmark in 1793, but most of what is visible was built in the next century, including the Capitol's north and south wings and the distinctive 287-foot-tall cast-iron dome, all of which were added 1855-70.

Up to 5 million people visit the Capitol every year, and for obvious reasons: Not only is this the hallowed center of representative government and political power in the United States, but it is a splendid building filled with historic and artistic treasures as well.

At the Capitol's heart is the rotunda, a grand circular space 96 feet across beneath the dome that connects the north and south wings. From the statues and large, historically themed paintings on the lower walls look upward to the canopy over the inner dome, 180 feet above, which is adorned with a fresco by Constantino Brumidi titled "The Apotheosis of Washington." Restored in 1988, the 4,664-square-foot fresco depicts George Washington ascending to the heavens flanked by 15 female figures—two symbolizing Liberty and Victory, the others representing the 13 original states. A painted frieze designed to look like a bas-relief forms

a band beneath the rotunda's windows and illustrates scenes from American history.

Other sights within the Capitol include the Hall of Columns; National Statuary Hall (formerly the Old Hall of the House of Representatives); the Old Supreme Court Chamber; the Old Senate Chamber; the Crypt, located beneath the rotunda; and the ornate Brumidi Corridors. Guided tours of the Capitol are given regularly; however, to gain access to the congressional chambers you must first obtain a pass from your representative or one of your senators.

Remember that the Capitol is the point from which the city's streets are numbered and lettered; therefore, pay attention to the quadrant (N.E., N.W., S.E. or S.W.) of the streets or addresses you wish to find.

From the Capitol, cross 1st Street N.E. on the north side of E. Capitol Street. The imposing white building in front of you is the Supreme Court Building, where the creed "Equal Justice Under Law" is written on the facade. The seated female figure to the left is titled "Contemplation of Justice," while the male counterpart opposite her is called "Guardian of Law."

The third branch of government did not have its own building until 1935. For almost a century and a half of its existence, the court met in various locations, including the Capitol. It was not until 1929 that William H. Taft—who was chief justice at the time and a former U.S. president to boot—was able to convince Congress of the court's need for its own home, authorizing the creation of the current neoclassic building.

Designed to match surrounding structures, the Supreme Court possesses many noteworthy features, including a Great Hall lined with the busts of every chief justice who has presided over the court since it was established. The hall leads to the marble-trimmed Court Chamber, which looks like a theater thanks to the plush red curtain suspended behind the bench. Considering the weighty Constitutional issues that are debated in this room, the theater-like ambience seems appropriate.

To learn more about the court and what cases are currently being argued, stop by the information desk beneath the statue of Chief Justice John Marshall on the ground floor. Here you'll find exhibits, portraits of justices and a film. You'll also be able to see one of the building's two, five-story-tall marble staircases that creates a striking vista as it spirals upward without a central column for support.

Turn north after leaving the Supreme Court and follow Maryland Avenue northeast to 2nd Street N.E., where Maryland and Constitution avenues meet, and go north across Constitution. On the corner of 2nd and Constitution is the Sewall-Belmont House and Museum, headquarters of the National Woman's Party since 1929. Within the red-brick house, built about 1700, are displays relating to the women's suffrage and equal rights movements.

From there head west on Constitution Avenue and turn right on 1st Street N.E. To either side are the Dirksen and Russell Senate office buildings. Cross C and D streets N.E. and Massachusetts Avenue. The large, white-granite edifice ahead of you is Union Station. Before it stands a 1912 monument to Christopher Columbus made up of three flagpoles, a semicircular fountain and a 15-foot statue of the explorer, which faces the Capitol.

Built in 1907 during the heyday of railway travel, Union Station was designed to serve as the gateway to America's capital city and is an important example of the Beaux Arts style. Inspired by ancient Roman baths and triumphal arches, architect Daniel Burnham designed the station's main hall, distinguished by a 96-foot-tall barrel-vaulted ceiling made up of recessed, gilded panels. Statues adorn both the exterior and interior; a few of the 46 Roman legionnaires encircling the main hall had to be redesigned due to concern that their skimpy uniforms would scandalize passengers.

Like many stately train stations built before the advent of air travel, Union Station endured a period of decline and decay until it was abandoned in the 1970s. When renovations began in the 1980s, large portions of ceiling had collapsed and mushrooms were discovered growing on the

floor. But the station was returned to its original splendor, and also found new life as a retail and entertainment complex boasting numerous restaurants and cafes, more than 100 stores and a multiscreen movie complex. The building also houses a Metrorail station and is Amtrak's hub and headquarters.

From Union Station walk back toward the Capitol via Delaware Avenue N.E. Once you cross D Street N.E., Capitol Plaza will be on your right. If you're a shutterbug then get your camera ready. This spacious park's reflecting pool and fountain make an especially picturesque foreground for the Capitol. Just west of the plaza across New Jersey Avenue is The Robert A. Taft Memorial and Carillon. This 100-foot bell tower, dedicated in 1959, honors the influential Ohio senator who became known as "Mr. Republican" for his outspoken opposition to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal policies. Son of President Taft, the senator died of cancer in 1953. His statue stands before the tower.

From the Taft memorial, cross Constitution Avenue and then go immediately right across 1st Street N.W. Continuing south down 1st Street, you'll enter Union Square with its monuments and Reflecting Pool. The first memorial you'll come to is the Peace Monument, at Pennsylvania Avenue and 1st Street N.W. Dedicated to those who served at sea during the Civil War, the memorial depicts two female figures representing Grief weeping on the shoulder of History.

The next memorial honors Ulysses S. Grant, Union general and U.S. president. The central figure depicts the general on horseback impassively gazing westward. His poise contrasts sharply with the artillery and cavalry statuary groups frozen in action at either side of him. Said to be the largest equestrian statue in America, the pedestal, horse and rider together stand 65 feet tall. Dedicated in 1922, the memorial took sculptor Henry Merwin Shrady 2 decades to complete.

The James A. Garfield Monument stands at 1st Street and Maryland Avenue S.W. and honors the 20th president, who was assassinated in 1881 after serving only 4 months in office. Garfield was a brigadier general during the Civil War and held public office as both a U.S. senator

and representative before being elected president. The monument features a lifelike statue of Garfield atop a cylindrical pedestal. The three figures arranged around the base represent different phases of his career: student, officer and statesman.

Just south of the Garfield Monument across Maryland Avenue S.W. is the United States Botanic Garden. Established by Congress in 1820 as a research facility to cultivate and distribute plants from around the world to benefit the American people, it has existed at its current location on the Capitol grounds since 1933. The main conservatory features soaring glass walls. Also part of the Botanic Garden is Bartholdi Park, across Independence Avenue. The centerpiece of this seasonal flower and plant garden is a fanciful cast-iron fountain complete with sea nymphs and tritons; it was designed by Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi, sculptor of the Statue of Liberty.

After leaving the Botanic Garden, turn right on 1st Street S.W. to Independence Avenue. Cross Independence and turn left, following it east across 1st Street, S. Capitol Street and New Jersey Avenue S.E. Turn right onto 1st Street S.E.; the Capitol South Metro station is 1 block south across C Street S.E. on the right.

The National Mall

From the Smithsonian Metro station, on the Mall opposite where 12th Street S.W. meets Jefferson Drive S.W., follow the short gravel path to the sidewalk, cross Jefferson Drive and turn left. Just ahead on the right is the Freer Gallery of Art, which contains Chinese paintings, Islamic metalwork, Indian sculpture, Korean ceramics and Japanese lacquer.

Although primarily dedicated to Asian art, the Freer also exhibits American paintings and prints from the late 19th century and is noted for The Peacock Room. This finely detailed interior space was designed by James McNeill Whistler 1876-77; it served as a dining room in a London mansion before being relocated to the museum's southeast corner.

Leaving the Freer, turn right, still going east on Jefferson Drive. Next door is the administrative building of the Smithsonian Institution. Nicknamed the Castle because of its red sandstone walls, towers, mullioned windows and Romanesque details, this 1855 structure is the work of James Renwick Jr., who also designed the Smithsonian's Renwick Gallery near the White House and St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York. The Castle houses an information center and the tomb of James Smithson, the institution's benefactor. A domed entry pavilion between the Castle and the Freer leads to the S. Dillon Ripley Center, a three-level underground structure built in 1987 that includes an International Gallery, offices and classrooms.

On either side of the Smithsonian Castle are the entrances to the underground Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and the National Museum of African Art. Connected to the Freer by a skylighted gallery, the Sackler continues the Smithsonian's Asian art collection, with a focus on changing exhibitions. Inside the National Museum of African Art you'll find traditional objects from the sub-Saharan continent, including highly wrought sculptures, carvings and masks.

Continue east to the Arts and Industries Building, which was built in 1881 to house items from the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia. Above the entrance, a statue grouping portrays Columbia shielding seated figures representing Science and Industry. The museum is currently closed for renovations.

What appears to be an alien spaceship next door is actually the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. In sharp contrast to the 19th-century architecture nearby, the cylindrical Hirshhorn building makes a fitting showplace for one of America's best collections of modern art. Glass-walled ambulatories overlook a central courtyard with a fountain, allowing visitors to see art pieces in natural lighting. Name a 20th-century artistic movement and it is likely represented in the collection: Pop Art, Abstract Expressionism, Cubism, Minimalism, Surrealism and several other "isms." Unusual figure studies fill the museum's sunken outdoor sculpture garden, across the sidewalk on the building's Mall side.

Just east of the Hirshhorn across 7th Street S.W. is the capital's most visited museum, the National Air and Space Museum. Crowds come in droves here to see history-making flying machines dramatically suspended in cavernous exhibit spaces. From the Wright Flyer to rockets and lunar landers, the spectrum of air and spacecraft on display traces the evolution of flight, delighting busloads of tourists and school children in the process.

The high concentration of large museums will take its toll on even the most energetic of sightseers, one reason the Mall is amply lined with shaded benches for rest stops. Vendor carts also sell a variety of refreshments along the way. If you require assistance or information, visit one of the National Park Service kiosks that dot the Mall.

From the Air and Space Museum, continue down Jefferson Drive. Across 4th Street S.W. is the National Museum of the American Indian. The newest Smithsonian museum is distinguished by undulating walls of buff-colored limestone. Inside this cultural resource center are three permanent exhibitions as well as rotating exhibits and performance spaces.

Turn right onto 4th Street S.W. (soon becomes 4th St. N.W.) and walk toward the modern glass and concrete structure ahead on the right. This is the East Building of the National Gallery of Art, which features contemporary art as well as changing exhibits. It is linked to the West Building by a paved plaza and an underground concourse. Take either one to view the gallery's world-class collection of European and American painting and sculpture.

From the West Building's Mall exit go down the large flight of stairs and turn right, going west on Madison Drive N.W. Taking a short detour from the Mall, turn right again at 7th Street N.W. The park on your left is the National Gallery of Art's Sculpture Garden; works by Claes Oldenburg, Joan Miró and Isamu Noguchi are on display here year-round, and a jazz concert series takes place in summer.

Cross Constitution Avenue, and between 7th and 9th streets N.W. you'll come to a mammoth neoclassic building, the National Archives. It contains the nation's triumvirate of governmental blueprints: the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. At Pennsylvania Avenue and 7th Street N.W. is the United States Navy Memorial, which displays a ground-level granite map of the world some 100 feet in diameter.

From the Archives go back across Constitution Avenue, proceed south 1 block on 7th Street N.W., then turn west onto Madison Drive on the Mall. One block ahead on the right is the National Museum of Natural History, with treasures that include natural and cultural specimens ranging from the Hope Diamond to a giant squid. Enter the rotunda and prepare to be greeted by an African elephant showing off its raised trunk and lengthy tusks. Even more intimidating displays await intrepid visitors in the skeleton-crowded Dinosaur Hall.

Another block west along Madison Drive is the National Museum of American History, Kenneth E. Behring Center, home to such familiar objects of Americana as a covered wagon, steam locomotive and a 19th-century general store. You can see such historic items as the Star-Spangled Banner, Lewis and Clark's compass and even Cold War-era submarines, or if you're more interested in America's popular culture, there's Muhammad Ali's boxing gloves, Evel Knievel's motorcycle and Dorothy's ruby slippers from "The Wizard of Oz." Another museum highlight: a colorful collection of first ladies' gowns. The sixth Smithsonian building on the National Mall originally opened to the public in January 1964 as the Museum of History and Technology.

From the museum return to Madison Drive N.W. and continue west to 14th Street. Turn left, cross Madison and go south toward Jefferson Drive. Halfway across the walkway, pause to take in the view of the Mall's tallest landmarks, the Capitol and the Washington Monument. Turn left at Jefferson Drive; the Smithsonian Metro station, where you began, is on the left.

The White House

Beginning at the McPherson Square Metro station's White House/Vermont Avenue exit at the corner of Vermont Avenue and I Street N.W., go 1 block west on I Street to 16th Street N.W. Turn left and go south on 16th to the end of the block. On your left is St. John's Church. Painted yellow and white with a distinctive golden-roofed steeple, St. John's is known as the Church of the Presidents due to the number of commanders-in-chief who have worshiped here over the years.



Cross H Street N.W. to Lafayette Square, the park opposite the main entrance to the White House. A statue of Andrew Jackson presides over squirrels, chess players and the occasional placards and protestors. Impressive monuments at the park's four corners honor foreign-born Revolutionary War heroes: Baron von Steuben of Prussia, Brig. Gen. Thaddeus Kosciuszko of Poland, Maj. Gen. Comte de Rochambeau of France and Maj. Gen. Marquis de Lafayette, the Frenchman for whom the park is named.

Go right and walk west through the park along H Street, crossing Jackson Place N.W. On the corner is Decatur House, which was the first private home in this part of the city.

Farther south on Jackson Place and around the corner to the right on Pennsylvania Avenue N.W. is Blair House. It was named for its original owner, Francis Preston Blair, founder of *The Washington Globe* newspaper during President Andrew Jackson's term of office and one of the founders of the Republican Party. It was in Blair House that Robert E. Lee, at President Abraham Lincoln's insistence, was offered the command of the Union army, which he declined. The house later served as a residence for President Harry S. Truman while the White House was being renovated 1948-52.

Next door is the Lee House, the former home of Blair's daughter and son-in-law. The Blair and Lee houses have been combined and serve as guest quarters for visiting dignitaries; both are closed to the public.

Next to Lee House is the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, which displays changing exhibits of American decorative arts, crafts and design. The 1858 building was the first home of the Corcoran Gallery of Art and is such a splendid example of Second Empire style that its name was changed in the 1960s to honor the architect who designed it, James Renwick Jr.

Walk south across Pennsylvania Avenue N.W. and down 17th Street N.W. to the stately Old Executive Office Building, now called the Eisenhower Executive Office Building. Another example of Second Empire architecture, it was built 1871-88 to house the State, War and Navy Departments.

Cross 17th Street to the right and proceed down New York Avenue N.W. 1 block to The Octagon Museum. This weathered, red-brick house, really more of a hexagon than an octagon, was built 1798-1800 and was the temporary home of President and Mrs. James Madison after the White House was burned during the War of 1812. The marvelous architecture is both practical and decorative and explains why the house is now a museum of The American Institute of Architects, whose headquarters building looms behind it.

Head 2 blocks south on 18th Street. Between C and D streets N.W. is Constitution Hall, where concerts are presented throughout the year. On the same block is the DAR Museum and the national headquarters of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

One block south of Constitution Hall across C Street at the corner of 18th Street and Virginia Avenue N.W. is the Art Museum of the Americas. This small gallery contains a collection of colorful and insightful works by Latin American artists. Across 18th Street stands a regal equestrian statue of South American revolutionary leader Simón Bolívar; the monument was a gift from Venezuela.

The art museum is a part of the Organization of American States (OAS) complex. The main building is entered around the corner from the museum on 17th Street N.W. Inside is a lush atrium filled with tropical foliage and centered about an Aztec-themed fountain. Busts of Latin American heroes line the walls.

Continue up 17th Street 2 blocks to E Street N.W. and the Corcoran Gallery of Art. Its entrance flanked by two lounging lions, this palatial Beaux Arts building has changing exhibits ranging from classic masterpieces to contemporary photography. Named for 19th-century banker and founder William Wilson Corcoran, it is one of the nation's oldest museums.

Leaving the Corcoran's main entrance, turn right, cross 17th Street at the corner and go east along E Street N.W. Opposite the south lawn of the White House is the Ellipse, where the Zero Milestone marks the original center of the city.

Originally called the President's House, the White House got its current name after it was painted white to cover scorch marks left after the British burned it in 1814. The White House Visitor Center at 1450 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W. features exhibits and a 30-minute video that describe the history and architecture of the Executive Mansion.

Nearby on Pennsylvania Avenue N.W. between 13th and 14th streets N.W. is Freedom Plaza, made up of inlaid pieces depicting parts of Pierre-Charles L'Enfant's city plan. A time capsule filled with belongings of Martin Luther King Jr. lies buried beneath the plaza surface.

Head west on E Street N.W. and when you get to 15th Street N.W., cross the intersection into the park to see the equestrian statue of Civil War Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman, remembered for his march through Georgia and capture of Savannah. Afterward make a left onto 15th Street N.W. and follow it north along the Treasury Building.

The Treasury Building, pictured on the back of the \$10 bill, is to the right of the White House's East Gate. Construction of this Greek Revival

building, the headquarters for the Treasury Department, began in 1836 and was completed 33 years later. Inside, the Andrew Johnson Suite is where President Andrew Johnson conducted business after Lincoln's assassination. Other rooms include the Salmon P. Chase Suite; the Cash Room, where President Ulysses S. Grant's inaugural reception was held; and the 1864 burglar-proof Vault. Guided tours are available on Saturday mornings by advance reservation through your senators' or representative's office; phone (202) 224-3121 for the congressional main switchboard.

Continue north on 15th Street N.W. and turn left onto H Street N.W. Turn right to proceed north up Vermont Avenue; the McPherson Square Metro station entrance is at the end of the block on the left.

Insider Info

House and Senate Passes

Passes for both the House and Senate galleries must be obtained from one of your senators or your representative. Although these passes may be available on a walk-in basis, it is suggested that visitors contact one of their legislators several months in advance, because the number of passes is limited. Senator and representative names often can be found in the front matter of your telephone directory.

Requests for tours of the White House also must be made through one of your senators or your representative and are accepted up to 6 months in advance; tours are scheduled approximately 2 weeks before the requested date.

In addition to gallery passes, your legislators can provide tickets for special tours of the United States Capitol, the Supreme Court, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, The Pentagon, the Treasury Building, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and the National Archives. Advance passes may also be reserved online for the United States Capitol by visiting www.visitthecapitol.gov and for The Pentagon at <http://pentagon.afis.osd.mil>. Tickets should be reserved as early as possible, but some facilities permit tickets to be reserved only 1, 2 or 3

months in advance because of the possibility of ceremonies or other unscheduled closings.

To contact your legislator, phone the United States Capitol main switchboard at (202) 224-3121, give your legislator's name and ask to be connected to his or her office. The switchboard operator may be able to answer general questions but cannot issue passes or tickets.

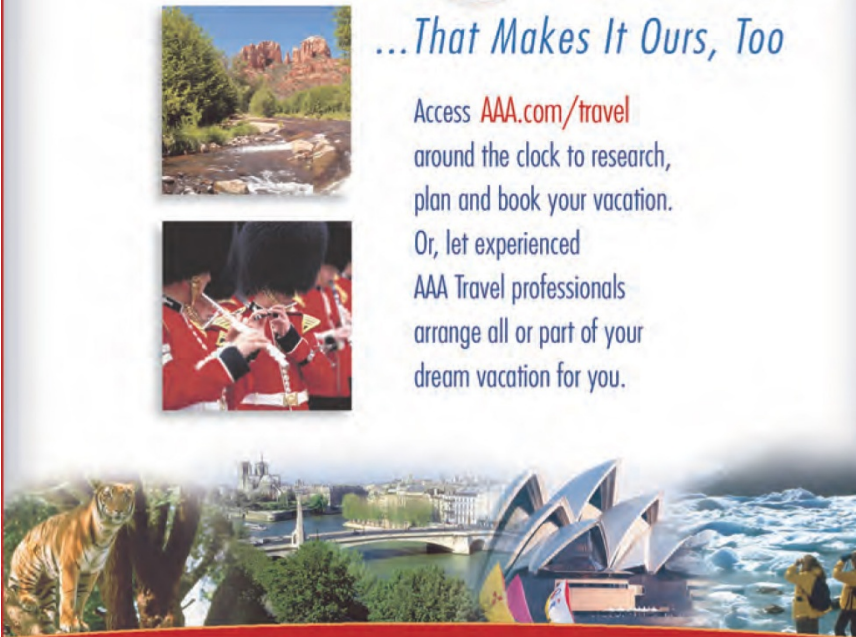
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