



nileGUIDE

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



terren in Virginia

2 Day Museums Tour

Washington DC, 2 Days

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Guide Description



AUTHOR NOTE: This trip is designed to pack your day full of some of DC's best and most memorable museums. Most of the trip can be done on foot in nice weather or easily via public transportation. In addition, this trip can easily be combined with the monuments and memorials trip to allow for a comprehensive visit of DC. Please note, a number of the restaurants and some of the museums require tickets, depending on the time of day and year of your visit. Please make sure to inquire about advanced ticketing at the Holocaust Memorial Museum, the International Spy Museum, and Newseum prior to your arrival. Also, please note that while most museums in DC are free, not all of the museums on this list are free to the public and some, such as the Corcoran and the International Spy Museum, charge between \$5-20 for admission.

Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - Washington DC

DAY NOTE: If it is a nice day, start off with a walk down to the National Mall from your hotel (about 12-15 blocks) stopping for coffee and breakfast along the way. Once you get to the Mall, begin with a tour of the Sculpture Gardens and the Hirshhorn, a museum focused on modern art. After you finish, walk north toward Chinatown (north on 7th street or get on the Yellow Line Metro) and to visit the International Spy Museum (for best results, make reservations in advance). Poste, for lunch, is just up the street from the Spy Museum. After lunch at Poste, head back down towards the Mall and spend the afternoon at the Air and Space Museum and the National Gallery of Art. Be sure, however, not to miss the Holocaust Memorial Museum. All three of these museums are located on or around the Mall, and can be done in any order. Once you have seen enough, head back north to the Chinatown area. If you are ready for dinner head straight to the wine-focused Proof (reservations required). Be sure not to miss the delicious cheese and charcuterie offerings. Alternatively, if you are not ready for dinner, stop by RFD or any number of the other bars located right around the Verizon center before heading to dinner.

	Renaissance Washington DC Hotel Large convention hotel
	Hirshhorn Museum & Sculpture Garden Modern Gallery with 19th- and 20th-century artworks
	International Spy Museum In Penn Quarter, a compelling look at the history of espionage.
	Poste Kobe beef steak tartare and more
	National Air and Space Museum High flying exploration fun with your feet on the ground
	National Gallery of Art The premier art museum in the Nation's Capital, the National Gallery houses an extensive art collection from the world's most famous artists
	United States Holocaust Memorial Museum This must-see museum provides a sobering exploration of the Holocaust, and a testimonial to its victims.



Proof

A wine-centric restaurant

Day 2 - Washington DC

DAY NOTE: Begin day 2 at the Museum of American History, again located on the mall. After that, head over to the beautiful Museum of the American Indian. This museum not only offers some of the most impressive museum architecture, but also it is home to one of the best museum cafeterias in DC. After you are done exploring the museum, visit the cafeteria before heading out for the afternoon. After lunch, head to the northeastern part of the mall, towards Pennsylvania avenue, and visit the newly relocated Newseum. Then follow Pennsylvania northwest toward the White House or hop in a taxi to visit the Corcoran Gallery, before heading back to Chinatown to visit one of the local's favorite museums, the Portrait Gallery. You will be right back in the neighborhood for dinner at Zola, in the same building as the International Spy Museum you visited yesterday (reservations recommended). After dinner, if you are feeling up for it, hop on the Red Line to DuPont Circle (exit at the DuPont North exit) and walk north on Connecticut Avenue about 2 blocks. On your left will be the Russia House, a great place for vodka or Russian beer. Alternatively, stay in Chinatown and explore any of the numerous bars in that area including Rocket Bar, Fado, and others, before calling it a night.

	National Museum of American History Two centuries of Americana
	National Museum of the American Indian Explore Native American history and culture at this museum on the Mall.
	Newseum This innovative museum shines a spotlight on newsmaking.
	Corcoran Gallery of Art Washington's first art museum boasts an impressive collection of works by established and up-and-coming artists.
	National Portrait Gallery In praise of famous Americans
	Zola A DC must visit

Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife



Russia House Restaurant and Lounge (The)

This is more than a restaurant and bar - it's an experience. Sip vodka martinis and enjoy the buzzy, multicultural atmosphere.

Day 1 - Washington DC

QUICK NOTE

DAY NOTE: If it is a nice day, start off with a walk down to the National Mall from your hotel (about 12-15 blocks) stopping for coffee and breakfast along the way. Once you get to the Mall, begin with a tour of the Sculpture Gardens and the Hirshhorn, a museum focused on modern art. After you finish, walk north toward Chinatown (north on 7th street or get on the Yellow Line Metro) and to visit the International Spy Museum (for best results, make reservations in advance). Poste, for lunch, is just up the street from the Spy Museum. After lunch at Poste, head back down towards the Mall and spend the afternoon at the Air and Space Museum and the National Gallery of Art. Be sure, however, not to miss the Holocaust Memorial Museum. All three of these museums are located on or around the Mall, and can be done in any order. Once you have seen enough, head back north to the Chinatown area. If you are ready for dinner head straight to the wine-focused Proof (reservations required). Be sure not to miss the delicious cheese and charcuterie offerings. Alternatively, if you are not ready for dinner, stop by RFD or any number of the other bars located right around the Verizon center before heading to dinner.

contact:

tel: +1 202 898 9000
fax: +1 202 289 0947
<http://www.tkqlhce.com/click-2005797-10406976>

location:

999 9th St Nw
Washington DC 20001

1 Renaissance Washington DC Hotel

DESCRIPTION: Near Chinatown and across from the Washington Convention Center, this modern hotel has all the conveniences for the business traveler. Government and business offices are not far away by taxi or Metro. For those who have some free time, the museums of the Smithsonian Institute are easily accessible. Stylish and plush rooms, well equipped meeting spaces and facilities like a heated swimming pool, fitness center, on-site restaurant and bar and much more is on offer here. © wcities.com



Hotels.com

contact:

tel: +1 202 633 1000 / +1 202 357 1729
fax: +1 202 786 2682
<http://www.hirshhorn.si.edu/>

location:

Independence Avenue and
7th Street South West
Washington DC 20576

hours:

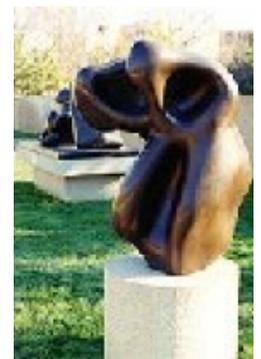
Museum: 10:30a, noon & 1p
M-F, noon, 1p & 2p Sa-Su

2 Hirshhorn Museum & Sculpture Garden

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

The Sculpture Garden provides a quiet refuge from the hustle of museum-going.

DESCRIPTION: The Smithsonian Institution's Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden invites everyone in to explore modern and contemporary art. Gordon Bunshaft designed the Hirshhorn building itself as a "functional sculpture." Elevated above manicured sculpture grounds, the four-story hollow cylinder encircles a 60-foot fountain visible from every interior window. Since each floor is a large ring, navigating the museum is very intuitive; you progress through the curved galleries and end up exactly where you began then proceed to the next floor. The Hirshhorn continuously seeks and acquires important works by current artists, hosts traveling exhibits, and features installations with the artists on hand for discussion. Meet at the information desk on Fridays at 12:30 pm for gallery talks by visiting curators, professors and artists. Thursdays offer a mix of contemporary films and meet-the-artist events in the Ring Auditorium. Every few months brings the Hirshhorn After Hours where art and nightlife come together with DJs, artists, cocktails and dancing. Check website or visit the information desk for current schedule. After Hours events are \$10 advance, \$12 at the door, but most other events are



free, including films. Guides are available at anytime for a 30-minute tour so ask at front desk. Forget about parking. L'Enfant Plaza is the closest Metro station (blue/gree/orange/red lines). This station is large and can be confusing – take the Maryland Ave & 7th St SW exit, follow 7th street away from the station to Independence Ave and you'll see the Hirshhorn.
© NileGuide

contact:

tel: +1 202 393 7798 (+1 202 EYE SPY U)
<http://www.spymuseum.org>

location:

800 F St, NW
Washington DC 20073

hours:

M-Su 10a-6p

3 International Spy Museum

DESCRIPTION: James Bond wannabes will love this museum; it provides a fascinating look at the world of espionage and how it's affected our past and present. Check out artifacts and learn stories about spies from all over the globe as they perform their covert duties in various eras.
© NileGuide



contact:

tel: 1 202 783 6060
fax: 1 202 783 4222
www.postebrasserie.com

location:

555 8th Street NW
Washington DC 20073

hours:

Breakfast: Monday -
Friday: 7:00am - 10:00am
Brunch: Saturday-Sunday
8:00am-3:00pm Lunch:
Monday - Friday: 11:30am
- 2:30pm Dinner: Monday -
Thursday: 5:00pm - 10:00pm:
Dinner: Friday and Saturday:
5:00pm - 10:30pm Dinner:
Sunday: 5:00 - 9:00pm
Special Bar Menu: Weekday:
2:00pm - 5:30pm Fri-Sat:
11:30am - Midnight Enclosed
courtyard is first come, first
served, weather permitting.
Reservations are not taken for
outside seating

4 Poste

DESCRIPTION: This lovely brasserie lies within one of Washington's coolest hotels, the Monaco. You find its separate entrance via an arched carriageway that leads to a stone-paved courtyard, where the restaurant sets up tables in warm weather. Inside, past a small bar-lounge, is the dining area, which includes an exhibition kitchen, banquettes, and a quieter back room. Poste chef Robert Weland has established himself well, settling into a pleasant culinary groove that wins praise from local critics and diners. Weland uses seasonal local ingredients to create modern American fare heavily influenced by traditional French cuisine. At lunch that means a croque-monsieur is made with Virginia ham and Gruyère on brioche; at dinner, your selections may include French onion soup, herbed fresh ricotta ravioli, red wine-braised rabbit, steak frites, and cassoulet. Desserts, too, blend French and American tastes; try the chocolate pot de crème (custard), which lists chili (!) as an ingredient. A wine list of 100 California and French bottles offers nearly 30 wines by the glass. © Frommer's

contact:

tel: +1 202 633 1000
http://www.nasm.si.edu/museum/

location:

6th Street and Independence Avenue Southwest
Washington DC 20576

hours:

Daily 10a-5:30p

5

National Air and Space Museum

DESCRIPTION: Located on the National Mall a few blocks from the Capitol Building, the National Air and Space Museum appeals to all ages. See the Wright 1903 Flyer, the Apollo 11 command module Columbia, and a lunar rock sample which visitors can touch. Children delight in the many hands-on demonstrations while IMAX Theater presentations and flight simulators engage the whole family. Fascinated with space? Explore the universe at the Albert Einstein Planetarium! Whether you visit for one hour or five, the large solarium-style food court makes this a convenient mid-day museum stop. Free admission. There is no museum parking, but public lots are within a few blocks (rates vary). Metro stations nearby: L'Enfant Plaza (blue/orange and yellow/green lines) and Smithsonian (blue/orange lines). © NileGuide



contact:

tel: +1 202 737 4215
fax: +1 202 842 6948
http://www.nga.gov/

location:

Constitution Avenue Northwest
Washington DC 20565

hours:

M-Sa 10a-5p, Su 11a-6p

6

National Gallery of Art

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

The National Gallery's two gift shops are ideal for finding unique mementos, books, jewelry, and toys.

DESCRIPTION: The National Gallery of Art guides Washingtonians and visitors through the world of art all day, every day (except Christmas and New Year's Day). The National Gallery consists of the West Building (opened in 1941), the East Building (1978) and the 6.1-acre Sculpture Garden adjacent to the West Building (1999). Don't be daunted by the size, the National Gallery has prepared "Highlights" guides for half-hour and one-hour visits. Scores of guided tours are scheduled throughout each day (too many to list here), gallery talks and lectures are held throughout the month. Free Sunday concerts take place in the West Building, usually starting at 6:30 but check ahead. The East Building Auditorium hosts original format film screenings every Saturday and Sunday (plus a few weekdays) free of charge (first come first served) with doors opening thirty minutes before each show. To the delight of locals and visitors, the Sculpture Garden ice rink is open mid-November through mid-March! It's about the only activity that is not free, but at \$7 for adults and \$6 for seniors, students and kids (skate rental \$3), it's a lot of fun for a little money. Aside from all this, visitors can still walk in off the street and look at art the old fashioned way, by wandering through the galleries at leisure. Located on the National Mall, forget about parking. The Archives-Navy Memorial-Penn Quarter (Green/Yellow lines) Metrorail station is only a block away. © NileGuide



contact:

tel: +1 202 488 0400 / +1 202 488 0406
http://www.ushmm.org/

location:

100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW
Washington DC 20250

hours:

Daily 10a-5:30p

7 United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

This powerful, emotionally intense memorial should not be missed.

DESCRIPTION: Twenty-five million people from 100 different countries have visited this museum since it opened in 1993, and the museum continues to be a top draw. In the busiest months, April through July, if you arrive without a reserved ticket specifying an admission time, you'll have to wait in line to get one of the 2,000 day-of-sale tickets the museum makes available each day. Before you visit the museum, you might want to access its website, www.ushmm.org, and download copies of the Visitors Guide and the Permanent Exhibition Guide. These are also available at the museum, of course. As you enter the museum, you may find the noise and bustle of so many visitors disconcerting, or at odds with the experience you expect is coming. But things settle down as you start the tour. When you enter, you will be issued an identity card of an actual victim of the Holocaust; at several points in the tour, you can find out the location and status of the person on your card -- by 1945, 66% of those whose lives are documented on these cards were dead. From its collection of more than 12,435 artifacts, the museum has organized some 900 items and 70 video monitors to reveal the Jewish experience in three parts: Nazi Assault, Final Solution, and Last Chapter. The tour begins on the fourth floor, where exhibits portray the events of 1933 to 1939, the years of the Nazi rise to power. On the third floor (documenting 1940-44), exhibits illustrate the narrowing choices of people caught up in the Nazi machine. You board a Polish freight car of the type used to transport Jews from the Warsaw ghetto to Treblinka and hear recordings of survivors telling what life in the camps was like. The second floor recounts a more heartening story: It depicts how non-Jews throughout Europe, by exercising individual action and responsibility, saved Jews at great personal risk. Denmark -- led by a king who swore that if any of his subjects wore a yellow star, so would he -- managed to hide and save 90% of its Jews. Exhibits follow on the liberation of the camps, life in Displaced Persons camps, emigration to Israel and America, and the Nuremberg trials. At the end of the permanent exhibition is a most compelling and heartbreaking hour-long film called Testimony, in which Holocaust survivors tell their stories. The tour concludes in the hexagonal Hall of Remembrance, where you can meditate and light a candle for the victims. The museum notes that most people take 2 to 3 hours on their first visit; many people take longer. In addition to its permanent and temporary exhibitions, the museum has a Resource Center for educators, which provides materials and services to Holocaust educators and students; an interactive computer learning center; and a registry of Holocaust survivors, a library, and archives, which researchers may use to retrieve historical documents, photographs, oral histories, films, and videos. The museum recommends not bringing children 11 and under; for older children, it's advisable to prepare them for what they'll see. You can see some parts of the museum without tickets,



including two special areas on the first floor and concourse: **Daniel's Story: Remember the Children** and the **Wall of Remembrance** (Children's Tile Wall), which commemorates the 1.5 million children killed in the Holocaust, and the **Wexner Learning Center**. There's a cafeteria and museum shop on the premises. **Holocaust Museum Touring Tips** -- Because so many people want to visit the museum (it has hosted as many as 10,000 visitors in a single day), tickets specifying a visit time (in 15-min. intervals) are required. Reserve as many as 40 tickets in advance via Tickets.com (tel. **800/400-9373**; www.tickets.com) for a small fee. If you order well in advance, you can have tickets mailed to you at home. You can also get as many as 20 same-day tickets (if available) at the museum beginning at 10am daily (lines form earlier, usually around 8am). © Frommer's

contact:

tel: 1 202 737 7663
www.proofdc.com

location:

775 G Street, NW
Washington DC 30505

hours:

Lunch: Tuesday - Friday:
11:30AM - 2:00PM Dinner:
Monday - Thursday: 5:30PM
- 10:00PM Friday & Saturday:
5:30PM - 11:00PM Sunday:
5:00PM - 9:30pm

8 Proof

DESCRIPTION: Proof is a wine-centric restaurant featuring modern American cuisine. Expect a lengthy charcuterie board, huge cheese bar, fish and meats, root vegetables, and mushrooms. Ask your server for help with the large wine list. © NileGuide

Day 2 - Washington DC

QUICK NOTE

DAY NOTE: Begin day 2 at the Museum of American History, again located on the mall. After that, head over to the beautiful Museum of the American Indian. This museum not only offers some of the most impressive museum architecture, but also it is home to one of the best museum cafeterias in DC. After you are done exploring the museum, visit the cafeteria before heading out for the afternoon. After lunch, head to the northeastern part of the mall, towards Pennsylvania Avenue, and visit the newly relocated Newseum. Then follow Pennsylvania northwest toward the White House or hop in a taxi to visit the Corcoran Gallery, before heading back to Chinatown to visit one of the local's favorite museums, the Portrait Gallery. You will be right back in the neighborhood for dinner at Zola, in the same building as the International Spy Museum you visited yesterday (reservations recommended). After dinner, if you are feeling up for it, hop on the Red Line to DuPont Circle (exit at the DuPont North exit) and walk north on Connecticut Avenue about 2 blocks. On your left will be the Russia House, a great place for vodka or Russian beer. Alternatively, stay in Chinatown and explore any of the numerous bars in that area including Rocket Bar, Fado, and others, before calling it a night.

contact:
tel: +1 202 633 1000
<http://americanhistory.si.edu/>

location:
14th Street and Constitution
Avenue North West
Washington DC 20560

hours:
Call for details

1 National Museum of American History

DESCRIPTION: This eclectic museum is sometimes referred to as "The Nation's Attic." It houses numerous memorabilia and artifacts collected throughout American history. The American Presidency section exhibits the many facets of the nation's highest office and the impact it has had in those who have held it. Another section contains objects that highlight the cultural history of the country including Mohammed Ali's boxing gloves and the inaugural ball gowns of many of the First Ladies. Exhibits on science and technology, military history and much more can be found on the three floors of this fascinating museum. Stop by the old-fashioned ice cream parlor before you leave. © wcities.com



contact:
tel: +1 202 633 1000
<http://www.nmai.si.edu>

location:
4th & Independence
Washington DC 20024

hours:
10a-5:30p

2 National Museum of the American Indian

DESCRIPTION: The National Museum of the American Indian officially opened on September 21, 2004, having taken 5 years and \$219 million to construct. Outside and in, this museum is strikingly handsome. Its burnt-sand-colored exterior of Kasota limestone wraps around the undulating walls of the museum, making the five-story building a standout among the many white-stone structures on the National Mall. Its interior design incorporates themes of nature and astronomy. For instance, the Potomac (a Piscataway word meaning "where the goods are brought in") is a rotunda that serves as the museum's main gathering place; it is also "the heart of the museum, the sun of its universe" (as noted in the museum's literature). Measuring 120 feet in diameter, with an atrium rising 120 feet to the top of the dome overhead, the Potomac is the central entryway into the museum, a venue for performances, and a hall filled with celestial references, from the equinoxes and solstices mapped on the floor beneath your feet to the sights of sky visible through the oculus in the dome above your head. A



gift shop, a theater, and the museum's excellent restaurant, Mitsitam, occupy most of the remaining space on the first floor. A second shop and the museum's main galleries lie upstairs on the second and third levels. Three permanent exhibits, "Our Universes: Traditional Knowledge Shapes Our World," "Our Peoples: Giving Voice to Our Histories," and "Our Lives: Contemporary Life and Identities," use videos, interactive technology, and displays of artifacts to help you learn about Native cosmologies, history, and contemporary cultural identity, both of Native Americans as a group and within certain individual tribes. An exhibit called "Window on the Collections: Many Hands, Many Voices" displays 3,500 objects behind glass; a computer kiosk in front of each case allows the museumgoer to zoom in and learn more about a particular item on view. These precious wood and stone carvings, masks, pottery, feather bonnets, and so on are a fraction of the 800,000 objets d'art amassed by a wealthy New Yorker named George Gustav Heye (1874-1957). Heye founded the New York Museum of the American Indian, this museum's predecessor. The National Museum of the American Indian does not provide much direction to self-guided touring, which tends to leave visitors at a loss as to how to proceed through the museum. Faced with the vast display of objects and with galleries that have no obvious beginning or end, tourists wander around, adopting a scattershot approach to the information, emerging eventually with more of an impression than with a coherent understanding of the Indian experience, and overwhelmed by the variety and number of artifacts and details. Perhaps that's intentional. Best advice? Stop at the Welcome Desk when you enter to sign up for a highlights tour. © Frommer's

contact:

tel: +1 888 639 7386
<http://www.newseum.org/>

location:

555 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington DC 20565

hours:

Call for details

3 Newseum

DESCRIPTION: Open since April 11, 2008, the Newseum is as much a fun house of participatory experiences and special-effects exhibits as it is a museum. In fact, the Newseum's tag line, "World's Most Interactive Museum," conveys its purpose in allowing the visitor to step into the picture: to play the reporter, TV journalist, researcher, or editor. The museum boasts 125 interactive game stations, 2 state-of-the-art broadcast studios, 14 galleries, and 15 theaters. At this particular time in history, with the business of journalism undergoing a world of change, the six-story Newseum manages to capture the magic of past, current, and future ways of covering the news. First, take a look at the exterior, best viewed from across Pennsylvania Avenue. Covering the left side of the facade is a 75-foot-high tablet inscribed with words from the First Amendment ("Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech or of the press . . ."). Through its glass front, one can see (though much better at night) the huge high-definition screen hanging inside the atrium, spinning news story images. When you cross the street to enter the museum, you walk by a display of the day's front pages electronically obtained from newspapers across the country and around the world. Once inside, staff direct you first to the orientation film on the lower level (personally, I'd say skip this), then to the glass elevators that shoot you to the sixth floor. The outdoor promenade on its own is worth the



price of admission, since it offers you a breathtaking view of Pennsylvania Avenue and the Capitol. Also take time to read the fascinating history of Pennsylvania Avenue and of the city, presented in an exhibit that runs the length of the terrace. Fifth-floor exhibits cover history. A display of "Great Books" presents 20 books and documents (originals, not copies) that are widely considered our "cornerstones of freedom." These include the 1475 printing of Thomas Aquinas's "Summa Theologica" and a 1215 edition of the Magna Carta. Next to the display is a touch screen; touch the image of the book you'd like to examine and the screen presents that book, allowing you to scroll through the first few pages. Nearby, the History Gallery showcases the Newseum's extensive collection of historic newspapers and magazines, tracing 500 years of news. Several theaters on this floor continuously play short documentaries in which esteemed journalists talk about ethics, sources, "getting it right," and other topics. On the fourth floor, the First Amendment Gallery explores the historical contexts of the five freedoms. The 9/11 Gallery displays items recovered at the World Trade Center, images and reporting from that day, and an 11-minute film featuring personal stories by journalists who covered the attacks. While at first glance it appears to be a modern sculpture, one artifact on display here is in fact a 360-foot piece of the antenna that had stood on top of the North Tower. On the third floor, check out the display of New Yorker cartoons joshing the news. In the World News Gallery, you can tune in to a current news broadcast from one of many countries (I listened briefly to a report from France on the Tour de France). The "Dateline: Danger" exhibit displays artifacts from hazardous missions that journalists have undertaken -- including the laptop computer used by Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl before he was killed and the bloodstained notebook of TIME magazine reporter Michael Weisskopf, who lost his hand in an explosion in Iraq. Following that exhibit is the Journalists Memorial, a sobering display of 1,843 names written in a glass tablet to mark the deaths of those journalists who have died in pursuit of the news between 1837 and 2007. Elsewhere on this floor are several studios used by news organizations -- including NPR and ABC -- to broadcast programs. Visitors can sit in the audience during broadcasts or take behind-the-scenes tours when the studios are not in use. A veritable playground for news junkies of all ages awaits on the second floor. An interactive newsroom with 48 kiosks allows you to test your skills as a photojournalist, editor, reporter, or anchor. An ethics center tests your sense of ethics. And, for a price (\$8.50), you can try your hand at news anchor, reading from a teleprompter as a staff person tapes you, then watching your performance on screen. The first floor's gallery of Pulitzer Prize photographs leaves one speechless. The gallery's database of interviews with some of the photographers, a documentary, and vignettes accompanying the photos offer fascinating context to the craft and to the stories behind the photographs. Last but not least, return to the concourse level to view the I-Witness, a 4-D film feature that makes you feel as if you're on the scene with legends Isaiah Thomas (radical printer, not basketball legend), Nellie Bly, and Edward R. Murrow. I'm not saying another word, except: Don't miss it. The Newseum's on-site restaurant, the

Source, is already a favorite of Washingtonians. The museum has several gift shops. © Frommer's

contact:

tel: +1 202 639 1700
fax: +1 202 639 1785
<http://www.corcoran.org>

location:

500 17th St. NW
Washington DC 20240

hours:

10a-5p W-Su, until 9p Th

4 Corcoran Gallery of Art

DESCRIPTION: The first art museum in Washington, the Corcoran Gallery, founded by Washington philanthropist William Wilson Corcoran in 1869, focuses on American Art. The rotating main collection includes a variety of American art spanning from older pieces to modern works by Nevelson, Warhol, and Rothko. The building of the Corcoran is in itself impressive, and its convenient location between the White House, the National Mall, and many of the national monuments make it an easily accessible museum for locals and tourists alike. Also home to a school of art, the Corcoran Gallery is well-known for its wide variety of rotating exhibitions. For the most up to date information, see <http://www.corcoran.org/exhibitions/index.htm>. © NileGuide



contact:

tel: +1 202 275 1738
fax: +1 202 275 1887
<http://www.npg.si.edu/>

location:

8th & F Sts NW
Washington DC 20560

hours:

Daily 10a-5:30p

5 National Portrait Gallery

DESCRIPTION: Famous and distinguished Americans are honored here in portraits, photographs and other visual media. A wide variety of politicians, artists, scientists and social activists are represented. This gallery is a remarkable testimony to the diverse figures the United States has produced, from Grace Kelly and Boris Karloff to George Washington, Mickey Mantle and Gertrude Stein. Photographs, prints, drawings and sculptures supplement the paintings. Of particular interest is the Hall of Presidents, which features a portrait or sculpture of each chief executive. Admission is free. © wcities.com



contact:

tel: 1 202 654 0999
fax: 1 202 654 0998
www.zoladc.com

location:

800 F Street NW
Washington DC 20073

hours:

Lunch: 11:30a-midnight M-F, Dinner: 5p-midnight Sa, 5p-10p Su

6 Zola

DESCRIPTION: Zola acquired a new chef in spring 2007. Bryan Moscatello is committed to continuing his predecessor's bent for "straight ahead American" cuisine, while adding his own creative twists. Not sure how that translates exactly, but count on deliciousness: a simple mushroom crepe or grilled lamb sandwich at lunch; delicately roasted sea scallops with creamy parsnip purée, and an artichoke-and-goat-cheese tart or lobster "mac and cheese" at dinner, with such sweets as lemon chiffon pudding with raspberries for dessert. Zola is a cleverly designed restaurant, trading on its location next to the International Spy Museum for a decor that includes red-velvet booths, backlit panels of coded KGB documents, and a center-pivoted swinging wall/door that's like something straight out of the TV show Get Smart. Zola, in its superb downtown location, has become a popular place for the young and single to hang.



citysearch

Servers are friendly. A \$30 preheater menu, available nightly 5 to 7pm, offers great value. © Frommer's

contact:

tel: 1 202 234 9433
www.russiahouselounge.com

location:

1800 Connecticut Avenue,
NW
Washington DC 20009

hours:

Dinner: Sunday - Thursday:
5:00pm - 10:00pm Friday -
Saturday: 5:00pm - 11:00pm

7 Russia House Restaurant and Lounge (The)

DESCRIPTION: This Russian restaurant is located at the meeting point of Connecticut and Florida Avenues. The menu is essentially Russian with an ambience to match. The warm and cozy environment is perfect for socializing. The inter-continental menu, having Russian influences, includes an eclectic range of salads and Russian delicacies such as Beef Stroganoff. If you are a seafood fan, choose from the caviar selection - go ahead or gorge on the Salmon Kulebyaka. Pair your meal with a pick from the House Drinks. Don't forget to end your meal with one of the sumptuous desserts on offer. © wcities.com

Washington DC Snapshot

Local Info

Politics have helped to shape Washington, but they don't define it. It's the nation's capital, and arguably one of the most powerful places in the world, yet DC is often overlooked in favor of seemingly more glamorous US cities. But scratch the ostensibly dry surface and you'll find a city far more diverse than one might think; not surprising, considering that all of the embassies and consulates are here. It's impossible to list Washington's must-see sights in a paragraph, but certain places simply cannot be missed. The Smithsonian Institution, with its myriad museums and galleries, provides something of interest for every visitor, from the arts to aerospace engineering and everything in between. Beyond the majesty of the National Mall, plenty of lesser-known DC institutions lie a bit off the beaten track. Washington's music scene has long been lauded for its originality (everything from go-go funk to hardcore punk has heavy DC roots; Fort Reno's outdoor concerts are a summer tradition). Changing administrations make for prevalent transience (it's actually quite difficult to find many people in DC who are born-and-bred natives), yet there are certain venerable city establishments – like Ben's Chili Bowl, where Presidents have been known to dine – that stand the test of time. And Washington continues to grow and evolve – visitors can sample exquisite Ethiopian cuisine in the city's revitalized U Street Corridor neighborhood, wander through small, privately owned art galleries in Dupont Circle, or sip ale at Columbia Height's new Commonwealth Pub. One of the many things that DC has in its favor is that it's a very walkable town, so visitors can fill their days with activities in several different neighborhoods without traveling unreasonable distances. And Washington is imminently family-friendly, with plenty of events and activities that will please kids of all ages.

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History

Native American settlements existed in current-day Washington DC for thousands of years before the area was first explored by Europeans in the early 1600s; the Potomac River, on which the city is located,

derived its name from an Algonquin tribe.

While the Native Americans were initially accommodating to the arriving Colonists, relations became strained due to land ownership disputes, and most members of the DC-area tribes eventually sought refuge further afield.

It was not until 1790, with the signing of the Residence Act, that the states of Maryland and Virginia officially ceded the 10-mile square of land (including Alexandria, Virginia) on which DC was to be built. Pierre L'Enfant, a French-born architect, was commissioned to develop a plan for the new city; though L'Enfant was eventually de-commissioned and his plans superseded by the updated engravings of Andrew Ellicott, his is the name most commonly associated with the original planning of Washington.

The 19th century was one of great change in Washington- from the burning of the city by the British during the War of 1812, to Alexandria's "retrocession" from the District and return to Virginia in the mid-century, to the Civil War and Reconstruction. Slavery was abolished in Washington almost a full year before President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. This paved the way for the growth of a vibrant African-American community in Washington, the benefits of which have played an integral part in shaping the city's cultural and political history.

The last hundred years have witnessed DC's establishment as one of the most powerful cities in the world. It was also one of the foremost cities in the American Civil Rights movement. Washington public schools were the first to integrate in the mid-1950s; the National Mall was the site of Martin Luther King Jr.'s historic 1963 "I have a dream" speech. When King was assassinated in 1968, riots erupted in Washington, among other places; the U Street Corridor in particular was a scene of massive unrest. Forty years later, crowds gathered in this same neighborhood- near U and 14th Streets, NW- in a spontaneous, peaceful celebration of the election of America's first African-American President.

Considering the amount of attention that DC receives every four years during election time, it's quite surprising that Washingtonians themselves were only granted the right to vote in Presidential

elections in the mid-1960s. Washington is not a state, nor is it part of a state; it's a free-standing federal territory, under complete jurisdiction of Congress.

Unsurprisingly, this perceived lack of governing control is cause for much controversy. District residents still lament the lack of Senatorial representation, and the argument for "Home Rule" and distancing from Congressional control has been debated for years.

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Hotel Insights

There are hundreds of hotels, inns, B&Bs, and other types of accommodation in and around Washington. Any number of these places will suit just about any traveler's needs; since Washington is a thoroughly manageable city (many of the main neighborhoods are walkable and/or accessible by bus or Metro), staying in the most central location isn't too big of a concern. Instead, you can focus on finding a hotel that suits your personal style.

Hip and trendy Visitors who like being in the middle of the action have several different hotel options at their disposal. There are lots of funky boutique hotels in Dupont Circle, like Hotel Rouge or the Topaz Hotel; if Georgetown is more your scene, try Hotel Monticello.

Family-friendly Convenience is probably at the top of the list of hotel criteria for families traveling with children. In this instance, it might make more sense to choose a location that's a little less chaotic; hotels in nearby Arlington, Virginia or Bethesda, Maryland offer easy access to the center of Washington while also allowing for a slightly quieter (and likely less expensive) home base.

Old School The big-name hotels downtown, like the St. Regis or the Renaissance Mayflower, are the best bet for a classic, glamorous hotel experience.

A few blocks north, the stately Watergate Hotel benefits from a super-central location in addition to its famous historical connotations. Smaller inns like the Latham Hotel in Georgetown, the Henley Park Hotel near the Verizon Center, or the Hay-Adams near the White House provide more intimate (but equally sophisticated) settings.

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Star spotting Those hoping to see a famous face will have the most luck at The Ritz Carlton in Georgetown. Hollywood types often bunk there when they're in town for special events. On a more local note, politicians can often be seen in and around the Omni Shoreham in Woodley Park- notable also because of its proximity to Adams Morgan.

On the Cheap For many, vacation accommodations don't need to be more than a nice, clean place to crash after a long day of sightseeing and exploring.

Thankfully, it's not too difficult to find perfectly adequate, cheap lodging in Washington. The Quincy is centrally located in Foggy Bottom, and its prices are tough to beat. If you don't mind sharing your room with other travelers, check out some of DC's hostels, such as the Gallery Inn.

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Restaurants Insights

Washington has always had a lively dining scene, but a recent, steady influx of exciting new restaurants has forced some of the old standbys to take notice and stop resting on their laurels. As specific neighborhoods change and grow, so do their culinary offerings. As a result, areas that were virtually bereft of dining options as little as ten years ago are now crammed with restaurants and cafes catering to all tastes and budgets.

Many of DC's traditionally fancy restaurants are located downtown, presumably because they cater to the lawyers, politicians, and various other movers and shakers who work around there. Stalwarts like Old Ebbitt Grill and The Prime Rib are still solid establishments; they've been joined by stylish newer spots like Cafe Atlantico and The Source, Wolfgang Puck's gorgeous bistro in the Newseum building. Rasika is consistently included among the top Indian restaurants in the city. And Obelisk has been known to host a political dignitary or two, given its closeness to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

Adams Morgan offers wide-ranging and eclectic food choices befitting its funky atmosphere. Among the many options are Ethiopian, South American, and even Cajun restaurants. You can dine on the cheap at Mixtec, gorge on delicious vegetarian food at Amsterdam Falafelshop (bonus:

they're open late on weekends!), or sip whiskey at Bourbon. The neighborhood's main thoroughfare provides lots of lazy Sunday brunch options as well.

The revitalized U Street Corridor is constantly adding new culinary feathers in its cap. And patrons benefit from the neighborhood's dense concentration of outstanding restaurants- with so many choices, everyone is bound to find something to satisfy his or her appetite.

Eatonville serves funky Southern cooking; Cork has a great wine list and tasty small plates to balance it.

Dupont Circle is a perennial dining favorite, and nearby Logan Circle is fast becoming a go-to restaurant destination as well. Dupont is host to Komi, arguably one of the most spectacular restaurants in the city; appealing and less expensive options like Circa, Zorba's and Pizzeria Paradiso abound as well. In Logan, stop by Posto for traditional Florentine fare in a modern atmosphere. Just down the road, Rice serves up Asian-inspired food that both vegetarians and meat-eaters can enjoy.

Georgetown's moneyed streets are home to posh restaurants like the venerable 1789 and chic Citronelle. Newer restaurants like Agraria, which specializes in organic and locally grown food, are a nice addition to the Waterfront.

Depending on where you are in Capitol Hill, there are some great restaurant choices worth exploring. In Southeast, check out Montmartre or Park Cafe for a romantic meal or Good Stuff Eatery for heavenly burgers. On the Southwest Waterfront, the Mandarin Oriental Hotel offers both swanky CityZen and laid-back Sou'Wester. In Northeast, head to Union Pub to watch college football or sip a beer on the outdoor patio.

DC's top restaurants aren't limited to within the city limits. In the Maryland and Virginia suburbs, there's a huge array of great eateries from which to choose. The area's diverse demographics are reflected in its vast array of cuisines (everything from Vietnamese to Afghan to Austrian).

Try Vermilion in Old Town Alexandria, or Cafe Asia in the Rosslyn section of Arlington. Further afield, restaurants like L'Auberge Chez Francois and The Inn at Little Washington are great "special event" locations (though your wallet will feel a lot lighter after dining there).

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Nightlife Insights

Everyone has an opinion when it comes to the "perfect night out". A few quiet drinks somewhere off the beaten track, perhaps? Clubbing until the daylight hours? Getting a dose of culture at the theater? All of these things are on offer in Washington- you just need to know where to look.

New York might be known as "the city that never sleeps", but clubbers can indulge their inner insomniacs in DC as well, at one-named clubs like Policy, Ultra, Fur and Glow- all of which offer R&B, house, hip hop, salsa, trance and other dance-worthy music. Patrons need to "dress to impress", and call in advance to reserve a table with bottle service (in order to people-watch in style).

For those craving something a little more low-key, there are many bars, pubs and lounges to suit their mood. Swanky hotels like The Ritz Carlton in Georgetown offer appropriately chic cocktail lounges. Or stop by Russia House near Dupont Circle to drink (strong) vodka martinis and chat with the eclectic clientele. RFD, in Chinatown, has one of the largest beer selections in the city; Dr. Granville Moore's, in the Atlas District, offers great Belgian ales.

There's an active theater and dance community here; depending on the show, it's not too difficult to secure a ticket to see a performance at Arena Stage, Woolly Mammoth, the Shakespeare Theatre, or the Kennedy Center (to name a very few).

Washington has dozens of live music venues, ranging from intimate nightclubs to large stadiums. Nightclub 9:30 is a DC institution, as is the Black Cat; both places skew a bit more heavily toward indie, punk and alternative music, although pop acts have been known to play there as well. Bigger-name acts tend to play at Verizon Center, Nissan Pavilion, or Wolf Trap. In the summertime, visitors bring a picnic to some of these places and camp out on the lawn while listening to the music.

For a family-friendly evening alternative, the Kennedy Center's Family Theater always has great performances geared for kids of all ages. If the weather is nice, book a family walk through Washington Walks; kids will learn cool facts about the

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city (and get a little exercise as well). Or catch a movie at one of the several IMAX movie theaters in the area, including one on Independence Avenue on the Mall.

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Things to Do Insights

As befitting a diverse place, Washington offers different activities for different tastes.

And while seasonally varied, DC weather is not overly extreme; it gets very hot in the summer and quite cold in the winter, but neither end of the weather spectrum is so severe that it forces people inside for extended periods.

You probably already know that DC is full of tourist-worthy attractions. Those planning to do the whole sightseeing shebang won't run out of things on their itinerary. Indeed, many of the world's iconic statues, monuments and museums reside in the Nation's Capital and its surrounding areas.

Spend a few hours in quiet reflection at Arlington Cemetery or the various war memorials (Korea, Vietnam, World War II and more) on the Mall. Catch a glimpse of the building that inspired the Watergate scandal.

Take your pick of one of the Smithsonian Institution's many different galleries, or visit some of the lesser-known museums (why not check out the Octagon Museum, for example?). And of course, no first-time visit to Washington is complete without a photo or two of the White House; seeing more of the President's residence, however, requires a fair bit of planning in advance.

People who like the great outdoors love Washington - it's loaded with parks, trails, and gardens, most of which are open to the public. Walking along the quiet, tree-lined paths of Rock Creek Park, you might just forget that you're in the middle of a vibrant city. Wander down from Georgetown's crowded streets to the C&O Canal, which is perfect for jogging, cycling, or strolling with the family. The National Zoo is easily accessible by metro, and always a crowd-pleaser (check the zoo's website to find out about special events, which take place fairly frequently throughout the year). If you have a car, drive out to Glen Echo Park in Maryland and enjoy family-friendly entertainment like puppet shows and story telling, or head down to the United States Arboretum to truly immerse yourself in nature.

Foodies have an ever-increasing array of cafes, restaurants and bistros from which to choose, from critical darlings like Central Michel Richard to up-and-comers like Founding Farmers. The Kennedy Center is perhaps the best known performing arts center in the city, but it's by no means the only one; depending on what you're interested in seeing or hearing, there is always a theater, club or concert hall to fit the bill. Balance steamy days in July with cool performances at the city's annual Capital Fringe Festival, or watch the holiday favorite Nutcracker at The Washington Ballet.

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Travel Tips

Getting Here

Situated more or less in the middle of the east coast, Washington is accessible by pretty much any mode of transport.

For visitors traveling to DC from within the US, Canada, or Mexico, Ronald Reagan National Airport (or "National Airport", as the locals who remember its original name still call it) is the most convenient option. In addition to the standard airport transportation services (cab, Super Shuttle, rental car facilities and bus), Reagan also boasts a Metro station, making it imminently easy (and inexpensive) to travel to and from there.

International flights (and certain airline carriers like JetBlue) come through Washington Dulles International Airport. It's farther away from the center of town, and there is no direct Metro service, but the aforementioned Super Shuttle runs to and from here, and there are several bus services from which to choose, including one operated by the Washington Flyer that travels to Dulles from West Falls Church Metro station.

Baltimore-Washington International Airport is the farthest of the three airports from the center of town; travelers willing to deal with the 30+ mile commute (via a number of options, including buses, trains, cabs, and car services) might get a slightly cheaper fare here than at the other two airports.

All three airports have the prerequisite coffee chains, souvenir stores and news agents; more substantial shopping or

dining options, aside from Duty-Free, are pretty limited.

Amtrak and MARC trains run directly into Union Station, near the Capitol; Greyhound and Peter Pan share a bus terminal close by. Offshoots of these and other large bus companies (like Bolt Bus or Megabus) are generally cheap, clean and reliable; they pick up and drop off their passengers in or near the center of the city.

Finally, anyone up to the challenge of navigating the Capital Beltway (the Washington area's interstate highway, which intersects in the north and the south with I-95) will find several modes of entry into the city via car.

Once You've Arrived

Washington is surprisingly navigable.

Divided into four quadrants (NW, NE, SW and SE), the city is planned on a grid (though perhaps not quite as straightforward as, say, New York's). For the most part, lettered streets run east to west, and numbered streets run north to south. The streets are crisscrossed by avenues, named after the country's 50 states. That said, you should certainly invest in a map to get your bearings and prepare yourself for some of the odd streets, alleys and parks that prove exceptions to the grid rule.

The Metro is a fantastic way to get to all of the city's major neighborhoods without the hassle of driving, parking, or spending too much money. WMATA (the overarching transit authority that includes Metrorail and Metrobuses) are generally very reliable.

Cabs are plentiful, and meter-based (a recent change from the zoned system that caused many tourist confusion and frustration).

If driving is a necessity, it's easy to rent a car in DC from any of the major rental agencies - check their individual websites for more information about rates and location. Bear in mind, though, that parking in central Washington can be pricey.

Helpful links:

WMATA - <http://www.wmata.com>
Amtrak - 1-800-872-7245, <http://www.amtrak.com>
MARC - 1-800-325-7245, <http://www.mtmaryland.com>
Greyhound - 1-800-231-2222, <http://www.greyhound.com>
Peter

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Pan- 1-800-343-9999, <http://www.peterpanbus.com>

Ronald Reagan National Airport- 703-417-8600, <http://www.mwaa.com/national>
Dulles International Airport- 703-417-8600, <http://www.metwashairports.com/dulles>
Baltimore-Washington International Airport- 1-800-435-9294, <http://www.bwiairport.com>

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Fun Facts

Washington Stats:

Coordinates: 38°53'42.4"N 77°02'12.0"W

Population: 591,833

Size: 68.3 sq miles

Time Zone: EST(UTC-5)

Temperature averages: 35° F winter, 80° F summer

Rainiest month(on average): May

Did You Know?

The Washington Monument is DC's largest building- it's roughly a tenth of a mile high.

The "DC" in Washington DC stands for "District of Columbia". The phrase "taxation without representation", often heard here, is based on the fact that DC, not being a state, doesn't have any representation in Congress.

Washington was ranked the #1 Most Walkable City in the U.S. by The Brookings Institution in 2007.

DC's area code is 202, but you're also likely to see area codes like 301 and 240 (for nearby Maryland suburbs) and 703 (for Northern Virginia).

L'Enfant Plaza, in the SW quadrant of the city, is named after Pierre L'Enfant, who is credited with creating Washington's first planned street layout in the late 18th century.

DC's current Mayor, Adrian Fenty, was the youngest person ever to assume the post (at age 36). He is also an avid runner who competes regularly in local road races.

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