



**nileGUIDE**

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



terren in Virginia

# Favorite Family Activities in Washington DC

## Washington DC, 7 Days

### Table of contents:

Guide Description 2

Itinerary Overview 3

Daily Itineraries 5

Washington DC Snapshot 17

# Guide Description



**AUTHOR NOTE:** Guide written by Nancy Solomon.

Here's our list of favorite family-friendly activities in and around DC. Remember, keep it fun and take what you think you can do in a day and cut that in half.

**Note: Be sure to read the Day Notes for the kid-friendly details on recommended attractions.**

Ciao Bambino provides tips and advice around all things related to traveling with kids and is a guide to the best kid friendly hotels.

# Itinerary Overview

things to do  
restaurants  
hotels  
nightlife

## Day 1 - Washington DC

**DAY NOTE:** Hop-on Hop-off tours help get you around the city without wearing out the little feet. You can see a large number of monuments and cover a large distance in a short amount of time.

National Air and Space Museum:

Always terrific, this museum highlights the history of aviation and the exhibits are designed to teach kids the basics behind flight. The IMAX theater is a hit and the chance to see real spacecrafts is exciting.

White House:

As a child, I remember our extensive tours of the White House. Today's tours are not the same. Though interesting, the visits are limited in scope and difficult to book. Between not being able to bring any type of bag (very hard when you're traveling with a baby), and the booking hassle, I have to say we were disappointed. I couldn't believe it when my kids ranked the Wax Museum over the White House (I know, but it was dry). If you go, stop by the Visitor Center. It has a terrific gift shop with an overview of the White House.



### Washington DC Hop-on Hop-off Trolley Tour

Tour the city on your own schedule with these flexible, frequently-running trolley tours.



### National Mall

The Nation's front yard - and home to DC's most notable monuments.



### National Air and Space Museum

High flying exploration fun with your feet on the ground



### Lincoln Memorial

An inspiring and symbolic landmark, with a sweeping view of the Reflecting Pool and Washington Monument.



### The White House

Visit the home of the US President; limited tours available

and see real tools of the spy trade. You can even play James Bond for the afternoon with the new Spy in the City tour that sends families on a 1.2 mile loop with a GPS in hand looking for clues to complete a mission. Make reservations ahead of time. (Ages 5+)

Madam Tussauds Wax Museum:

The wax museum in Washington DC brings history to life. For me, this is the key to keeping kids engaged. Featuring historical figures and pop icons, this is a quick and entertaining stop.

Bike the Sites:

Our absolute favorite tour is Bike the Sites. You bike to each monument, get an overview, and then move along. This is the perfect way to get close to the monuments, learn all about them, and ensure everyone has fun. I'm not sure my kids get the deep meaning of the monuments at this age, but they enjoy the open space to run and play. When the weather is nice, rent paddle boats on Tidal Basin.

Old Post Office Building:

Looking for a great view without the line of the Washington Monument? Head to the top of the Clock Tower. The view is excellent, it's easy to access, and is stroller-friendly



### International Spy Museum

In Penn Quarter, a compelling look at the history of espionage.



### Madame Tussauds Washington D.C.



### Bike the Sites

A guided bicycle tour is a great way to see the city while getting exercise. A fun activity for the family.



### National Portrait Gallery

In praise of famous Americans



### Pavilion at the Old Post Office

Magnificent building and city view

## Day 2 - Washington DC

**DAY NOTE:** International Spy Museum:

An interactive museum that engages the group from the start. To enter, you create an alias and then climb through secret tunnels

## Day 3 - Washington DC

**DAY NOTE:** National Museum of Natural History:

A Solomon family favorite! There's something for everyone here including a Mammal Hall, Butterfly Garden, insects, and tons of gemstones, to name a few. Look for the family guides at each

# Itinerary Overview

things to do  
restaurants  
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exhibit and the information desk. Don't forget to stop by the gift shop packed with interesting kid stuff.

National Museums of American History:

My kids enjoy the Spark Lab, Invention at Play, America on the Move (covering transportation), and the First Ladies' Gowns. This museum is great, but with limited time, I'd choose the Natural History Museum.

Bureau of Engraving:

Show kids how money is made. Watching millions of dollars pass by certainly captured my children's attention. It's great to learn about something we use every day and the exhibit provides a mini-economics lesson. Given that this is a popular site and often sold out, stop by the ticket booth first thing in the morning to book a tour time.



## Bike the Sites

A guided bicycle tour is a great way to see the city while getting exercise. A fun activity for the family.



## National Museum of Natural History

Explore every aspect of nature - and gape at the Hope Diamond - at one of the Smithsonian's most famous galleries.



## National Museum of American History

Two centuries of Americana



## Bureau of Engraving and Printing

Watch money being made during a free tour at this downtown building.



## Mount Vernon

George Washington's home

## Day 5 - Washington DC

**DAY NOTE:** National Air and Space Museum at Dulles:

With over 80 aircraft, this addition to the Smithsonian is awe-inspiring. First, you'll be amazed by the size of the building itself; when you see the collection of huge aircraft, rockets and spaceships, you'll understand why it's worth a trip out here (located by Dulles Airport).



## National Air and Space Museum at Dulles (Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center)

The majestic recent addition to the Air and Space Museum, located in Dulles, VA.



## National Zoological Park

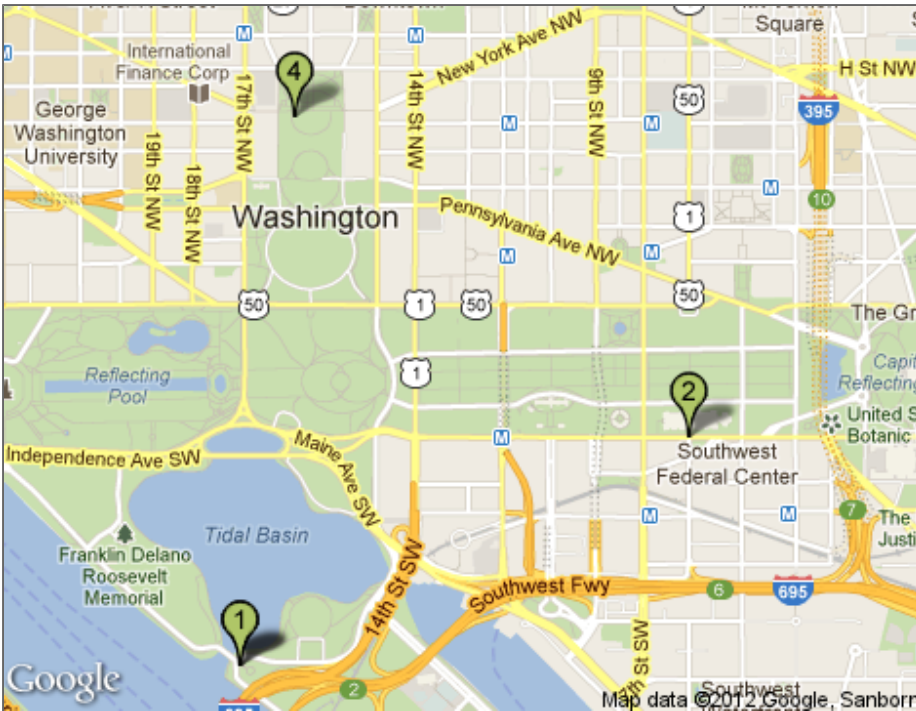
A great family experience

## Day 4 - Washington DC

**DAY NOTE:** Mount Vernon/Old Town Alexandria:

Ever since I was a kid, I've loved visiting Mount Vernon. The graceful setting makes exploring the grounds a peaceful experience. The museum offers interesting perspective about the history of farming and George Washington's life. There is a movie available, but some scenes are violent. We prefer walking around at our leisure (we skipped the guided house tour on our last visit). Pick up the Adventure Map for kids at the information desk. You can bike here or take a water taxi from Alexandria, offering a charming look at life just outside the city.

# Day 1 - Washington DC



## QUICK NOTE

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### contact:

[http://www.partner.viator.com/en/6793/tours/Washington-DC/Washington-DC-Hop-on-Hop-off-Trolley-Tour/d657-5046\\_WAS\\_OTT](http://www.partner.viator.com/en/6793/tours/Washington-DC/Washington-DC-Hop-on-Hop-off-Trolley-Tour/d657-5046_WAS_OTT)

### location:

Washington DC

## Washington DC Hop-on Hop-off Trolley Tour

**DESCRIPTION:** Discover Washington DC at your leisure with a one-day ticket on the Hop-on Hop-off Trolley Tour. Create your own itinerary to see the most popular sights of Washington DC at your own pace.

The Washington DC Hop-on Hop-off Trolley Tour is the easiest way to get around town. You can hop on and off at any of the 19 stops as often as you like. Trolleys depart every 30 minutes. There are three trolley routes:



viator

### **National Mall and Downtown – Orange Loop**

The orange line traverses the National Mall with stops at all the Smithsonian Museum buildings, as well as the national monuments and memorials: Lincoln, FDR, Washington, Jefferson, Vietnam Veterans Memorial, United States Capitol and Supreme Court buildings.

### **National Cathedral, Uptown and Georgetown – Green Loop**

The green line travels uptown to visit the National Zoo and Washington National Cathedral. It then takes you through "Embassy Row" on its way to historic Georgetown, Washington's oldest neighborhood and a mecca for shopping and dining. Finally, the green line stops at the White House and White House Visitor Center.

### **Arlington National Cemetery Shuttle – Red Loop (10–15 minute ride)**

The Arlington Cemetery line shuttles between the Lincoln Memorial and Arlington Cemetery. **Special Offer - Price displayed currently includes a 5% discount off the recommended retail price - BOOK NOW!** © Viator

#### **contact:**

tel: +1 202 426 6841  
fax: +1 202 737 3400  
<http://www.nps.gov/nama/>

#### **location:**

900 Ohio Drive, Southwest  
Washington DC 20024

#### **hours:**

Call for details

## **1 National Mall**

**DESCRIPTION:** Many visits to Washington DC center around the expansive National Mall & Memorial Parks. Public park space was one of the cornerstones of the original plan for the District of Columbia and today the National Mall helps fulfill that vision. At 1,000 square acres, and roughly 2.4 miles long, the Mall & Memorials provides open space for relaxation, reflection, celebration, and national expressions of First Amendment rights. Annual festivals and events held on the Mall: National Cherry Blossom Festival, National Black Family Reunion and Smithsonian Folklife Festival. The National Park Service offers walking and bike tours a few days a week and Military Band Concerts are held during the summer. The national museums line the eastern side of the Mall and the monuments occupy the west end (Washington, Lincoln, Jefferson, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, World War II Memorial, Korean War and Vietnam Memorial to name a few). Parking spaces are sparse and driving around the west end of the Mall is extremely confusing (it's easy to end up in Virginia and not know how to return). Various Metro stations service the Mall. Tourmobile Sightseeing provides a convenient option and it's authorized by the National Park Service. Tickets and tours vary (\$7.50 - \$20) but you can get on and off the busses at will. The Mall & Monuments are free and open 24 hours. Dramatic lighting makes nighttime monument viewing breathtaking (less crowds too!).



photo courtesy of National Mall

**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

2

## 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: +1 202 426 6841  
<http://www.nps.gov/linc/index.htm>

**location:**

900 Ohio Drive Southwest  
Washington DC 20024

**hours:**

24 hrs

3

## Lincoln Memorial

**DESCRIPTION:** A stunning tribute to the 16th president of the United States, this memorial sits at the western end of the reflecting pool and the national mall. This famous memorial is featured on both the penny and the back of the five dollar bill. The Lincoln Memorial is also the historic site of the famous March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, where Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered his "I have a dream" speech. A true must visit for any trip to Washington, DC. Inside the temple-like structure you will find a 19-foot tall statue of Lincoln seated, with a number of memorable speeches inscribed in the walls that surround him. © NileGuide



**contact:**

tel: +1 202 456 2121 / +1 202 456 1111  
fax: +1 202 456 2461  
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/>

**location:**

1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington DC 20502

**hours:**

Call for details

4

## The White House

**OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:**

Plan ahead; tours may need reservations months in advance. Tours later in the day are more likely to get behind the scenes.

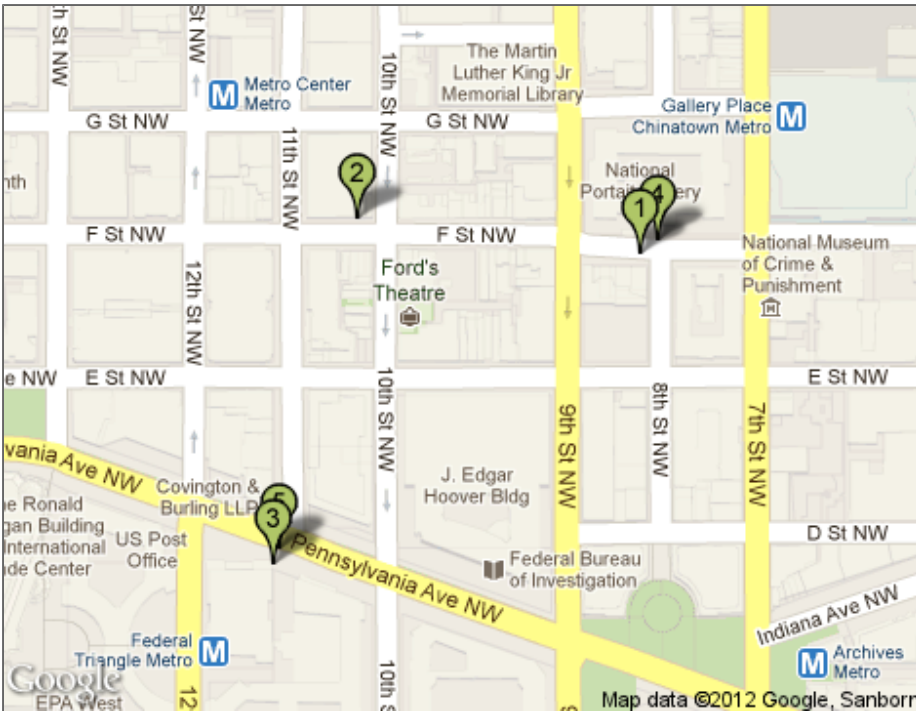
**DESCRIPTION:** It takes planning to tour the White House, but it's worth it! They are arranged through Congress. It is easy, contact your Member of Congress (done through your Member's website) one to six months prior to your visit to DC to request a tour. Tours are free but space is limited. The prohibited items makes airport security look lax and no storage facilities are available, so plan accordingly. Seasonal tours and events are not arranged through Congress – spring and fall garden tours (October and April), White House Easter Egg Roll, and lighting of the National Christmas Tree (early December). Tickets for these events are free but you'll have to stand in line to get them. They are distributed at the Ellipse Visitor Pavilion (15th and E Street NW). See website for dates and ticket details. For the planning-challenged, the White House



Visitor Center brings the White House to your fingertips. It's open seven days a week from 7:30 am – 4:00 pm. Unlike the White House tour, the visitor center does not prohibit strollers, cameras, make-up items, pens, backpacks or purses. Take public transit, parking is scarce. © NileGuide

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# Day 2 - Washington DC



## QUICK NOTE

### DAY NOTE: International Spy Museum:

An interactive museum that engages the group from the start. To enter, you create an alias and then climb through secret tunnels and see real tools of the spy trade. You can even play James Bond for the afternoon with the new Spy in the City tour that sends families on a 1.2 mile loop with a GPS in hand looking for clues to complete a mission. Make reservations ahead of time. (Ages 5+)

### Madam Tussauds Wax Museum:

The wax museum in Washington DC brings history to life. For me, this is the key to keeping kids engaged. Featuring historical figures and pop icons, this is a quick and entertaining stop.

### Bike the Sites:

Our absolute favorite tour is Bike the Sites. You bike to each monument, get an overview, and then move along. This is the perfect way to get close to the monuments, learn all about them, and ensure everyone has fun. I'm not sure my kids get the deep meaning of the monuments at this age, but they enjoy the open space to run and play. When the weather is nice, rent paddle boats on Tidal Basin.

### Old Post Office Building:

Looking for a great view without the line of the Washington Monument? Head to the top of the Clock Tower. The view is excellent, it's easy to access, and is stroller-friendly

**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

**1 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: 888/929-4632  
[www.madametussaudsdc.com](http://www.madametussaudsdc.com)

**location:**

1025 F St. NW  
Washington DC 30505

**hours:**

Daily 10am-8pm

**2 Madame Tussauds Washington D.C.**

**DESCRIPTION:** Seven other Madame Tussauds exist, only two others are located in the U.S., and only one allows you the pleasure of sizing up George Washington, mingling with Beyoncé, or helping Tiger Woods line up his putt. Madame Tussauds is a wax museum whose life-size wax figure replicas of famous Americans and historic icons appear in one of four sections: The Spirit of Washington, D.C.; Behind the Scenes; Glamour; and Sports. Interactive displays allow visitors to step into the pictures of historic, celebrity, and sports events, whether to attend George Washington's inauguration or to hang with Julia Roberts. © Frommer's

**contact:**

tel: +1 202 842 2453  
fax: +1 202 842 2441  
<http://www.bikethesites.com/>

**location:**

1100 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington DC 20004

**hours:**

Daily Mar-Nov; Spring 9a-6p,  
Summer 9a-9p, Fall 9a-6p;  
Sundays 9:30a-6p

**3 Bike the Sites**

**DESCRIPTION:** Seeing the nation's capital by bike is not only healthy, but it also allows visitors to get a closer view of DC. This guided bicycle tour takes in many of Washington's magnificent monuments and landmarks; everything from the White House and Washington Monument to the to the Freer Gallery and Rock Creek Park. The standard tour covers about eight miles in three hours. Most of the tour is on paved paths and gravel trails. The company also rents bikes, wheelchairs and scooters. © wcities.com



Bike the Sites

**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

**4 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

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**contact:**

tel: +1 202 289 4222 (extn 15)  
<http://oldpostofficedc.com/>

**location:**

1100 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington DC 20004

**hours:**

8a-11p M-Su, Apr-Aug,  
10a-6p M-Su Sep-Mar

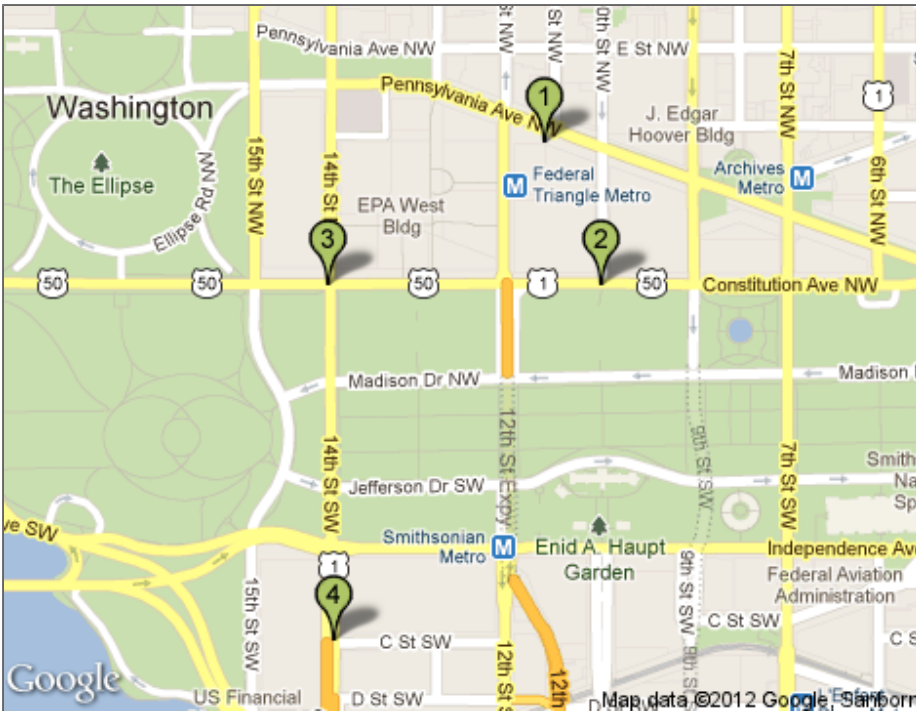


## Pavilion at the Old Post Office

**DESCRIPTION:** Not so much a mall as a tourist trap with souvenir shops and a food court. But you can ride a pair of elevators to the clock tower for a stunning view of the city. © Frommer's



# Day 3 - Washington DC



## QUICK NOTE

### DAY NOTE: National Museum of Natural History:

A Solomon family favorite! There's something for everyone here including a Mammal Hall, Butterfly Garden, insects, and tons of gemstones, to name a few. Look for the family guides at each exhibit and the information desk. Don't forget to stop by the gift shop packed with interesting kid stuff.

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### Bureau of Engraving:

Show kids how money is made. Watching millions of dollars pass by certainly captured my children's attention. It's great to learn about something we use every day and the exhibit provides a mini-economics lesson. Given that this is a popular site and often sold out, stop by the ticket booth first thing in the morning to book a tour time.

### contact:

tel: +1 202 842 2453  
fax: +1 202 842 2441  
<http://www.bikethesites.com/>

### location:

1100 Pennsylvania Avenue  
NW  
Washington DC 20004

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Bike the Sites

**hours:**  
Daily Mar-Nov; Spring 9a-6p,  
Summer 9a-9p, Fall 9a-6p;  
Sundays 9:30a-6p

and gravel trails. The company also rents bikes, wheelchairs and scooters. © wcities.com

**contact:**  
tel: +1 202 633 1000 / +1 202  
357 1729  
fax: +1 202 768 2778  
<http://www.mnh.si.edu/>

**location:**  
10th Street and Constitution  
Avenue, Northwest  
Washington DC 20560

**hours:**  
Daily 10a-5:30p

## 2 National Museum of Natural History

**DESCRIPTION:** This gallery is a wonderland for kids and adults alike - it has everything from dinosaur skeletons to diamonds and insect zoos. Kids are especially big fans of the Discovery Room, which encourages their participation in the form of touching and smelling various exhibits. The museum also boasts an IMAX theater, so be sure to check the schedule and see what's playing.  
© NileGuide



**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

## 3 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: +1 202 874 3019 / +1 877  
874 4114 (toll free)  
[http://www.bep.treas.gov./](http://www.bep.treas.gov/)

**location:**  
14th and C Street SW  
Washington DC 20228

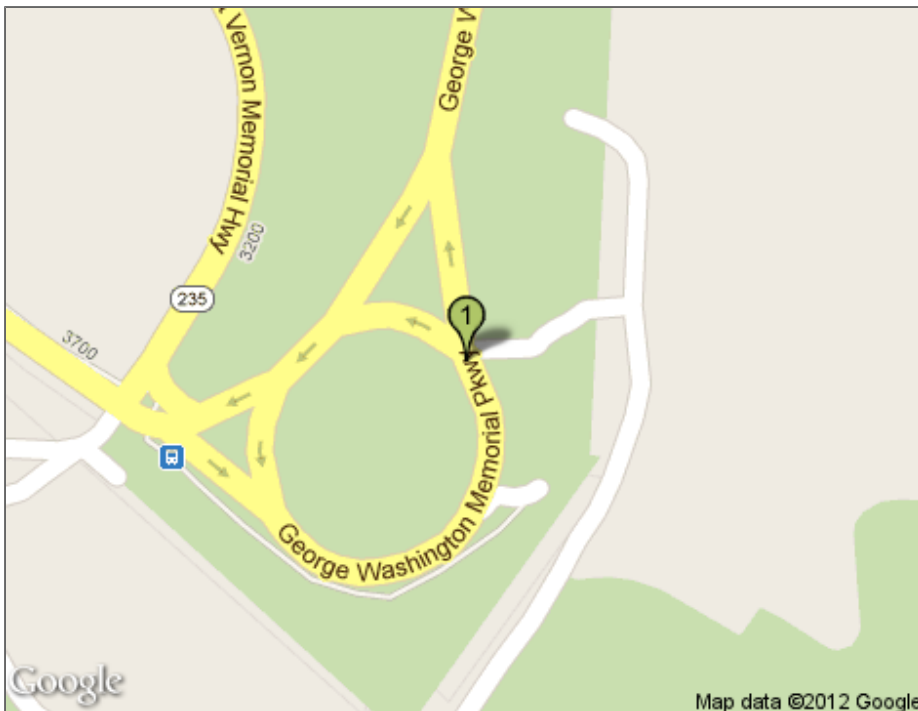
**hours:**  
Daily 6a-8:30a, 11:30-6p

## 4 Bureau of Engraving and Printing

**DESCRIPTION:** You know the government prints money - come see how it's done! The 45 – 50 minute tour shows how modern technology as well as old is used to make the paper that gets us through the day. See sheets of all denominations in all states of the process. Tours are free and tickets are needed March through August. The Ticket Booth, located at Raoul Wallenberg Place (15th Street), opens at 8 am but you may have to line up very early during the busy Cherry Blossom season (March & April). No tickets are required September through February, simply line up at the Visitors' Entrance on 14th Street. Parking is almost impossible, use the Metro Smithsonian Station (blue/orange) located at 12th Street and Independence Ave SW. Note that strollers are not allowed on tours. © NileGuide



# Day 4 - Washington DC



## QUICK NOTE

### DAY NOTE: Mount Vernon/Old Town Alexandria:

Ever since I was a kid, I've loved visiting Mount Vernon. The graceful setting makes exploring the grounds a peaceful experience. The museum offers interesting perspective about the history of farming and George Washington's life. There is a movie available, but some scenes are violent. We prefer walking around at our leisure (we skipped the guided house tour on our last visit). Pick up the Adventure Map for kids at the information desk. You can bike here or take a water taxi from Alexandria, offering a charming look at life just outside the city.

#### contact:

tel: +1 703 780 2000

<http://www.mountvernon.org/>

#### location:

3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway  
Mount Vernon VA 22121

#### hours:

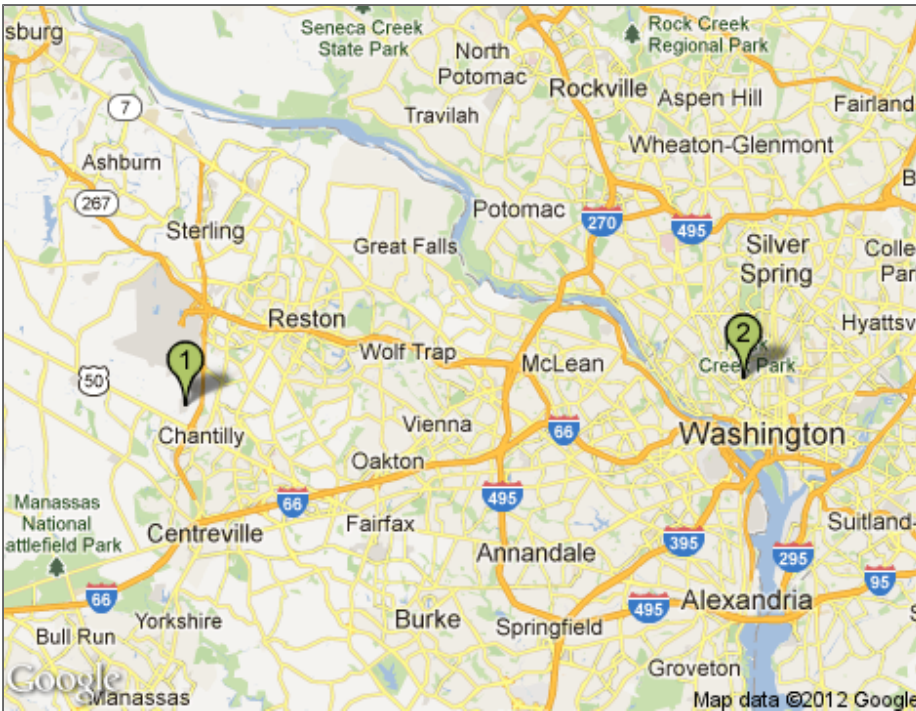
Apr-Aug: daily 8a-5p, Mar, Sep  
& Oct: daily 9a-5p, Nov-Feb:  
daily 9a-4p

## 1 Mount Vernon

**DESCRIPTION:** From beneath the 90-foot portico of Mount Vernon, visitors can gaze across an expanse of sloping lawn to the Potomac River, a mile wide, as its flows past George Washington's home. Costumed guides narrate the history of the elegant mansion and of the surrounding buildings, which have been preserved to reflect the days when the first president resided here. Visitors are invited to walk around the 500-acre estate, tour the buildings and participate in the 'Hand-on History' exhibits that recreate farming techniques and colonial games. © wcities.com



# Day 5 - Washington DC



## QUICK NOTE

**DAY NOTE:** National Air and Space Museum at Dulles:

With over 80 aircraft, this addition to the Smithsonian is awe-inspiring. First, you'll be amazed by the size of the building itself; when you see the collection of huge aircraft, rockets and spaceships, you'll understand why it's worth a trip out here (located by Dulles Airport).

### contact:

tel: 202.633.1000  
<http://www.nasm.si.edu/museum/udvarhazy/>

### location:

14390 Air and Space  
Museum Parkway  
Chantilly VA 20151

## 1 National Air and Space Museum at Dulles (Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center)

**DESCRIPTION:** The Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center near Washington Dulles International Airport is the companion facility to the Museum on the National Mall. The building opened in December, 2003, and provides enough space for the Smithsonian to display the thousands of aviation and space artifacts that cannot be exhibited on the National Mall. The two sites together showcase the largest collection of aviation and space artifacts in the world. The Center was named in honor of its major donor, and features the large Boeing Aviation Hangar in which aircraft are displayed on three levels. Visitors can walk among aircraft and small artifacts in display cases located on the floor, and view aircraft hanging from the arched ceiling on elevated skywalks. Many engines, helicopters, ultralights, and experimental flying machines are on display in a museum setting for the first time. Among the aviation artifacts on display are the Lockheed SR-71 Blackbird, the fastest jet in the world; the Boeing Dash 80, the prototype of the 707; the



Photo courtesy of National Air and Space museum

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Boeing B-29 Superfortress Enola Gay; and the deHavilland Chipmunk aerobatic airplane.

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**contact:**

tel: 202.633.4800

fax: +1 202 225 3393

<http://nationalzoo.si.edu/>

**location:**

3001 Connecticut Ave. NW  
Washington DC 20008

**hours:**

Winter: 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.;

Spring - Fall: 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.

**2 National Zoological Park**

**DESCRIPTION:** Located in the heart of DC, the Smithsonian National Zoological Park (National Zoo) is the famous home of the Giant Pandas (Tian Tian, Mei Xiang, and Tai Shan). Recognized as one of the premier zoological research institutions in the United States, the National Zoo, which is free, attracts 2 million visitors per year. In addition to the Pandas, the Zoo includes a number of other well-loved animal attractions including Asian Elephants, orangutans, cheetahs, tiger cubs, seals, and penguins. There is also a petting zoo. In addition to the animals, the Zoo is a large, open park, and offers picnic tables and numerous other family-friendly diversions on the weekends. © NileGuide



# 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 Heights' 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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