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terren in Virginia

Weekend in Washington: A Two-Day Crash Course in some of DC's Greatest Hits

Washington DC, 2 Days

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Guide Description









AUTHOR NOTE: In a perfect world, you'd have many days (or even weeks) to explore Washington and all that it has to offer. But as we all know, the world isn't perfect, and things like jobs, family obligations, and finances get in the way. If you do manage to carve out a weekend to visit the Nation's Capital, here are some ideas to make the most of your relatively brief visit. Note that these tips are bit more focused on exploring neighborhoods rather than specific places, and that some of them are more family-oriented than others; all of them, however, offer interesting insight into the District and its environs.

Itinerary Overview






things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - Washington DC

DAY NOTE: Maximize your time in DC by choosing a hotel that provides easy walking/Metro access to different parts of the city. Foggy Bottom is a good choice in that regard, and the George Washington University Inn is good value for money. Start your day by wandering into Georgetown for coffee and some window shopping. Georgetown is arguably Washington's most famous neighborhood; if you're feeling intellectual, you can tour the grounds of Georgetown University. If it's a nice day, you can cross the key Bridge into Arlington and hop on the Metro downtown to the National Mall. You can't really say you've visited DC if you haven't visited the Mall and all it has to offer. The monuments! The museums! The cherry blossoms (in the springtime)! The relative proximity of everything makes it easy for you to pick and choose which attractions interest you most; be prepared for crowds, however, especially on weekends in the summer months. From the Mall, make your way to Capitol Hill for a stroll and a nice dinner at Belga Cafe. This is one of the few Belgian restaurants in DC, and it doesn't disappoint. From its scrumptious brunch to its extensive beer list, Belga is a great place for delicious and reasonably priced European fare. If you're in the mood to party, there are several bars and clubs in Georgetown from which to choose. Jazz aficionados have been singing the praises (pardon the pun) of hip little club Blues Alley for years. It's a perfect spot to unwind at the end of the evening and listen to some world-class live music. Be away that there is a cover charge.

	George Washington University Inn Colonial atmosphere
	Georgetown Washington's oldest neighborhood
	Georgetown University Academic Excellence
	National Mall The Nation's front yard - and home to DC's most notable monuments.
	Belga Café Brunch is tops at this Belgian and Euro-fusion spot
	Blues Alley Top jazz and blues artists

DAY NOTE: Now that you've fulfilled your tourist obligations, you can spend your second day in DC soaking up the atmosphere of two of its more interesting neighborhoods. Dupont Circle and Adams Morgan are lively, diverse areas with a great vibe and lots of culture. Many consider Dupont Circle (so named after the busy roundabout that defines it) to be the most culturally exciting neighborhood in the city. Art galleries thrive and restaurants of every conceivable cuisine can be found in Dupont, and it's recognized as being the unofficial hub of Washington's LGBT community. If you visit in June, you might be lucky enough to catch the annual "Pride of Pets" Dog Show (<http://www.petsdc.org/dogshow1.htm>), hosted at the Circle itself. Grab a coffee and a book at Kramerbooks and Afterwards, then wander up to Adams Morgan along 18th Street. Adams Morgan is home to an active Ethiopian community; sample delicious Ethiopian fare at Meskerem before heading back to Dupont for a (strong) martini at Russia House. This slick little bar/restaurant provides an opportunity to mingle fun-minded folks from all over the globe, and you'll enjoy the fun, Euro atmosphere.

	Dupont Circle Lively, artsy neighborhood
	Kramerbooks and Afterwards Lattes and literature
	Adams-Morgan Explore this vibrant neighborhood with great food, boutiques, nightlife
	Meskerem Eat with your fingers
	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 2 - Washington DC

Day 1 - Washington DC

QUICK NOTE

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contact:

tel: +1 800 426 4455

fax: +1 202 298 7499

<http://www.gwuinn.com/>

location:

824 New Hampshire Ave Nw
Washington DC 20037

1 George Washington University Inn

DESCRIPTION: Kennedy Center performers, corporate folks, visiting professors, and parents of GW students are frequent guests at this hotel owned by George Washington University. Rooms are a little larger and corridors are a tad narrower than those in a typical hotel, and each room includes a roomy dressing chamber. More than one-third of the units are one-bedroom suites. These are especially spacious, with living rooms that hold a sleeper sofa and a TV hidden in an armoire (there's another in the bedroom). The suites, plus the 16 efficiencies, have kitchens. The spaciousness and the kitchen facilities make this a popular choice for families and for long-term guests. The hotel is located in a lovely neighborhood, close to Georgetown, the Kennedy Center, and downtown. Mention your affiliation with George Washington University, if you have one, and you may receive a special "GWU" rate. © Frommer's



Hotels.com

contact:

tel: +1 202 789 7000 (Tourist Information)

fax: +1 202 789 7037 (Tourist Information)

<http://www.georgetowndc.com/>

location:

M Street and Wisconsin Avenue
Washington DC 20007

hours:

2 Georgetown

DESCRIPTION: Georgetown is one of the most historically significant areas of DC. It is a great place to spend the afternoon shopping or just strolling along the tree-lined streets, looking at the expansive homes and mansions. "M" street in Georgetown is the main upscale shopping area in DC. There are numerous historical sights mixed throughout the area, including the Old Stone House on M street, the oldest building in DC, and Dumbarton Oaks, where the United Nations was outlined in 1944. Georgetown is also one of DC's best places for eating, drinking, and nightlife. Local favorites include such places as Mr. Smith's, a piano bar, J. Pauls, and Old Glory Bar-



Call for details

B-Que. The Georgetown Waterfront is also a popular place to spend the afternoon. The restaurants that line the Potomac make for a great venue for drinks, although the food is better a couple of blocks north on M street. Recently, there has also been a proliferation of new, upscale restaurants in Georgetown including Hook and Mendocino Grille & Wine Bar. © NileGuide

contact:

tel: +1 202 687 3600
http://www.georgetown.edu/

location:

37th and O St.
Washington DC 20057

3 Georgetown University

DESCRIPTION: One of the world's foremost universities, Georgetown University offers much more than lectures and books. Famous speakers from around the globe make a point of stopping at this renowned institution to give a speech, sit in on panels, or simply meet students and answer questions. The grounds of the university also offer a spectacular setting for an afternoon stroll. Healy Hall, designated a National Historic Landmark in 1987, is one of the finest examples of Collegiate Gothic architecture in the nation. The oldest building on campus, Old North, has acted as a soap box for multiple presidents, including George Washington and Bill Clinton. Not too far off M Street, Georgetown is a must if you find yourself in the neighborhood. © wcities.com



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

4 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, Ward 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: 1 202 544 0100
www.belgacafe.com

location:
514 8th Street, SE
Washington DC 20003

hours:
Call for details

5 Belga Café

DESCRIPTION: If you're planning to spend some time on the Hill, Belga Cafe is a great spot to take a break and enjoy some artfully prepared Belgian fare. Steak and frites are the most commonly ordered dish here - and you have several different steak sauces available from which to choose. If you stop in for brunch, be prepared to leave with a VERY full stomach - the Belgian waffles are to die for.
© NileGuide



Photo courtesy of Belga Cafe

contact:
tel: 202/337-4141
fax: +1 202 337 7946
www.bluesalley.com

location:
1073 Wisconsin Ave. NW
Washington DC 20007

hours:
Daily 6p-12:30a

6 Blues Alley

DESCRIPTION: Blues Alley, in Georgetown, has been Washington's top jazz club since 1965, featuring such artists as Karrin Allyson, Ahmad Jamal, Sonny Rollins, Wynton Marsalis, Rachelle Ferrell, and Maynard Ferguson. There are usually two shows nightly at 8 and 10pm; some performers also do midnight shows on weekends. Reservations are essential (call after noon); since seating is on a first-come, first-served basis, it's best to arrive no later than 7pm and have dinner. Entrees on the steak and Creole seafood menu are in the \$17 to \$23 range, snacks and sandwiches are \$5.25 to \$10, and drinks are \$5.35 to \$9. The decor is "classic dive": exposed-brick walls; beamed ceiling; small, candlelit tables; and a very worn look about it. Sometimes well-known visiting musicians get up and jam with performers. © Frommer's



Day 2 - Washington DC

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contact:

tel: +1 202 789 7000 (Tourist Information)

fax: +1 202 789 7037 (Tourist Information)

<http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/wash/dc50.htm>

location:

Connecticut Avenue
Washington DC 20036

hours:

Call for details

1 Dupont Circle

DESCRIPTION: DuPont circle is one of Washington's hubs of nightlife, shopping, and dining. The circle itself is filled with Washingtonians day and night, relaxing on the benches, snacking, or playing music or a game of chess. Around the circle, the neighborhood is filled with interesting museums, shops, restaurants and bars. DuPont, and more specifically 17th street off of DuPont, is considered the center of Washington DC's gay and lesbian community. The Brickseller, home of the world largest beer list, according to the Guinness Book of World Records, is located in DuPont. DuPont is also home to a large number of embassies, and one can easily access Embassy Row by simply walking north-west on Massachusetts Avenue, which intersects the circle. DuPont is also home to some of the most important think-tanks in the country, including the Brookings Institution and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and the Johns Hopkins University's Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). © NileGuide



contact:

tel: 1 202 387 1400

(Bookstore)

fax: 1 202 232 6777 (Cafe)

<http://www.kramers.com/>

location:

1517 Connecticut Avenue,
Northwest
Washington DC 20036

hours:

Su-Th: 7:30a-1a; F-Sa 24 hrs

2 Kramerbooks and Afterwards

DESCRIPTION: This bookstore-cafe was the first to set up shop in Dupont Circle. It is always crowded, particularly on weekends when singles who would rather skip the bar scene flock to this surprising hot spot. Live music is featured nightly, Wednesday through Saturday. The cafe is a full-service restaurant that serves breakfast, lunch and dinner daily. Draft beer and wines by the glass are available. The entrees are not fancy— chicken and lamb chops are among your choices— but they are tasty. © wcities.com



contact:

tel: +1 202 789 7000 (Tourist Information)
fax: +1 202 789 7037 (Tourist Information)
<http://www.adamsmorgan.net/>

location:

18th Street Northwest & Columbia Road Northwest
Washington DC 20009

hours:

Call for details

3 Adams-Morgan

DESCRIPTION: A true melting pot of DC culture, Adams Morgan offers a little bit of something for everyone. Centered at 18th street and Columbia Road, by day, it is the one of city's most interesting neighborhoods, with a large variety of unusual stores. By night, the true character of Adams Morgan emerges. Traffic comes to a near standstill as 18th street turns into one of the hubs of DC's nightlife scene. Adams Morgan has a wide variety of restaurants serving food from a variety of countries such as Ethiopia, Turkey, Mexico, El Salvador, Brazil, Italy, Vietnam, and Ghana. Almost every restaurant transforms into a bar or nightclub come sundown. At 3 AM, partiers flood the street again, looking for late night food including falafel and DC's famous "Jumbo Slice" pizza. Adams Morgan is a must-visit for those that want to experience one of the most diverse dining and nightlife areas of DC. © NileGuide



contact:

tel: 1 202 462 4100
<http://www.meskeremonline.com>

location:

2434 18th Street NorthWest
Washington DC 20009

hours:

M-Th noon-midnight, F-Su noon-3a

4 Meskerem

DESCRIPTION: In the past few years, Washington has seen an explosion of Ethiopian restaurants, notably in the 9th and U streets area, where you will find at least 10 cafes offering authentic Ethiopian cuisine backed up by traditional or contemporary musical entertainment. But Meskerem in Adams-Morgan was one of the first Ethiopian restaurants to open in Washington and remains among the best, especially for newcomers to the food. It's attractive; the three-level, high-ceilinged dining room has an oval skylight girded by a painted sunburst and yellow-washed walls hung with African art and musical instruments. On the mezzanine level, you sit at messobs (basket tables) on low, carved Ethiopian chairs or upholstered leather poufs. Diners share large platters of food, which they scoop up with a sourdough crepelike pancake called injera (no silverware here). You'll notice a lot of watt dishes, which refers to the traditional Ethiopian stew, made with your choice of beef, chicken, lamb, or vegetables, in varying degrees of hot and spicy; the alicha watts are milder and more delicately flavored. You might share an entree -- perhaps yegeb kay watt (succulent lamb in thick, hot berbere sauce) -- along with a sampler platter of five vegetarian dishes, served with tomato and potato salads. Some combination platters comprise an array of beef, chicken, lamb, and vegetables. There's a full bar, and the wine list includes Ethiopian honey wine and beer. © Frommer's

contact:

tel: 1 202 234 9433
www.russiahouselounge.com

location:

1800 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington DC 20009

hours:

Dinner: 5p-10p M-Th, 5p-11p F, 6p-11p Sa, Lounge: 5p-midnight M-Th, 5p-2a F, 6p-2a Sa

5 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 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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