



TRAVEL REPORT

The inside scoop from experienced travelers

WASHINGTON D.C.

INTRODUCTION

The embodiment of American government, **WASHINGTON, D.C.**, finds a myriad of gleaming marble monuments and a dizzying array of impressive museums. As the nation's capital, the scale of the city is accordingly grand, with spacious boulevards and imposing buildings fronted by wide, sweeping steps. There are, however, no skyscrapers to compete with the impact of the city's famous monuments. Beyond the memorials and museums, interesting neighborhoods like Georgetown, the preppy enclave surrounding the university, and funky Adams Morgan, the city's smaller version of Manhattan's East Village, are fun to explore. The grand houses and chic restaurants of Dupont Circle also deserve a visit. D.C.'s parking police seem to take special pleasure tormenting native and visiting drivers alike, so opt for the clean, efficient subway system to get around. Also, be aware that heightened security has affected tours in certain buildings.

WHAT OUR MEMBERS SAY



Member: Overlander

Journal: Washington, DC, an American Anomaly

"I've met many people who strongly dislike Washington, who say it feels strange, oppressive, even spooky, and who can't wait to get out even after admitting that they were impressed with the place. I feel quite comfortable there, I think because Washington isn't like other American cities; it's not a cookie-cutter copy of the next urban monstrosity down the Interstate. Washington has a unique personality, an identity very closely linked to its history and its urban designer, Pierre l'Enfant. That L'Enfant was French explains why Pennsylvania Avenue feels a lot more like the Champs Élysées than Fifth Avenue. This is a city built on a human scale, one that can be appreciated at ground level—it isn't dwarfed by high-rise canyons with ne'er a glimpse of the sun or sky. It has an intimacy about it that few other North American cities can match."



Member: Karin Leperi

Journal: Washington, D.C. - A Capitol With Culture

"By nature a conservative town, Washington doesn't exhibit the energy of a New York or Chicago. That said, the beauty of our Nation's Capital lies in its architecture and the convergence of culture, power, and politics—where else can you rub shoulders with America's most powerful leaders?"



Member: [smmmarti guide](#)

Journal: [Trip to Nation's Capital Nets Surprises](#)

“Oh, the things you can see and do for free! The Smithsonian Museums, the National Gallery of Art, the National Treasury and US Mint, the Air and Space Museum, the Capitol, the White House, the Lincoln, Washington, and Jefferson memorials...”

ATTRACTIONS

Air & Space Museum

National Mall at 7th and Independence Ave. Washington, D.C.. 202/357-1400.
www.nasm.si.edu.

“All around you, whether suspended from the ceiling or parked at floor level, are aircraft representing milestones in the history of flight. It's extraordinary to find yourself surrounded by so much ground-breaking aviation history. Look up into the rafters and there, suspended as in amber, is the recumbent figure of Wilbur Wright inside his 1903 Flyer. Move your head around and you'll see a DC-3, first produced in 1935, and perhaps the world's most successful aircraft—it still flies in some isolated places. You'll also spot a TriMotor and the Boeing 247-D, the first successful long-distance airliners, while down on the floor finds a DC-6 fuselage—walk into it to get a look at the bygone elegance of air travel (windows with curtains, china with sterling silver cutlery, and leather seats).” Member:

[Overlander](#). Journal: [Washington, D.C., an American Anomaly](#).

snapshots from the road >>>>>>



“There's just nothing like standing in the middle of a cherry tree grove with pinkish-white petals floating to the ground around you. The **Cherry Blossom Festival** takes place every spring, and the Potomac makes the scenery even prettier, especially when covered by blossoms that have fallen to the water. Usually, the tulips are also blooming, so it's a springtime flower fest. ” Member: [Carmen](#).

American Art Museum & National Portrait Gallery

750 9th St. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/275-1912. www.nmaa.si.edu.

“I have been to the Louvre and the Musée d'Orsay, the Sistine Chapel, the Uffizzi Gallery, the Metropolitan Museum, the Van Gogh Museum and the Rijksmuseum . . . having been around the block, I can tell you that this Smithsonian art museum is one of the BEST. It has wondrous pieces like Edward Hopper's *People in the Sun*, and Andrea Del Castagno's tempura and leather *Youthful David* as part of its collection.” Member: [BeAdventureous!](#)

Journal: [Let's Lobby Washington](#).



“When I noticed the replica of Russia's Sputnik I suspended from the ceiling at the **Air & Space Museum**, I also remembered the shock its launch provoked in the States. Then, when I viewed the charred Mercury capsule, so tiny and vulnerable looking, I recalled the flickering black-and-white television images of its launch, and the joy over Astronaut John Glenn's safe return to earth.” Member: [Overlander](#).

Arlington Cemetery

Arlington, VA. 703/695-3250. www.arlingtoncemetery.com.

“You can't help but get a lump in your throat when you walk among the tombstones and see all of the young soldiers that died. Some are well-known (i.e., Audie Murphy, General George C. Marshall) while others are obviously more anonymous—but they all served their country. The cemetery is also famous for holding the tombs of John F. Kennedy and boxer Joe Louis. Make sure you go to the Tomb of the Unknowns and watch the changing of the guard, visit the Iwo Jima war memorials, see Arlington House (a memorial to Robert E. Lee, whose land was used to create the cemetery), and check out other monuments like the Shuttle Challenger Memorial. Take a moment and leave a flower on the grave of a fallen soldier. Arlington is personal because my grandfather (a WWII hero) and my grandmother were buried here; I always take the time to pay my respects when I pass through Washington.” Member: [jim](#).

Journal: [A City of Memorials](#).

Capitol Building

Constitution and Independence Ave., near east end of the Mall. Washington, D.C.. 202/224-3121. www.aoc.gov.

“The Capitol cannot be missed—its cast-iron dome (an engineering feat in 1851) rises 280 feet above the ground and weighs 9 million pounds. The Great Rotunda is the first thing you'll see when entering the building, but don't miss the Old Senate Chamber, Statuary Hall, and the 10-ton bronze Columbus Doors.” Member: [gonewriting](#). Journal: [Our Nation's Capitol](#).

Corcoran Gallery

500 17th St. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/639-1700. www.corcoran.org.

“With its marble edifice and huge lobby, the Corcoran feels more like a museum than a gallery. Though it showcases a survey of Western art from the late 18th century onwards, the Corcoran's greatest strength is its American collection, especially its paintings from 1850 to 1930. You'll see Gilbert Stuart's portraits of George Washington, as well as works by Winslow Homer, Eastman Johnson, Thomas Eakins, John Singer Sargent, and James MacNeill Whistler. Two large canvases dominate the central gallery on the second floor: Frank Church's churning *Niagara* and the epic *Last of the Buffalo* by Church's archrival Alfred Bierstadt. American painters from the early 20th century, like George Bellows and the Ashcan artists, are well represented. Note the canvas *Ground Swell*—this seascape is likely the brightest, cheeriest work you'll ever see from Edward Hopper. The Corcoran's modern art holdings don't succeed quite as well, but the museum often hosts some terrific traveling exhibits. Visit the Corcoran on a Sunday morning and you'll likely overhear the gospel brunch from the ground-floor café.” Member: [Adventures With Adam](#). Journal:

[Adventures in D.C.](#)

snapshots from the road > > > > >



“If you like to **run**, run around downtown and the Mall—you’ll cover a lot of ground and it will help orient you for later sightseeing. This was one of the best runs I have ever had on vacation.

Another great run was along the water in Arlington, Virginia (near the Pentagon and Arlington Cemetery), across the river from D.C; the views were fantastic and the route was very enjoyable.” Member: [jim.](#)



Duck Tour

Union Station, 50 Massachusetts Ave. NE. Washington, D.C.. 202/832-9800.

“This is a combo tour—part land and part water. You ride past and around the Mall and see all of the historic sites and memorials. Then you go into the Potomac and get the view from the water, which is beautiful. Be prepared for some good insights, some corny jokes, and a fun time (you have to have a sense of humor riding on the Duck Tour).” Member: [jim.](#) Journal: [A City of Memorials.](#)

Ford’s Theatre

511 10th St. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/347-4833. [www.fordstheatre.org.](http://www.fordstheatre.org)

“This is where Lincoln was shot! A tour guide narrates the story, while you sit, rapt, in one of the theater seats. He tells the drama in a way that makes it come alive—you can almost hear the shots ring out. Yes, there is a line to get in, but it’s worth the wait. In the museum across the street, you will see Booth’s murder weapon, the bed in which Lincoln died, his tall hat, and blood-caked clothes, as well as other memorabilia related to the infamous evening. It is fascinating indeed.” Member: [BeAdventureous!](#) Journal: [Let’s Lobby Washington.](#)

Holocaust Museum

100 Raoul Wallenberg Pl. SW. Washington, D.C.. 202/488-0400. [www.ushmm.org.](http://www.ushmm.org)

“We each received a small book on an individual who had died in the Holocaust; it told us where they grew up, how they died, and about their family members. Movie theaters on three floors show footage of concentration camp prisoners and their torturers. The museum has very good pictures, stories, hands-on experiments, and many other things to keep you busy. My favorite part was being able to see a uniform worn by a child who was in a camp.” Member: [Dr.Julie.](#) Journal: [My Trip to Washington DC.](#)



“We thought Washington was a collection of impressive monoliths and marble, but little else. It had no real personality of its own. Frankly, it reminded me of visiting a cemetery; interesting, but not something to spend days at. We were weary of the street people and the lack of relaxed public places. Thank goodness we gave it one more try and discovered the Dupont Circle area, spent some time in Georgetown, and got into neighborhoods away from the main attractions.”
Member: [Jim Rosenberg](#).

Library of Congress

101 Independence Ave. SE. Washington, D.C.. 202/707-5000. www.loc.gov.

“The world's largest library contains more than 100 million items in 450 languages. This Brobdingnagian institution is housed in three enormous buildings and employs a staff of around 5,000. The first congressional library was a no-frills affair housed in the Capitol—the initial collection of 740 books arrived from London in 1801. In 1814, the British invaded Washington and burned the Capitol building and the small library in the process. Retired President Thomas Jefferson, an avid book collector with the finest library in the country, stepped forward and offered his collection to Congress. Congress actually *hesitated*, objecting to the fact that Jefferson's library contained controversial works. After four months of angry Congressional debate, the final vote was 81 in favor and 71 opposed. By accepting Jefferson's 6,487 books, Congress tacitly subscribed to Jefferson's all-embracing philosophy, which guides the Library to this day. The magnificent interior, with its soaring vaulted ceilings, marble columns, mosaic floors, and ornate murals, was a decidedly *American* undertaking—something of a political statement in the European-besotted Gilded Age. While the decorative themes may seem decidedly lopsided to the modern visitor—they scarcely acknowledge non-Western cultures—they are remarkably beautiful.” Member: [Idler](#). Journal: [Paper Chase](#).

Lincoln Memorial

W. Potomac Park at 23rd St. Washington, D.C.. 202/426-6841. www.nps.gov/linc/home.htm.

“The architect who designed the memorial, Henry Bacon, envisioned the shrine as a beacon that would be visible from many corners of the city. Inside, Daniel Chester French's 19-foot-high statue of Lincoln is surrounded by engravings of Abe's words. Abe himself is sitting, his brows knitted in contemplation, gazing solemnly over the Mall while one hand grips the arm of the chair—it's so lifelike! This humbling piece of work evokes patriotism and a sense of awe. It's not to be missed!” Member: [Adventures With Adam](#). Journal: [Adventures in D.C.](#)

National Arboretum

3501 New York Ave. NE. Washington, D.C.. 202/245-2726. www.usna.usda.gov.

“This may well be the most under-appreciated thing in the District of Columbia. This is largely due to its location—Northeast D.C. isn't the friendliest part of town and it's not easy to get to unless you have access to a car. If you can work past all that, though, you really should consider the Arboretum for a relaxing afternoon. Maintained by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the park contains 446 acres of rolling land dotted with pretty gardens, interesting trees, shrubs, flowers, and the like. There are 9.5 miles of winding roads for driving or biking. The coolest thing here is the Capitol Column installation; originally slated to replace the existing columns at the U.S. Capitol building, this set of columns wound up being too big for the sandstone base. The Capitol's loss is the Arboretum's gain, as the columns create a feeling of mystery and majesty as they rise from the meadows. Rounding out the installation is a striking reflecting pool with a nifty stair-step waterfall.” Member: **Czarski**. Journal: **Off the Beaten**

Path Inside the Beltway.

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“**Park your car** outside D.C. and come in on the Metro. Don't be one of those poor bewildered folks going haplessly 'round and 'round massive Dupont Circle without a clue as to which street to take. Listen, Pierre L'Enfant was a genius, but cars didn't figure in his vision for the nation's capital. Traffic is hideous: drivers are either impatient or enraged. Imagine . . . a city with the world's highest proportion of lawyers (the rest are lobbyists, bureaucrats, and politicians), they're all late for a very important meeting, and you're in front of them, not sure where you're going— that's reason enough to avoid driving in Washington.” Member: **Idler**.

National Gallery of Art

National Mall, between 3rd and 9th streets, at Constitution Ave. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/737-4215. www.nga.gov.

“Over the past few decades, the National Gallery of Art has become one of the world's greatest repositories of art—rivaling the Met and the Tate. There is so much to see here it can be overwhelming. There are usually a couple of major exhibitions going on (some charge admission) so be sure to check with docents at the front desk. I've seen everything from Leonardo da Vinci's early sketches to watercolors by Monet. Personally, I'm gonzo for Renaissance art, particularly paintings from Northern Europe, so I always gravitate to Rogier van der Weyden's *Portrait of a Lady* and Quentin Massys' *Ill-Matched Lovers*. The gallery also has amazing works by Dürer and Breugel. If modern art is more your thing, head to the East Building for 20th-century works from artists like Lichtenstein, Picasso, and Warhol.” Member: **daverydc**. Journal: **The**

Smithsonian Museums on the Mall.

National Museum of American History

National Mall, 14th St. and Constitution Ave. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/357-2700.
www.americanhistory.si.edu.

"Few museums match this one in breadth and scope. Far from being merely a jingoistic celebration of America, it traces the country's major historical and cultural developments with wings devoted to agricultural advances, maritime and shipbuilding history, road and rail transport, and electricity. My advice is to make sure you have a plan of attack before entering this gigantic edifice. With the help of a good guide, decide what you most want to see, and then prioritize the list. Once inside, approach the exhibits single-mindedly and ignore anything that exceeds your list. If you don't do this, there's a very good chance that you'll get sidetracked and never make it to the exhibits you actually wanted to concentrate on." Member: [Overlander](#). Journal: [Washington, D.C., an American Anomaly](#).



National Zoo

3001 Connecticut Ave. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/673-4800. www.si.edu/natzoo.

"The giant pandas are always a good source of entertainment, but there is plenty more to keep children occupied here. The zoo is a big open space near the city and is easily accessible from the Metro red line via Woodley Park/National Zoo station. There are lots of animals to see, including the reptile center, great ape house, and bat cave. Amazonia is a large rainforest display that houses many birds and plants. Everything is well signposted with signs to direct you to the latest baby animals—on my first visit I saw a baby rhino." Member: [Timone](#). Journal: [A Year in Washington D.C.](#)

snapshots from the road > > > > >



"One of the most vibrant places in Washington is the **Eastern Market** at 7th and S.E. Independence streets. It's the oldest continually operating market in Washington and liveliest on a Saturday morning, when the weekend craftspeople festival is in full swing. The market has an appealing bohemian quality crossed with a certain entrepreneurial élan, which

draws everyone from tony Capitol Hill residents to less-wealthy people from southern Washington districts."

Member: [Idler](#).

Paddleboating the Potomac

"A really neat way to see the Jefferson Memorial is by renting a paddleboat on the Potomac! There's a paddleboat rental station near the Memorial, and you and a friend can just float around the Potomac and take in the sites. Be warned, the farther out you paddle, the farther you have to paddle back! We had a great time: it was a bright, sunny day, the ducks were friendly, and we talked to other paddleboaters too. I highly recommend trying this!" Member: [Carmen](#). Journal: [Something for all seasons in Washington, DC](#).

Phillips Collection

1600 21st St. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/387-2151. www.phillipscollection.org.

"A visit to the Phillips Collection doesn't feel like a typical museum excursion: it's more like visiting an acquaintance who lives in a really nice house and happens to own a lot of great paintings. After paying your admission, proceed to the room on the left, which features French painters from the mid-nineteenth century, to see Daumier's stirring *Uprising*. Further down the hall, in a large near-Gothic billiard room, two Marsden Hartley canvasses hang on the south wall; his still life *Wild Roses* is a triumph of color and shape. Upstairs finds American works from the first half of the 20th century, notably: Georgia O'Keefe, Arthur Dove, Thomas Hart Benton, and Edward Hopper. The greatest part is the Impressionist Gallery, a large room displaying stunners from Van Gogh (*Road Menders*), Bonnard (*The Palms*), and Matisse (*Studio: Quai St. Michel*), with Renoir's masterwork, *Luncheon of the Boating Party*, shining above them all. In fact, it's easy to overlook the Dégas and Cézanne works and get pulled into *Luncheon*—it cost \$125,000 and was the world's most expensive painting at the time." Member: [Adventures With Adam](#). Journal: [Adventures in D.C.](#)

Underground Museums

National Mall, 23rd St. NW at Capitol St. Washington, D.C.. 202/357-4880. www.asia.si.edu.

"Pssssttt . . . Here's an inside tip. If you're visiting the Mall, check out the attractions beneath your feet. Not many tourists realize it, but there's a whole miniature world to explore in a three-level subterranean complex of museums below the Enid Haupt Garden, behind the Smithsonian Castle. Enter any of the museums at street level and visit all four interconnecting areas: The National Museum of African Art, The Dillon S. Ripley Center (housing occasional expositions), the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, and the Freer Gallery of Art. On a hot day, this can be a real boon, not to mention that these places are seldom crowded—even during peak season. Admittedly, the Asian and African art housed in these collections is less of a draw than, say, the two-ton African elephant in the rotunda of the Natural History Museum. However, I make it a point to visit one of the delightful 'underground museums' every time I visit the Mall." Member: [Idler](#). Journal: [Paper Chase](#).

Vietnam War Memorial

Constitution Ave. at 21st St. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/426-6841.
www.nps.gov/vive/home.htm.

"It was perhaps inevitable that the memorial to the dead and missing soldiers in this most contentious and criticized of American wars should have been nearly as controversial to design and construct. The simplicity of the design, and the absence of romantic, vainglorious statuary—save a trio of splendid bronze soldiers added as an afterthought—leaves a simple marble wall on which are etched the names of more than 58,000 soldiers and officers who died in action or were—or are still—missing in action. A visit to the memorial is a moving experience, much more so than I ever expected. We approached from the direction of the Lincoln Memorial on a cool, misty, dreary morning. The wall sort of sneaks up on you, seemingly growing out of the earth. Almost at ground level is the first name, a soldier who died in 1963. As you walk along beside the wall, it gradually and inexorably grows taller and taller until it's over 10 feet tall. Very soon, you feel the need—at least I did—to run your fingers over the names, for this monument speaks with an intimacy I've rarely experienced. Most war memorials dwarf you with their grandiosity; this one mesmerizes you with its quiet, almost introverted, dignity. I won't soon forget this experience." Member: [Overlander](#). Journal: [Washington, D.C., an American Anomaly](#).

Washington Monument

15th St. NW at Constitution Ave. Washington, D.C.. 800/967-2283. www.nps.gov/wamo.

"In 1783, Congress called for the construction of a statue to honor George Washington's leadership during the American Revolution. It wasn't until 1836, when the Washington National Monument Society was formed, that money began being donated for a memorial. By 1848, enough money had been collected, but the construction was interrupted by the Civil War and was not resumed until 1876—this is noticeable in the change in marble color some 150-feet up. You can walk 898 steps or take a short elevator ride to the top of the monument for a grand view." Member: [gonewriting](#). Journal: [Our Nation's](#)

[Capitol](#).

snapshots from the road > > > > >



"My favorite part of the zoo was seeing the pandas. I'd never seen **pandas**, and they were so interesting. There's a great viewing platform from which to watch them; you can also watch them from home on the zoo's web cam (<http://pandas.si.edu>)."

Member: [finzup](#).

White House

1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/456-7041. www.whitehouse.gov.

"It's a shame that White House tours have been suspended indefinitely. The most recognized home in America, the White House embodies the power and statesmanship of the Oval Office, the world's most powerful office. Every President, except George Washington, has conducted government business from here over the last 200 years. Since Pennsylvania Avenue is closed, you can linger out front or in the park directly across the street and take photos for as long as you like; make sure, too, to look out for protestors (they always make things interesting). The anti-nuclear war vigil has allegedly been out front '24-hours a day since 1981.' On the West side of the White House, say 'hi' to your favorite network reporter as she awaits the latest news in the area affectionately known as 'Pebble Beach.' Make sure to walk around the back of the White House for the rear view, which may be the best of the lot! Before you go, contact your local Congressmen or Senator, just to make sure you can get whatever VIP treatment is available." Member: [Smozingo](#). Journal: [D.C. Highlights](#).

Bistro du Coin

1738 Connecticut Ave. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/234-6969.

“Fun, stylish bistro with excellent French food. BdC does an excellent job of capturing the look and feel of an age-old, casual Parisian restaurant. The colors are gold (walls and lighting) and brick red. You'll hear lots of conversation—everyone at BdC seems to be in the mood to socialize and that goes for the friendly, engaging staff too. I was excited to find bistro classics like tartiflette and onglet (hangar steak) and wasn't disappointed when they arrived. During my first visit, my group of five (which included two Frenchmen) ordered a few appetizers to share. The tartiflette was incredible—the perfect combination of potatoes, bacon, cheese, and onion—and I easily could have eaten one on my own (and gained 20 pounds in the process!!), but this rich concoction was a perfect shared appetizer. The group also shared a bucket of mussels in white wine. Most ordered meat as their main course. My onglet with frites was tender and delicious and served a perfect medium, as requested.” Member: [JLK100](#). Journal: [New to Washington, DC](#).

**Capitol Grille**

601 Pennsylvania Ave. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/737-6200.

“Let me just say that I am now spoiled forever when it comes to good steak with the fixin's. When you walk in, you can see cuts of steak being cured on the premises. When my filet mignon arrived, it was so juicy and tender that I could cut it with a fork. We split an order of mashed potatoes between us (most of their sides are big enough to serve two), which were unbelievably creamy. My friend ordered the salmon, which she also thought was incredible. The decor is very fancy-shmancy, but not overwhelming. It's a popular place among city politicians, and you might spot a senator. The service was impeccable. Our glasses were always full, and the waiter was at our beck and call. It was nice to treat ourselves to such a great dinner.” Member: [Carmen](#). Journal: [Something for all seasons in Washington, DC](#).

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“If you visit D.C. in the winter, make sure to take your skates along. You've probably seen it on television, but there's a **skating rink** right on the Mall where you can skate to music and take in the scenery. It seems like such a trivial thing to do with so many sights to see, but it's a neat way to take a break from the madness of tourist-central.” Member: [Carmen](#).

**Dubliner Pub**

520 N. Capitol St. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/737-3773.

“This is a traditional Irish Pub with a small but excellent selection of typical pub cuisine. I opted for the corn beef sandwich and was happy with my choice. The bar also makes several microbrews—I found their dark variety smoother than Guinness. There is also a relaxing outdoor beer garden and occasional live entertainment inside the bar.” Member: [Gypsy in the Palace](#). Journal: [Washington D.C. in Six Hours or Less](#).

Felix

2406 18th St. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/483-3549.

"Felix doubles as the neighborhood's martini bar, so things can get pretty crowded on weekend nights. The food is excellent, with interesting combinations and a very eclectic menu. The restaurant serves its famous matzo ball soup on Friday nights—I've never had it but it's supposed to be great—which provides an interesting contrast to the phenomenal Chilean Sea Bass and the incredibly tender strip steak. The restaurant is decorated in James Bond themes. I'm a novice on this count, but experts tell me the wall murals all contain Bond references. There's often live music downstairs (beginning around 10pm). Overall, a wonderful meal in a fun, hip environment—and a great place to simply go enjoy martinis!" Member: [offtrack](#). Journal: [DC dining](#).

Georgia Brown's

950 15th St. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/393-4499.

"This nicely furnished restaurant features southern cuisine, including chicken, catfish fingers, rock shrimp, and fabulous seafood dishes. The menu may remind you of New Orleans. It's a wonderful upscale atmosphere and, if you're lucky, you can get a window table overlooking active McPherson Square. I chose an elegant crab cake that was absolutely the best I've ever had. A nice bottle of white wine from an adequate list of possibilities made it a very relaxing and tasteful lunch. The portions in this place won't send you away hungry, either—they are large. There is a bar and the place can become crowded in the evenings, so a reservation is a good idea." Member: [Jim Rosenberg](#). Journal: [Washington DC -- Two Hotels; Dining "Possibles"](#).

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"All types of **ethnic cuisine** are available in this truly international city, but we found particular strength and value in the area of seafood menu items. We also found the immediate areas around most of the famous sites to be lacking in good choices, so you might plan something less formal or hit cafeterias in those areas when they are available." Member: [Jim](#).

Island Jim's Crab Shack and Tiki Bar

901 Monroe St. NE. Washington, D.C.. 202/635-8454.

"I loved this place. The decor was absolutely wonderful; it was like stepping into a Caribbean beach bar. The walls were painted in a Caribbean motif, and there were lush greens, tropical palm trees, and even an outside area with white sand on the ground. We had an appetizer of peel-and-eat shrimp, island style. They had a spicy sauce all over them, and were fabulous. We also had the jerk chicken sandwich and the shrimp salad sandwich, both of which were very good, and served with fries." Member: [finzup](#). Journal: [Weekend in Washington DC](#).

Jaleo

480 7th St. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/628-7949.

"Jaleo is a fun place to get tapas and sangria, particularly after work. They offer an extensive menu of hot and cold tapas with seasonal supplements. My friends and I are particularly fond of the chorizo served over garlic mashed potatoes, and the cheese plate. But don't miss the sangria—it's incredibly good. Prices are very reasonable." Member: [JLK100](#). Journal: [New to Washington, DC](#).

snapshots from the road > > > > >



"The **National Arboretum** is a wonderful part of the capital that often goes unvisited. The collections can be visited on foot, and there are ample picnic areas and large meadows ideal for flying kites, playing, or just being with family. There is almost always something in bloom, but the spring is when all of the action occurs. The Azalea collections are spectacular." Member: [chanif](#).



Jyoti

2433 18th St. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/518-5892.

"This basic Indian restaurant offers a relatively average menu with above-average presentation. The dishes served up, from tandoori to vindaloo, were all tasty. One caveat: while I shy away from the hotter vindaloo dishes regardless of where I'm eating, it seems that Jyoti's versions can occasionally go beyond what even seasoned vindaloo enthusiasts can handle. The sidewalk seating, excellent food, and large portions at reasonable prices make this my favorite Indian restaurant in D.C. I've sampled others, but I'm sticking with Jyoti." Member: [offtrack](#). Journal: [DC dining](#).

Kuna

1324 U St. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/797-7908.

"The restaurant itself is on the small side (NY-style, I call it), with only a few tables. You can also find a cozy little dining room upstairs, which is where my group of eight sat. We enjoyed some amazing appetizers and marveled at the price of wine selections (very inexpensive—all are less than \$28). One favorite appetizer was the antipasto with everything from hearty Italian meats and cheeses to anchovies and roasted red peppers. It was a great dish for sharing. The other clear winner was a risotto pancake with cheese and kale. Yum. Most members of the group had pasta and all were delicious. It's not a fancy place, but more of a nice neighborhood spot. Service is not ultra-professional, but everyone is friendly." Member: [JLK100](#). Journal: [New to Washington, DC](#).



Lebanese Taverna

2641 Connecticut Ave. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/265-8681.

"Lebanese Taverna is billed as *the* place for Middle Eastern food in D.C. The restaurant is nicely appointed, but really stands out for great food and fantastic service. The dishes are somewhat typical Middle Eastern fare: a lot of chicken, lamb, and vegetarian choices are broken up by a few delightful seafood specialties. I would highly recommend the tasting menus, and I adore ALL of their chicken dishes. The place is packed on weekend nights, but the wait is tolerable without reservations. The staff has mastered the art of moving diners through without rushing them out the door. A consumer caution: I've heard that the drinks in the lounge (where you'll wait for your table) are way overpriced, so you may want to simply wait until you reach your table before ordering, as the prices reportedly drop significantly." Member: [offtrack](#). Journal: [DC dining](#).



Meskerem Ethiopian Restaurant

2434 18th St. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/462-4100.

"Meskerem, as the menu explains, is the Ethiopian month equivalent to North American's September. It signifies the beginning of the spring rains that turn the landscape green—a happy time in an otherwise arid country. African instruments and paintings depicting Ethiopian village life hang on the walls, adding to the atmosphere. For the most authentic experience, ask to sit upstairs, where you'll find both Ethiopian-style basket tables and low stools. I began my meal with vegetable samosas—not spectacular, but with a nice, savory mixture of carrot and cabbage inside. If you're at a loss over what to have for the main course, do as I did and order the Meskerem Messabi, which will give you samplings of several dishes: lamb, chicken, beef, lentil, and vegetable selections—even a hard-boiled egg—appeared on my plate."

Member: [Adventures With Adam](#) Journal: [Adventures in D.C.](#)



Old Ebbitt Grill

675 15th St. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/347-4800.

"Old Ebbitt is a classic Washington restaurant. If you go there for lunch, you'll be eating with White House aides, Senate staffers, and various other people whose job titles include more capital letters than entire words. The food is decent and there are four bars to wait in, where bar staff are happy to tell you all the Hill gossip. The menu was fairly limited but well-priced and complemented by a great liquor list featuring mostly Californian wines and a terrific selection of Scotch." Member: [Bri like Cheese](#). Journal: [The Crazy Girls' Guide to Washington DC](#).

Pasta Mia

1790 Columbia Rd. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/328-9114.

"I spent months hearing people rave about Pasta Mia, and I saw lines out the door nearly every evening, so I was just short of ecstatic when I found myself facing a mere 10-minute wait one Friday night. The prices are by far the best feature; everything on the menu is under \$10. This, I quickly learned, is what all of the Pasta Mia hype is centered on—you get a very large bowl of pasta with a choice of sauces for around \$9. Unfortunately, you get it in VERY cramped quarters, overhear the conversations of diners sitting on either side of you, and select from a list of basic vegetable and meat sauces/toppings. If you're looking for quantity food and have a lot of time to kill, then Pasta Mia might be for you." Member: [offtrack](#). Journal: [DC dining](#).

fyi >>>>>>

“People who don't know D.C. well laugh at me when I say that the city's occasionally **less than safe**. They say 'Hello? You lived in New York for the last six years.' The truth is that New York City is vastly safer than Washington—I don't have statistics on-hand to back me up, but trust me on this. In my time here, I have heard about robberies and violent crimes in ALL parts of town.”
Member: [JLK100](#).

Perry's Restaurant and Catering

1811 Columbia Rd. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/234-6218.

“Perry's is a very hip, relaxed spot that can also be pretty romantic if you're sitting at one of their rooftop corners or a window table. While not a sushi restaurant per se, Perry's does have EXCELLENT sushi, by far the best I've found in town. It also has a large menu that serves more eclectic/fusion dishes. I've heard they're great, but I never waver from the sushi! Finally, beware! Pay careful attention to the address because the sign is nearly impossible to spot unless you know where to look (second story, right corner) and the hieroglyphics on the awning won't be helpful either. It does have a black awning and is right next to a parking lot (which I believe is valet).” Member: [offtrack](#).

Journal: [DC dining](#).



Teaism

800 Connecticut Ave. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/835-2233.

“Teaism is a fascinating place in the heart of the city. Order a pot with something to munch on and then head to the second floor to do some serious people-watching. It's known as the hang-out of several well-known authors, and the atmosphere is wonderful—very quiet and calm.” Member: [samepenny](#).

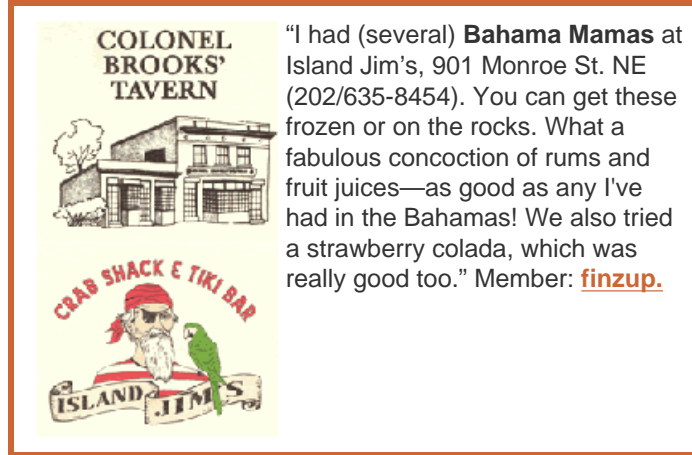
Journal: [Renaissance Mayflower Hotel](#).

The Little Fountain Cafe

2339 18th St. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/462-8100.

“One of the most romantic dinner places in town, this restaurant offers a menu of various international and vegetarian choices, together with an adequate list of wines to go with it. (I enjoyed the canard confit, which is not a common menu item in most places). The place is small—14 tables and a total seating capacity of 38. Interestingly, it is also below street level. Get a table by the window and the view will make you think you're in Europe. Truly unique and very intimate; we give it a nod for something different in the heart of the Adams Morgan area.”

Member: [Jim Rosenberg](#). Journal: [Washington DC -- Two Hotels; Dining "Possibles"](#).



“I had (several) **Bahama Mamas** at Island Jim’s, 901 Monroe St. NE (202/635-8454). You can get these frozen or on the rocks. What a fabulous concoction of rums and fruit juices—as good as any I’ve had in the Bahamas! We also tried a strawberry colada, which was really good too.” Member: [finzup](#).

AFTER DARK

Cafe Lautrec

2431 18th St. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/265-6436.

“This is a really fun place—especially if you like live jazz. I went with a group and had a great time—this amazing 80-year-old man gets up on the bar late at night (really late) and tap dances for everyone. The place is decorated with works by the famous French artist, Toulouse Lautrec.” Member: [Bari](#). Journal:

[What to do in DC](#).



Chi Cha Lounge

1624 U St. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/234-8400.

“The smell hits you first . . . a sweet apple smell emanating from smoking hooka pipes. This place is always packed. The atmosphere is laid-back, the people diverse and, when you can get a seat, it’s pretty comfy. Things start to get really smooth on Sunday nights, when there’s fewer people and live Bossa Nova.”

Member: [Sara Bryant](#). Journal: [The Insider's DC](#).

J.R.’s Bar & Grill

1519 17th St. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/328-0090.

“This gay men’s bar in the trendy Dupont Circle district is unique to Washington. The crowd here tends to be 30+ and more conservatively-dressed; one sees three-piece suits and blue jeans with polo shirts, rather than your typical over-the-top fabulous wear here. Despite the casual, less pretentious, more ‘governmental’ air of this bar, people seem quite out here; yet at the same time, JR’s isn’t the place to meet Jean Paul Gautier-wearing, in-your-face types. This is basically a drinking establishment, so if you wish to dance, you may want to haul yourself somewhere else in Dupont Circle.” Member: [Lulu Byrd](#). Journal:

[Washington DC: Crossroads USA](#).



Kennedy Center

2700 F St. NW. Washington, D.C.. 800/444-1324. www.kennedy-center.org.

"There's a lot to see at the Kennedy Center. I went to the opera—there were very good performances by the Washington Opera, whose musical director is Placido Domingo. The Kennedy Center is also home to the National Symphony Orchestra of Washington, which has a top resident conductor, Leonard Slatkin. If classical music isn't your thing, don't panic—there are many contemporary performances available in the Terrace and Eisenhower theaters. Check the local papers for details on free music performances." Member: [Timone](#). Journal: [A Year in Washington D.C.](#)

Madam's Organ

2461 18th St. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/667-5370. www.madamsorgan.com.

"Welcome to the 'Capital' of bluegrass, where the mixed rhythms of Irish Folk and American Blues thrive and survive. Every Wednesday night the kings of bluegrass come to perform live . . . make sure you wear your dancing shoes, as someone is sure to sweep you off your feet. People are friendly and down to earth, and everyone appreciates the sounds of bluegrass. Madam's Organ is a long narrow bar with four floors, a pool table, and a lot of funk." Member: [Sara Bryant](#). Journal: [The Insider's DC](#).

snapshots from the road > > > > >



"Many people fail to realize that the monuments are very beautiful, and much more serene, in the **evenings**. They are located very near one another and easily walkable. Make sure to see the FDR Memorial (located across the tidal basin from the Jefferson Memorial) at night. The lighting of the waterfalls there makes it a magical experience. Also, the Vietnam Memorial is eerily moving." Member: [Alkee](#).

Sequoia

3000 K St. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/944-4200.

"The multiple terraces of this hip-looking glass and steel restaurant/bar afford beautiful views of the Potomac. This bar was made for flirting and chatting on a summer night, and it does get crowded. If a pretentious crowd bothers you, plan on starting or ending your night here, so you can have one cocktail, enjoy the view, and then skedaddle. If you love flirting with a guy in Ralph Lauren or a girl in Donna Karan, get there early to secure a table! FYI: the restaurant's food is generally considered sub-par and overpriced." Member: [Tavia](#). Journal: [Posh, Pre-Inaugural DC](#).

The Brickskeller

1523 22nd St. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/293-1885.

"This place has an absolutely incredible selection of beer —10 pages of names in very small type. Since opening in 1957, the Brickskeller has handled more than 5,000 different labels at one time or another. If you've had a brew anywhere, the chances are better than good that they may have some on hand and ready to serve to you. Try the selection of 'Beer Tails'—mixed drinks all made with beer, including such concoctions as 'ale punch', 'whistle belly vengeance', and 'skip and go naked'. It's an extra-fun place and the staff knows what the hospitality business is all about." Member: [Jim Rosenberg](#). Journal: [Washington DC -- Two Hotels; Dining "Possibles"](#).

fyi >>>>>>

"WOW! How easy could it be to navigate a major U.S. city? Simply pick up a *Metro Pocket Guide* at the first stop and follow the legend. The five lines and 75 stations are all color-coded and Points of Interest are also keyed. The stations are cool and attractive, with terra-cotta floors and huge vaulted ceilings. They are surely an attraction in their own right! Make a special trip to Dupont Circle! I've never seen escalators that long!" Member: [SMozingo](#).

The Improv

1140 Connecticut Ave. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/296-7008.

"This is the only stand-up club in DC and pretty good talent performs here. This being DC, the humor tends to be politically charged. If you need a break from sightseeing, this makes for a fun evening. Make sure that you call ahead for tickets." Member: [Alkee](#). Journal: [One of the Greatest Cities in the World](#).

snapshots from the road >>>>>>



"Maya Lin, a Yale University architect student, designed 'The Wall.' 58,000 names are etched into it, and there are guide books to help you look up the names of those you know. Many make tracings to take back home with them. We found our friend Carl Renisis's name there, and made an etching to bring home to his sisters." Member: [BeAdventureous!](#)

The Tombs

1226 36th St. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/337-6668.

"Once you make it down the steep stairs to this basement bar, you will no doubt bump into half of the Georgetown University student population. If you think you've walked into *St. Elmo's Fire*, you're right—this is where Rob Lowe, Demi Moore, and the rest of the gang hung out in the 1980s teen classic. The dark, low-ceilinged bar has a red brick and wood decor. World War I posters and sports memorabilia help set the ambiance. Georgetown coeds hang out either at the central bar or at wooden chairs and tables, which have crew oars painted on them. If you are hungry, the Tombs serve decent burgers." Member: [Lilly](#). Journal: [Day trip to Washington DC](#).

Toledo Lounge

2435 18th St. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/986-5416.

"The theme is Toledo . . . as in Toledo, Ohio. A strange theme, but there is a great selection on the jukebox, a friendly waitstaff, and good beers on tap—try the Toledo Amber. As with everywhere in this area, it is packed on the weekends. If you are hungry, get the nachos—the serving is HUGE and tasty."

Member: [Litangel](#). Journal: [Washington, DC - so much to do](#).

fyi >>>>>>

"**Adams Morgan**, a neighborhood in NW D.C., hosts the city's main nightlife scene. It is a three or four block stretch of nothing but restaurants, bars, and clubs. There are some pretty good ethnic restaurants here (Ethiopian, Italian, Mexican, Brazilian, etc.). A few bars I'd recommend are: the Pharmacy Bar, Tryst, Bedrock Billiards, and Common Share." Member: [Alkee](#).

ACCOMMODATIONS



Bull Moose B & B on Capitol Hill

101 5th Ave. NE. Washington, D.C.. 202/547-1050.

"Although named a B&B, my wife and I found it to be more of an inn. I say this because, unlike most other B&Bs, guests are provided with the code to unlock the front door and, upon entry, find room information provided in a marked envelope lying on the foyer table. The inn's theme is centered around Teddy Roosevelt, but the owners have used it with tasteful moderation. For example, the rooms are named after significant events, people, and things in TR's life and administration, but guests are not haunted with his portrait or bust at every turn. On the contrary, the decor is handsome and warm. The hardwood floors are worn, but well preserved, and the furnishings and decorations complement the floor's soft glow with rich green and brown themes. In addition to the tasteful atmosphere, the breakfast is excellent. The innkeeper, Elizabeth, is very warm and talkative. She lives nearby and impressed us with her knowledge of the city."

Member: [Jon M.](#) Journal: [Playing Capital Hooky](#).



Four Seasons

2800 Pennsylvania Ave. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/342-0444.

"Staying at the Four Seasons is a blast! The rooms are just OK (they are more business oriented than spa/resort style) however, the legendary Four Seasons service guarantees that your mini bar will be restocked daily, your rooms cleaned often (and more L'Occitane soaps put in, even if you continually steal them), and your bed turned down at night. The large TV comes with a cool movie selection and PlayStation as well. The sleeping accommodations were amazing—the softest bed I have ever slept on. It was king-sized with gleaming white sheets, duvet, and pillows (the house keeper who turned down my bed even fluffed them for me . . . of course, I gave mine a pack of M&M's and she seemed much happier!)." Member: [Bri like Cheese](#). Journal: [The Crazy Girls' Guide to Washington DC](#).

St. James Suites

950 24th St. NW. Washington, D.C.. 202/457-0500.

“Tucked charmingly into a row of townhouses in the Georgetown neighborhood, St. James Suites delivers much more than the unassuming exterior would lead you to believe. The lobby is small and cozy, detailed with marble floors, fresh flowers, and brass railings. Up a level and around the corner is an attractively appointed dining area where complimentary continental breakfast is served each morning. Our fifth-floor suite included a separate living room and fully-furnished kitchen, along with another king-sized bedroom and marble bath. The temperature was too chilly during our visit to use the outdoor pool, but I checked it out along with the health club; both seemed perfectly accommodating to anyone looking to get a bit of sun or exercise. I would stay here again, even with grander and more historical hotels in town, because I liked coming back to that homey feeling at the end of a jam-packed day. Apparently others share this feeling—many guests book suites for a month at a time.” Member: [smmmarti](#) **guide.** Journal: [Trip to Nation's Capital Nets Surprises.](#)

fyi >>>>>>>

“Washington is not a cheap place to visit, but by paying attention to **seasonal pricing** fluctuations, the trip can be made much more affordable. Plan far in advance. There are low-cost airfares available and reasonably priced rooms, too, but they can sell out early.” Member: [Jim.](#)

GO FURTHER



Virginia Beach, VA

Virginia Beach Visitor Center, 2100 Parks Ave. 800/822-3224. www.vbfun.com.

“Virginia Beach is a very family-friendly destination. There are beautiful beaches, great seafood, and nice sunsets. Navy ships, different types of museums, and one of the 10 most-visited aquariums in the U.S. are all available for educational exploration. The city has gone to great lengths to bring a family atmosphere to the boardwalk—walk around it at least once, even though it can get very crowded in summer. The Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel is a man-made marvel worth driving across. If you’re visiting around the winter holidays, go see the boardwalk’s spectacular light display: it’s several miles long, and kids will delight at the reindeer and snowmen waving light-bulb covered arms at them.” Member: [barbara.](#) Journal: [Family Visiting Virginia Beach.](#)

Williamsburg, VA

“If you enjoy beautiful scenery and history, Williamsburg is a nice way to spend a day. Williamsburg was one of the first European settlements in the U.S. Many of the original buildings have been preserved or resurrected, so you can get a good glimpse of how things were done in colonial days. I recommend starting with a stroll through town before going on a full tour. To enter all of the buildings, you must purchase a pass (around \$30 per person); you can also purchase individual tickets for buildings like the jail, governor’s palace, and blacksmith. That said, you can definitely get a feel for the place without buying a single ticket.” Member: [jim.](#) Journal: [Step back in time in Colonial Williamsburg.](#)

