



Washington, DC & the Capital Region

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Best Places to Eat

- » Minibar at Café Atlantico (p256)
- » Blue Hill Tavern (p270)
- » Robert Morris Inn (p276)
- » Fat Canary (p293)
- » Local (p300)

Best Places to Stay

- » Hay-Adams (p253)
- » Bellmoor Inn & Spa (p281)
- » Colonial Williamsburg Historic Lodging (p292)
- » Martha Washington Inn (p306)
- » Greenbrier (p311)

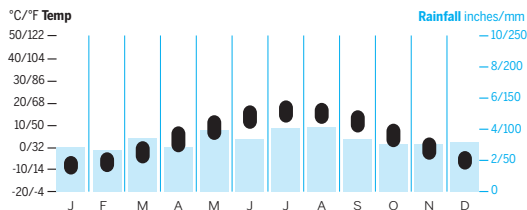
Why Go?

No matter your politics, it's hard not to fall for the nation's capital. Iconic monuments, vast (and free) museums and venerable restaurants serving cuisine from around the globe: this is just the beginning of the great DC experience. There's much to discover: leafy cobblestoned neighborhoods, sprawling markets, heady multicultural nightspots and verdant parks – not to mention the corridors of power where visionaries and demagogues still roam.

Beyond the Beltway, the diverse landscapes of Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia and Delaware offer potent enticement to travel beyond the marble city. Craggy mountains, rushing rivers, vast nature reserves (including islands where wild horses run), sparkling beaches, historic villages and the magnificent Chesapeake Bay form the backdrop to memorable adventures: sailing, hiking, rafting, camping or simply sitting on a pretty stretch of shoreline, planning the next seafood feast. It's a place where traditions run deep – from the nation's birthplace to Virginia's still-thriving bluegrass scene.

When to Go

Washington, DC



Mar-Apr Cherry blossoms bring crowds to the city in bloom during DC's most popular festival.

Jun-Aug Beaches and resorts heave; prices high and accommodations scarce.

Sep-Oct Fewer crowds and lower prices, but pleasant temperatures and fiery fall scenery.

Transportation

The region is served by three major airports: Washington Dulles International Airport (IAD), Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA) and Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI). Norfolk International Airport (ORF) and Richmond International Airport (RIC) are smaller regional hubs.

Traveling by train is possible in some areas, with service provided by **Amtrak** (www.amtrak.com). Key towns connected by rail from DC include Baltimore, MD; Wilmington, DE; Harpers Ferry, WV; and in VA: Manassas, Fredericksburg, Richmond, Williamsburg, Newport News and Charlottesville.

TIPS ON VISITING WASHINGTON, DC

DC has a lot of great museums, but there's no way to see them all – even if you spend two weeks in the capital. Some sights – like the Washington Monument, US Holocaust Memorial Museum and Ford's Theatre – have limited admittance: if they're high on your list, go early to ensure you get a spot.

Aside from the Museum of the American Indian, which has a great restaurant, dining is limited along the Mall. One strategy: hit Eastern Market first to assemble a picnic for later in the day (on the Mall or around the Tidal Basin).

If possible, leave the car at home. The Metro is excellent, and driving in the city can get pricey – with overnight lots charging upward of \$25 a night.

Best National Parks

- » The New River Gorge National River (p310) is utterly Eden-like and home to white-tailed deer and black bears. It also has world-class white-water rafting.
- » Shenandoah National Park (p301) provides spectacular scenery along the Blue Ridge Mountains, with great hiking and camping, including along the Appalachian Trail.
- » Assateague Island National Seashore (p277) and Chincoteague (p298) are beautiful coastal environments with great blue herons, ospreys, blue crabs and wild horses.
- » George Washington and Jefferson national forests (p302) protect more than 1500 sq miles of forests and alpine scenery bordering the Shenandoah Valley.
- » Virginia's famous battlefields are also part of the park system. Good places to reconnect with America's darkest hours are Antietam (p278) and Manassas (p287).

DON'T MISS

With Chesapeake Bay at its doorstep, this region is pure heaven for seafood-lovers. The Maine Avenue Fish Market (p256) in DC is legendary. In Baltimore, Annapolis and all along Maryland's Eastern Shore, you'll also find top-notch seafood.

Fast Facts

- » Population: 622,000 (Baltimore), 602,000 (Washington, DC), 440,000 (Virginia Beach)
- » Distances from DC: Baltimore (40 miles), Williamsburg (152 miles), Abingdon (362 miles)
- » Time Zone: Eastern
- » States covered in this chapter: Washington, DC, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, West Virginia

Did You Know?

- » Thomas Jefferson was one of many Virginians to make wine in the state in the past 400 years. Now, Virginia has over 192 wineries and earns high marks at international awards shows.

Resources

- » Washington (www.washington.org) lists upcoming events and loads of DC details.
- » The Crooked Road (www.thecrookedroad.org) is the gateway to Virginia's heritage music trail.
- » Virginia Wine (www.virginiawine.org) is essential for planning a route through wine country.