



# Washington, DC & the Capital Region

## Includes →

Washington, DC .....	261
Maryland .....	291
Baltimore .....	291
Annapolis .....	298
Western Maryland .....	302
Delaware .....	303
Virginia .....	307
Richmond .....	312
Petersburg .....	315
Shenandoah Valley .....	323
West Virginia .....	331
Eastern Panhandle .....	331

## Best Places to Eat

- Rose's Luxury (p282)
- Woodberry Kitchen (p296)
- Mama J's (p314)
- Blue Pete's (p320)
- Oakhart Social (p321)

## Best Places to Stay

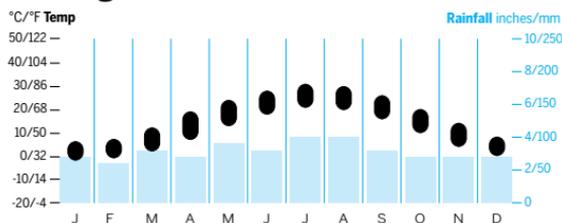
- Hotel Lombardy (p280)
- The Georges (p327)
- Peaks of Otter (p328)
- HI Richmond (p313)
- Colonial Williamsburg Historic Lodging (p316)

## 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 global cuisines are just the beginning of the great DC experience. There's much to discover: cobblestoned neighborhoods, sprawling markets, heady multicultural nightspots and verdant parks – not to mention the corridors of power, where visionaries and demagogues alike 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 just 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



**May–Apr** Cherry blossoms bring crowds to the city during DC's most popular festival.

**Jun–Aug** Beaches and resorts heave; prices are high and accommodations scarce.

**Sep–Oct** Fewer crowds and lower prices, but with pleasant temperatures and fiery fall scenery.

## History

Native Americans populated this region long before European settlers arrived. Many of the area's geographic landmarks are still known by their Native American names, such as Chesapeake, Shenandoah, Appalachian and Potomac. In 1607 a group of 108 English colonists established the first permanent European settlement in the New World: Jamestown. During the early years, colonists battled harsh winters, starvation, disease and, occasionally, hostile Native Americans.

Jamestown survived, and the Royal Colony of Virginia came into being in 1624. Ten years later, fleeing the English Civil War, Lord Baltimore established the Catholic colony of Maryland at St Mary's City, where a Spanish Jewish doctor treated a town council that included a black Portuguese sailor and Margaret Brent, the first woman to vote in North American politics. Delaware was settled as a Dutch whaling colony in 1631, practically wiped out by Native Americans, and later resettled by the British. Celts displaced from Britain filtered into the Appalachians, where their fiercely independent culture persists today. Border disputes between Maryland, Delaware and Pennsylvania led to the creation of the Mason-Dixon line, which eventually separated the industrial North from the agrarian, slave-holding South.

The fighting part of the Revolutionary War finished here with the British surrender at Yorktown in 1781. To diffuse regional tension, central, swampy Washington, District of Columbia (DC), was made the new nation's capital. But divisions of class, race and economy were strong, and this area in particular split along its seams during the Civil War (1861-65): Virginia seceded from the Union, while its impoverished western farmers, long resentful of genteel plantation owners, seceded from Virginia. Maryland stayed in the Union, but its white slave-owners rioted against Northern troops, while thousands of black Marylanders joined the Union Army.

## Local Culture

The North-South tension long defined this area, but the region has also swung between the cultures of Virginia aristocrats, miners, waterfolk, immigrants and the ever-changing rulers of Washington, DC. Since the Civil War, local economies have made the shift from agriculture and manufacturing to high technology and the servicing and staffing of the federal government.

Many African Americans settled this border region, either as slaves or escapees running for Northern freedom. Today African Americans still form the visible underclass of its major cities, but in the rough arena of the disadvantaged they compete with Latino immigrants, mainly from Central America.

At the other end of the spectrum, ivory towers – in the form of world-class universities and research centers such as the National Institute of Health – attract intelligence from around the world. The local high schools are often packed with the children of scientists and consultants who staff some of the world's most prestigious think tanks.

All of this has spawned a culture that is, in turns, as sophisticated as a journalists' book club, as linked to the land as bluegrass festivals in Virginia and as hooked into the main vein of African American culture as Tupac Shakur, go-go, Baltimore Club and DC Hardcore. And, of course, there's always politics, a subject continually simmering under the surface here.

## WASHINGTON, DC

The USA's capital teems with iconic monuments, vast museums and the corridors of power where visionaries and demagogues roam. But it's more than that. It's also home to tree-lined neighborhoods and groovy markets, with ethnically diverse restaurants, large numbers of immigrants and a dynamism percolating just beneath the surface. There's always a buzz here – no surprise, as DC gathers more overachieving and talented types than any city of this size deserves.

Plan on jam-packed days sightseeing in the countless museums (most of them free). At night, join the locals sipping DC-made brews and chowing in cozy restaurants in buzzy quarters such as U St and Logan Circle.

## History

Following the Revolutionary War, a balance was struck between Northern and Southern politicians, who wanted to plant a federal city somewhere between their power bases. Potential capitals such as Boston, Philadelphia and Baltimore were rejected by Southern plantation owners, as too urban-industrial so it was decided a new city would be carved at midway point of the 13 colonies, along the banks of the Potomac River. Maryland and Virginia donated the land.