

## Washington DC sightseeing places

### The National Mall

The National Mall is a national park in downtown Washington, D.C., the capital of the United States. The National Park Service administers the National Mall, which is part of its National Mall and Memorial Parks unit. The term National Mall commonly includes areas that are officially part of [West Potomac Park](#) and [Constitution Gardens](#) to the west, and often is taken to refer to the entire area between the [Lincoln Memorial](#) and the [United States Capitol](#), with the [Washington Monument](#) providing a division slightly west of the center. The National Mall receives approximately 24 million visitors each year.

Photo (KQN): Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

The National Mall occupies the space between the Lincoln Memorial and the United States Capitol. In 1981, the National Park Service defined the boundaries of the National Mall as Constitution and [Pennsylvania Avenues](#) on the north, 1st Street NW on the east, Independence and Maryland Avenues on the south, and [14th Street NW](#) on the west, with the exception of the section of land which the [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#) administers and which contains the [Jamie L. Whitten Building \(U.S. Department of Agriculture Administration Building\)](#).

In addition to the Lincoln Memorial, the National Mall is the home to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Korean War Veterans Memorial, the National World War II Memorial, and the Washington Monument.

### Smithsonian Museums

Nineteen museums and galleries, as well as the [National Zoological Park](#), comprise the Smithsonian museums. Eleven are on the [National Mall](#), the strip of land that runs between the [Lincoln Memorial](#) and the [United States Capitol](#). Other museums are located elsewhere in Washington, D.C., with two more in New York City and one in [Chantilly, Virginia](#).

The most popular museums on the National Mall are [Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden](#); [National Air and Space Museum](#); [National Museum of African American History and Culture](#); [National Museum of African Art](#); [National Museum of American History](#); [National Museum of the American Indian](#); and [National Museum of Natural History](#).

## **Newseum**

The Newseum is an [interactive museum](#) of [news](#) and [journalism](#). The seven-level, 250,000-square-foot (23,000 m<sup>2</sup>) museum features 15 theaters and 14 galleries. The Newseum's [Berlin Wall](#) Gallery includes the largest display of sections of the Berlin Wall outside of Germany. The Today's Front Pages Gallery presents daily front pages from more than 80 international newspapers. Other galleries present topics including news history, the [September 11 attacks](#), the [First Amendment](#), world press freedom and the history of the Internet, TV and radio. It opened at its first location in [Rosslyn, Virginia](#), on April 18, 1997, where it admitted visitors without charge.

Its mission is "to help the public and the news media understand one another better" and to "raise public awareness of the important role of a free press in a democratic society." In five years, the original Newseum attracted more than 2.25 million visitors.<sup>[1]</sup> The Newseum's operations are funded by the [Freedom Forum](#), a nonpartisan foundation dedicated to "free press, free speech and free spirit for all people." The new Newseum has become one of Washington's most popular destinations, and its high definition television studios hosts news broadcasts and [Al Jazeera America](#)'s Washington D.C. bureau. The adult admission fee (in 2013) is \$22.

Address: 555 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, [Washington, D.C.](#)

## **Tidal Basin**

Photo (KQN): Cherry blossom in Tidal Basin.

The Tidal Basin is a partially man-made reservoir between the Potomac River and the Washington Channel in Washington, D.C. It is part of West Potomac Park and is a focal point of the National Cherry Blossom Festival held each spring. The [Jefferson Memorial](#), the [Martin Luther King, Jr. National Memorial](#), the [Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial](#), and the [George Mason Memorial](#) are situated adjacent to the Tidal Basin. The basin covers an area of about 107 acres (43 ha) and is 10 feet (3.0 m) deep.

## **U.S. Capitol**

The United States Capitol is the meeting place of the [United States Congress](#), the legislature of the [U.S. federal government](#). Located in [Washington, D.C.](#), it sits atop [Capitol Hill](#) at the eastern end of the [National Mall](#). Though it has never been the

[geographic center](#) of the federal district, the Capitol is the [origin](#) by which the [quadrants of the District](#) are divided and the city was planned.

The Senate and House galleries are open to visitors whenever either legislative body is in session, however the galleries are not included as part of the U.S. Capitol tour. Passes are required to enter either gallery at any time. Visitors may obtain gallery passes from the offices of their Senators or Representative. International visitors may inquire about gallery passes at the House and Senate Appointment Desks on the upper level of the Capitol Visitor Center.

Photo (KQN): The U.S. Capitol.

When the House of Representatives is not in session, visitors with passes are admitted to the Gallery from 9 a.m. to no later than 4:15 p.m., Monday through Friday. The last entry into the Gallery may be earlier than 4:15 p.m. based on demand. Visitors are advised to arrive prior to 4 p.m. for the best opportunity to view the Gallery. The House Gallery is closed on holidays and is subject to unplanned, temporary closures when the House is out of session.

The Senate gallery is open during scheduled recesses of one week or more, and visitors are admitted to the gallery from 9 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., Monday through Friday. On recess days, visitors are welcome to stay until 4:30 p.m., at which time the gallery closes. The Senate gallery is closed on weekends and holidays (unless the Senate is in session), and during any recess or adjournment of less than one week. For information on whether the Senate gallery is open, please call 202.224.0057.

The underground, three-level, 580,000-square-foot (54,000 m<sup>2</sup>) United States Capitol Visitor Center (CVC) opened on December 2, 2008. The CVC is meant to bring all visitors in through one handicap accessible security checkpoint, yards away from the Capitol itself, increasing security and offering visitors educational exhibits, a food court, and restrooms. The estimated final cost of constructing the CVC was US\$621 million.<sup>[63]</sup>

**Hours:** The Capitol Visitor Center is open to visitors from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday except for Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, New Year's Day and Inauguration Day. Tours of the U.S. Capitol are conducted from 8:50 a.m. to 3:20 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Visitors with official business appointments may enter the Visitor Center as early as 7:15 a.m.

**Georgetown & Washington Harbor**

Georgetown is a historic [neighborhood](#), commercial, and entertainment district located in [northwest Washington, D.C.](#), situated along the [Potomac River](#). The primary commercial corridors of Georgetown are the intersection of [Wisconsin Avenue & M Street](#), which contain high-end shops, bars, restaurants, and the [Georgetown Park](#) enclosed shopping mall, as well as the [Washington Harbor](#) waterfront restaurants at [K Street, NW](#), between 30th and 31st Streets. Georgetown is home to the main campus of [Georgetown University](#) and numerous other landmarks, such as the [Volta Bureau](#) and the [Old Stone House](#), the oldest unchanged building in Washington. The [embassies](#) of [France](#), [Mongolia](#), [Sweden](#), [Thailand](#), and [Ukraine](#) are located in Georgetown.

Several movies have been filmed in Georgetown, including 1973 [horror film The Exorcist](#), which was set in the neighborhood and partially filmed there. In the movie's climactic scene, the protagonist is hurled down the 75-step staircase at the end of 36th Street NW, which connects Prospect Street with M Street below. The staircase has come to be known as the "[Exorcist steps](#)". A false front was built onto the house at the top of the steps so that the bedroom windows would immediately overlook the steps. The real structure is considerably set-back.

## **Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception**

Photo (KQN): Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception is a prominent [Latin Rite Catholic basilica](#) located in [Washington, D.C.](#), [United States of America](#), honoring the [Blessed Virgin Mary](#) as [Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception](#), the principal [Patroness](#) of the USA.

The shrine is the largest Catholic church in the United States, the largest church of any kind in the western hemisphere, the eighth largest church building in the world, and the [tallest habitable building in Washington, D.C.](#) An estimated one million [pilgrims](#) from around the country and the world visit the basilica each year. The basilica is on Michigan Avenue in the [northeast quadrant](#) of Washington, on land donated by [The Catholic University of America](#). As of 2014 the [rector](#) of the shrine was [Monsignor](#) Walter R. Rossi, who possesses a [Licentiate of Canon Law](#).

Address: 400 Michigan Ave NE, [Washington, D.C.](#) DT: (202) 526-8300.

## **Mount St. Sepulcher Franciscan Monastery**

Founded by Franciscan friars in 1899, the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in America is one of Washington's hidden gems, with a stunning Byzantine-style church; replicas of Holy Land shrines, Lourdes Grotto and catacombs; cloister walk; and beautiful gardens with more than 1,200 roses and other plants, flowers and herbs.

Photo (KQN): Franciscan Monastery.

This peaceful oasis is in the Brookland neighborhood near Catholic University and the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Visitors of all faiths and ages are welcome. Daily tours of the church and catacombs are on the hour, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Tours are free, though donations are appreciated. Reservations required for more than 6 people. Other facilities: meeting rooms for up to 70 people and St. Francis Hall, a charming event space offering modern amenities and classic Renaissance architecture; accommodates 250 people.

Address: 1400 Quincy St. NE, Washington, DC 20017. DT: 202-526-6800.

## **National Harbor, Maryland**

National Harbor is a 300-acre (1.2 km<sup>2</sup>) multi-use waterfront development on the shores of the [Potomac River](#) in [Prince George's County, Maryland](#) just south of [Washington, D.C.](#) near the [Woodrow Wilson Bridge](#).

Phase one of National Harbor opened on April 1, 2008. The site is being developed by Milton Peterson's Peterson Companies, with the project expected to cost well over \$2 billion, and a construction time frame of 2007 to late 2014. In addition to the [Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center](#), which opened on April 1, 2008, National Harbor contains five additional hotels, waterfront condos, offices, retail stores, nightspots, a marina, and a new location for the [National Children's Museum](#), whose first phase opened in December 2012. An outlet shopping center opened at National Harbor in November 2013.

The site has a convention center, six hotels, restaurants, shops, and condominiums.<sup>[6]</sup> National Harbor hosted Solei in 2008, 2010 and 2012 and also features outdoor activities such as a culinary festival and outdoor concerts by local artists, [National Harbor's calendar of events](#), an annual ice sculpture exhibition, and an annual international [Beatles](#) festival, "Abbey Road on the River." The site includes a beachfront walking path and a connection to a bike trail on the [Woodrow Wilson Bridge](#) that crosses into [Alexandria, Virginia](#).

[The Walt Disney Company](#) had announced that it would build a new resort hotel at National Harbor, but backed out of the project in November 2011. An [MGM](#)-branded [casino](#) is expected to open at National Harbor in 2016, following voters' approval of an expansion to the state's gambling program in the November 2012 elections. In addition, on November 29, 2012, ground was broken for a [Tanger Outlets](#) shopping facility at National Harbor, which opened in November 2013.

Address: 165 Waterfront St, [National Harbor, MD 20745](#)

### **Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia**

Photo (KQN): Arlington National Cemetery.

The Arlington National Cemetery, in [Arlington County, Virginia](#), directly across the [Potomac River](#) from the [Lincoln Memorial](#), is a United States [military cemetery](#) beneath whose 624 acres (253 ha) have been laid casualties, and deceased veterans, of the nation's conflicts beginning with the [American Civil War](#), as well as reinterred dead from earlier wars. It was established during the Civil War on the grounds of [Arlington House](#), which had been the estate of the family of [Confederate general Robert E. Lee's wife Mary Anna \(Custis\) Lee](#).

More than three million people visit Arlington National Cemetery annually, many coming to pay final respects at graveside services, which are conducted each week, Monday through Saturday. Hours: 7 days a week, 365 days. 8am-7pm (April-September) and 8am-5pm (October-March).

Address: Arlington, VA 22211.

### **National Air & Space Museum – Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center, Chantilly, Virginia**

Photo (KQN): space shuttle Enterprise displayed in the Udvar-Hazy Center

The Udvar-Hazy Center is a companion facility to the Museum on the National Mall in Washington, DC. Its two huge hangars display thousands of aviation and space artifacts, including a [Lockheed SR-71 Blackbird](#), a [Concorde](#), and the space shuttle [Discovery](#). The Center also offers the Airbus [IMAX Theater](#) and the Donald

D. Engen [Observation Tower](#), which gives you a 360-degree bird's-eye view of Washington Dulles International Airport and the surrounding area.

14390 Air and Space Museum Parkway, Chantilly, Virginia 20151. Phone: 703-572-4118. Winter Hours: 10:00 am to 5:30 pm.

## **Mount Vernon, Virginia**

Photo (KQN): Mount Vernon.

George Washington, the [first president](#) of the United States, and his wife [Martha Washington](#) lived at Mount Vernon for more than 40 years. Mount Vernon is now the most popular historic estate in America. Situated along the Potomac River in Northern Virginia, Mount Vernon is just 16 miles south of Washington, D.C.

Guests to Mount Vernon can visit the [Mansion](#), more than a dozen original structures, [Washington's Tomb](#), and nearly 50 acres of his extensive plantation. The estate also includes a working blacksmith shop and the Pioneer Farm, a 4-acre demonstration farm with a reconstructed slave cabin and 16-sided treading barn.

The Ford Orientation Center features an inspiring film, *We Fight To Be Free*. [The Donald W. Reynolds Museum and Education Center](#) is home to 25 theaters and galleries, which tell the detailed story of George Washington's life with more than 500 original artifacts, 11 video presentations, and even an immersion theater experience.

Address: 3200 Mt Vernon Memorial Hwy, Alexandria, VA 22121. Phone:(703) 780-0011

Hours: [11:00 am – 2:30 pm, 5:00 – 8:30 pm](#),

## **Great Falls, Virginia & Maryland**

Photo (KQN): Great Falls.

Great Falls Park is a [national park](#) situated on 800 [acres](#) (3.65 km<sup>2</sup>) along both the banks of the [Potomac River](#) in Virginia and Maryland. The [park](#) is a disconnected but integral part of the [George Washington Memorial Parkway](#). The [Great Falls of the Potomac River](#) are near the northern boundary of the park, as are the remains of the [Patowmack Canal](#), the first [canal](#) in the United States that used [locks](#) to raise and lower [boats](#).

[Address](#): 9200 Old Dominion Dr., McLean, VA 22102. [Phone](#): (703) 285-2965

### **Eden Center, Falls Church, Virginia**

Eden Center is a [Vietnamese American strip mall](#) located near the crossroads of [Seven Corners](#) in the City of [Falls Church, Virginia](#). The City's Economic Development commission considers it the #1 Tourist Destination in the City. The center is home to 120+ shops, restaurants and businesses catering to the extensive [Asian American](#), especially the [Vietnamese](#)-American, population. Eden Center has created an anchor for Vietnamese culture serving the Virginia, North Carolina, Maryland, and Pennsylvania areas, as evidenced by the large number of [phở](#) soup restaurants, [bánh mì](#) delicatessens, bakeries, markets, as well as Vietnamese-American cultural events that are regularly held at the Center. The name derives from the 1960s Saigon arcade “Khu Eden”. Eden Center is the largest Vietnamese commercial center on the East Coast, and the largest Asian-themed mall on the east coast of North America.

Address: 6751 Wilson Blvd, [Falls Church, Virginia](#), 22044.

**Sources:** Text from various sources. Photographs: Khai Nguyen.