

All About DC

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Introduction

The city of Washington, DC is widely known as the center of the United States' politics, but few know about the city itself. A vibrant, varied town with plenty to do and see, DC is much more than just the home of lawmakers. The city has its own fascinating history and culture, along with a keen eye toward the future.

With this guide to DC, you'll be able to see some of the lesser-known parts of DC that truly show what a wonderful and unique city our nation's capital is.

The DC Metro

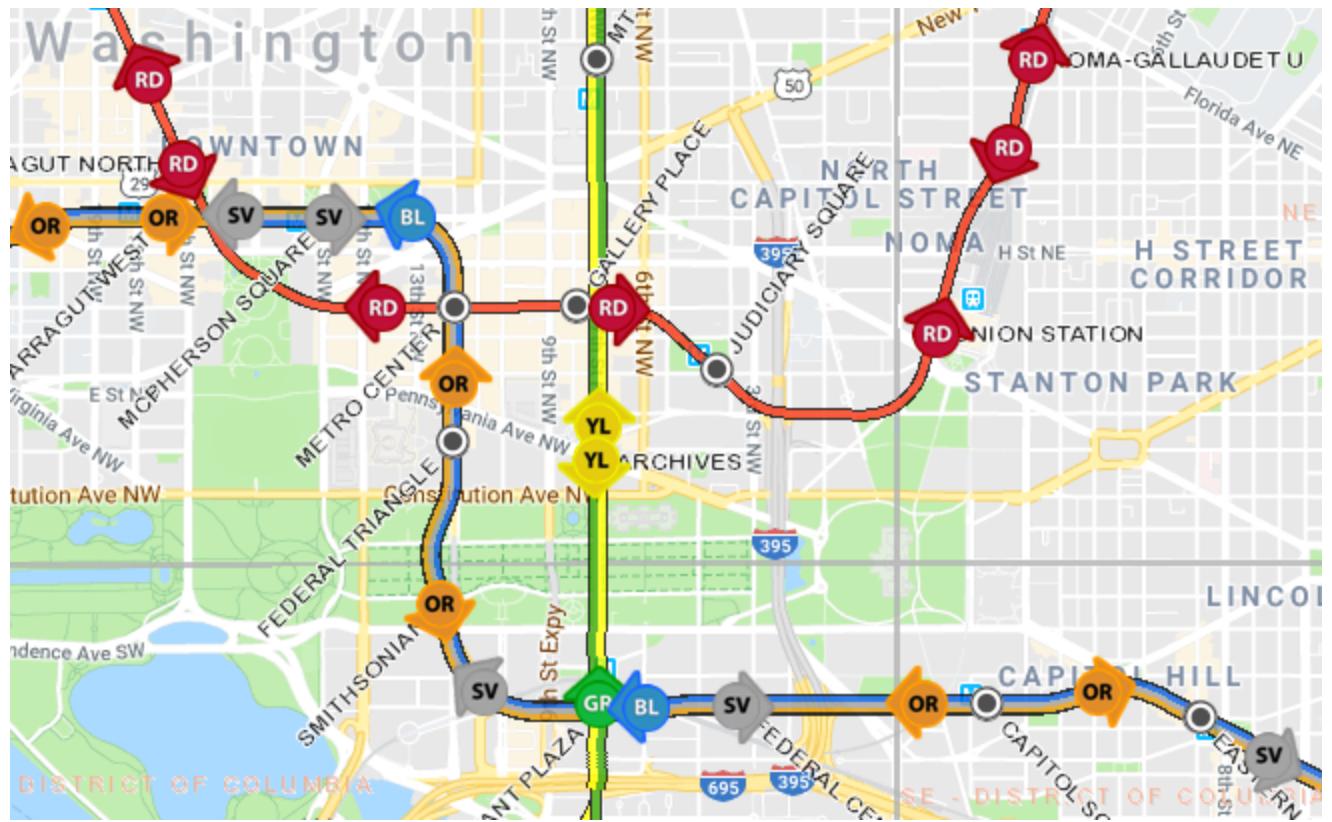
Washington DC's Metro, formally known as the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), began construction in 1969, and has operated consistently ever since. Development of its most recent addition, the Silver Line, began in 1994, and gives the Metro increased reach over the western side of DC.

For visitors or newcomers looking to find their way around DC using Metro, it can seem a little daunting with its six inter-woven lines and numerous stops. However, with some help, the Metro will quickly become second nature, and an inexpensive and useful way to get around the city.

[Metro map]

Planning your Metro Route

The Metro map is located throughout Metro stations and on all trains. If you know the general area or neighborhood you need to go to, you can use it to navigate your way through DC. If you are new to the area or need more help, there are trip planners on the [WMATA Website](#). If you choose the "travel by train" option in the Google Maps phone app, it will interface with the WMATA system and tell you exactly what trains you need to ride and when. It even covers transfers!



Purchasing your SmarTrip® Card



In order to ride on the Metro, you need what's known as a "SmarTrip®" Card. These are cards that you can load with money and tap at the turn-stiles at Metro entrances and exits to automatically pay the correct amount for your trip. You must purchase one before you ride, though!

If planning ahead, you may purchase one on the [WMATA Store](#), or may wait and purchase one at the station.



Here's how to purchase a SmarTrip® card from one of the station kiosks like these.

1. If you don't own a SmarTrip® card, use the numbered buttons on the side to select the option for ordering a new one.
2. You will then be asked to specify how much money you'd like to load onto the card. Enter that amount using the add/deduct values buttons in the center.
3. Choose your payment type, and enter your payment using the bill or card payment section. These kiosks accept most major credit / debit cards.
4. When payment is complete, your new SmarTrip® Card will be ready to ride!

Riding

When entering the platform area, make sure you are at the platform that is for the line color you chose *and* in the direction you need to go. In some stations the platforms for the different directions are on opposite sides of the track.

While on the train, be courteous to fellow riders and follow all posted rules. This includes not playing music without headphones, not bringing any open drinks, and staying away from the doors while on the train.

Re-loading your SmarTrip® Card

If you spend enough time in DC, you will likely need to add additional money to your SmarTrip® card. This can be done at the same kiosks as before. In order to re-load your card, select the option on the screen and tap your card to the sensor. You may then select your amount and pay with either cash or credit / debit card. Then, tap your card one last time to complete the transaction.

Museums

DC is home to an enormous variety of terrific museums, covering countless subjects. This section covers a few of my personal favorites, but there are far more to discover while you're there!

The Smithsonian Museums





The Smithsonian Institutes run *sixteen* different museums, galleries, and a zoo in the DC area. These museums are among the finest in the world, and all have no entrance fee! There are eleven of them around the National Mall, making that a perfect destination for museum lovers!

My personal favorites are the Air and Space Museum, the Archives of American Art, and the Natural History Museum.

The Newseum



The Newseum is a unique museum dedicated to the history of journalism and free press in the United States. There's no place better to get a sense of the power of the press and personal freedoms and the sacrifice those freedoms often require.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum



The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum is an incredible, moving museum dedicated to ensuring nobody forget the horrible events of the Holocaust. Immersive and powerful, this museum does not shy away from the facts and the history of what lead up to, and happened during the Holocaust.

The International Spy Museum



The International Spy Museum is a fascinating museum about spies and spying throughout history. With a ton of information, artifacts, and hands-on activities, this is one of the best museums for family fun.

History and Monuments

As the United States' capital city, Washington, DC has a storied history. The countless monuments in DC celebrate not only the city's heritage, but the history of our entire country. A vast majority of these monuments are located near the National Mall, so that's the primary place to be if you're interested in monuments and memorials.

Favorites On the National Mall

- » Lincoln Memorial



- » This memorial is dedicated to Abraham Lincoln and his accomplishments as president, including the Emancipation Proclamation, and helping to preserve the Union.
- » Washington Monument



»

- » This is a large obelisk style monument dedicated to the United States' first president, George Washington. The monument itself has a notable history and construction, taking nearly 40 years to finish construction.
- » Vietnam Veterans Memorial



- » The Vietnam Veterans Memorial is one of the most unique monuments in DC due to its unconventional design, and 3 separate parts. The parts are named the "Memorial Wall", the "Three Soldiers", and the "Vietnam Women's Memorial".

Favorites Around DC

- » Albert Einstein Memorial



- » This memorial is dedicated to Albert Einstein and the contributions he made to the human understanding of the universe.
- » Nuns of the Battlefield



»

- This memorial is dedicated to the hundreds of nurses who helped the wounded on both sides of the Civil War.

H Street NE Food and Fun

H Street Northeast is one of the coolest neighborhoods in DC. This one-and-a-half mile stretch has a wide variety of restaurants and hangout spots sure to satisfy any craving.

Restaurants

BUREDO



Buredo is an innovative sushi spot near 14th street with an eye for fresh, fantastic food. They specialize in burrito-sized sushi rolls, tasty bowls, and super-fresh salads. There are a ton of options for the seasoned sushi fan and for soon-to-be fans. Be sure to check out their super-cool Blade Runner mural while you're there!

My recommendation: Try the Nikkia Bowl for something just a little bit spicy!

STICKY RICE



Sticky Rice is a hip Asian-fusion restaurant with a laid-back atmosphere and plenty of tasty meals. They specialize in rice and noodle dishes with a variety of toppings, and have plenty of tasty options for vegans and vegetarians too! One of their more off-the-wall options is their series of bucketfuls of tater tots (or sweet tater tots!).

My recommendation: The Millennium

CHUPACABRA



Chupacabra is a Mexican restaurant with tons of personality and flavor. Serving traditional Latin food as fresh as can be, this place makes some of the best tacos, burritos, and anything else Latin you can think of! Most of the dining space is outside, so I highly recommend you stop by in the warmer months.

My recommendation: Corn tortilla tacos al pastor

Activities & Fun

SOLID STATE BOOKS



Solid State updates is a huge independent bookstore with a wide variety of hand-selected books of all sorts of genres. With friendly and enthusiastic staff and books covering almost every wall, you'll never be stuck not knowing what to read next! They even have a built-in coffee bar and a place to relax with your drink and new reads!

ATLAS PERFORMING ARTS CENTER



The Atlas Performing Arts Center is home to performances of all types. They have four separate performance spaces, and host events from groups throughout the DC region. They even perform family-oriented and free events from time to time, so it's always worth checking out what's on their schedule!

References

Please visit the following pages for more information about Washington DC and its many attractions.

- » [WMATA](#)
- » [The Smithsonian Institute](#)
- » [The Newseum](#)
- » [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#)
- » [Spy Museum](#)
- » [National Parks Service](#)
- » [H Street NE on Washington DC's Official Site](#)
- » [H Street Main Street](#)
- » Buredo
- » Sticky Rice
- » Chupacabra
- » Solid State Books
- » Atlas Performing Arts Center