

Family-friendly things to do in Washington DC

Washington DC has a host of activities for everyone and family-friendly attractions that make it a great place to explore with kids. Most of the museums, memorials and even the national Zoo have free admission! Most places have their own restaurants (but a little pricy). So either bring your food or visit other restaurants in the area (China town and Union Station food court are two good options). All the places described below are accessible via the Metro train. There are also hop-on hop-off bus tour companies (for a fee) listed below.

Map below shows the location of some of these attractions (numbered in blue within parenthesis) that are on the Mall.

Smithsonian National Air & Space Museum (2) - 7th and Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC. Open daily 10 am-5:30 pm. Allow at least 2-3 hours. This impressive museum displays the largest collection of air and spacecraft in the world as well as smaller items like instruments, memorabilia, and clothing. Learn about the history, science, and technology of aviation and space flight. IMAX films and planetarium shows are offered several times a day.



Additional activities for kids:

- You can ride in several 4-minute flight simulator rides for \$6.50 per ride.
- Take a journey through space or to natural and manmade wonders of the world at the Lockheed Martin IMAX Theater. IMAX movies and the Planetarium each cost \$9 per adult or \$7 per child. Tickets can be purchased in advance at (877) WDC-IMAX.

The National Museum of Natural History (12) - 10th Street and Constitution Ave., NW. Open 10 am-5:30 pm. Closest Metro Stations are Smithsonian and Federal Triangle. A favorite with kids, but has plenty to intrigue all ages. Popular displays include dinosaur skeletons, an enormous collection of natural gems and minerals, artifacts of early man, an insect zoo, a live coral reef and much more. Houses a national collection of more than 125 million natural science specimens and cultural artifacts



Additional activities for kids:

- Discovery Room where there are lots of hands-on activities.
- IMAX Theater: Purchase IMAX tickets in advance or as soon as you arrive.

Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian (4) - 4th St. and Independence Ave. SW, Open daily from 10 am-5:30 pm. The newest museum on the National Mall in Washington, DC showcases Native American objects from ancient pre-Columbian civilizations through the 21st century. Multimedia presentations, live



performances and hands-on demonstrations will bring the Native American people's history and culture to life.

Additional activities for kids:

- **imaginATIONS Activity Center** - The family-friendly space is geared to ages 12 and under and offers hands-on activities, interactive games, storytelling programs and craft workshops. Explore traditional Native dwellings, compete against family and friends in an interactive quiz show, experience different modes of indigenous transportation and sport, weave a giant basket and learn about basket-weaving's history.
- **Spark!Lab** - Hands-on, interactive exhibit meant to inspire kids through invention. Open daily (except Tuesdays) from 10-4

Smithsonian American History Museum (3) - 12th to 14th Sts. NW. Open daily 10 a-5:30 pm With more than 3 million artifacts of American history and culture, visitors learn about the nation's history from the War of Independence to the present day. At the heart of the museum, the Star-Spangled Banner—one of the most recognized symbols of the nation—has been given a new state-of-the-art gallery. New galleries such as the Jerome and Dorothy Lemelson Hall of Invention, presenting “Invention at Play,” join old favorites including “The American Presidency: A Glorious Burden” and “America on the Move.”

Additional Activities for Kids:

- Kids will have the most fun using their imaginations at the Spark! Lab, a hands-on science and invention center and riding a Chicago Transit Authority car in America on the Move. They'll marvel over displays of Kermit the Frog and Dumbo the Flying Elephant. Throughout the museum there are plenty of opportunities to use touch stations to learn something new.

Discovery Theater-Ripley Center - 1100 Jefferson Drive, SW. The Smithsonian's Discovery Theater, located in the Ripley Center on the National Mall. Is a live theater geared towards school-age children. Classic stories and folktales are told through puppet shows, storytellers, dancers, actors, musicians, and mimes. Most shows are Mondays through Fridays, 10 am and 11:30 am.

The Carousel on the National Mall - 900 Jefferson Dr. SW. In front of the Arts and Industries Building. Open daily from 10 am-5:30 weather permitting. Metro: Blue and Orange Line: Smithsonian. Take a spin on an old-fashioned carousel (merry-go-round), located in front of the Arts and Industries Building.



Washington Monument (25) - 15th St. SW & Constitution Ave. Open 9 am-5 pm. Free time assigned tickets are required. Visitors may obtain same day tickets at the Washington Monument Lodge located on the 15th Street side of the monument, midway between Constitution and Independence Avenues. Tickets are distributed beginning at 8:30 a.m. daily until tickets for that day are gone. During peak season, arrive early to avoid long lines. Advance tickets are also available for \$1.50 service fee. A memorial to George Washington, our nation's first president, it is the most prominent landmark in Washington, DC and stands as the



centerpiece of the National Mall. It is the tallest structure in Washington, DC Take the elevator to the top of the memorial to George Washington, our nation's first president, and see a wonderful view of Washington DC. Kids love to see the city from a bird's eye view. For Kids: Junior Ranger booklets are available at the Survey Lodge Ranger Station located along Independence Ave.

Sackler Art Gallery (13) - Jefferson Drive at 12th St SW. Metro: Smithsonian (Orange and Blue lines). Open 10 am- 5:30 pm. Asian art gallery with a variety of art from Asia.

Activities for kids:

- Imaginasia Family Programs: March 12, 12-4 pm. Museum Day Live: Family friendly activities. March 19, 11 am-1 pm & 2-4 pm. Afghan Fighter Kites: Exhibition, storytelling on the Afghan caravanserai and make your own kite (for kids ages 6-12)

Bureau of Engraving and Printing (27) - 14th and C Streets, SW. Free tickets are required for all tours during the peak season. Tickets are distributed on a first-come, first-served basis at Raoul Wallenberg Place (formerly 15th Street). Tickets are not available in advance. The Ticket Booth opens at 8:00 a.m. - Monday through Friday and are usually gone by 9 am – so must plan ahead. Tours last about 30 minutes and are offered every 15 minute. Watch real money being printed at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing in Washington, DC! This is a fun tour for all ages. You will see how U. S. paper currency is printed, stacked, cut and examined for defects

National Archives - Constitution Ave. NW, Between 7th and 9th St. Metro: Archives-Navy Memorial-Penn Quarter Open daily from 10 am-5:30 pm. Need at least 90 mins. To see exhibits and learning center. Houses the original Declaration of Independence, Constitution, Bill of Rights and more than 3 billion records. Stop by the Public Vaults, a permanent exhibition that gives visitors the sensation of walking into the Archives' behind-the-scenes stacks.

Additional activities for kids:

- Step into the boots of soldiers on the front lines, follow the original investigation into the sinking of the Titanic and even listen in on the deliberations of presidents as they faced some of the country's greatest challenges.

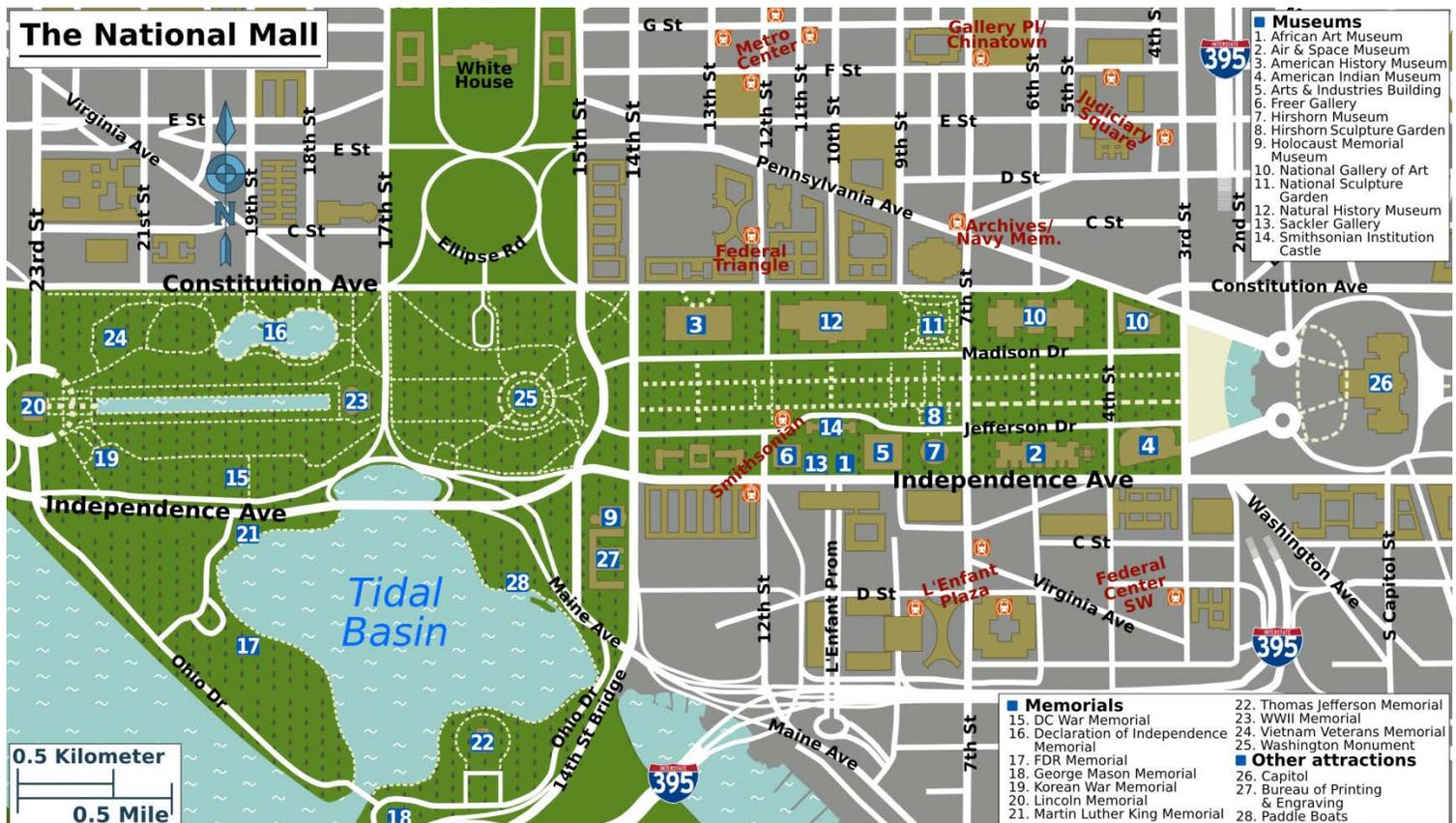
Library of Congress - Capitol Hill 101 First St. SE. Metro: Capitol South & Union Station. Monday - Saturday 8:30 am- 5 pm. Guided tours at half-past each hour (except noon) Mon. - Fri. 10:30 am - 3:30 pm, Sat. 10:30 am - 2:30 pm. The biggest library in the U.S. and a treasure trove of Americana, packed with artifacts like the Wright Brothers' flight logs, Bob Hope's collection of jokes and Harry Houdini's catalog of magic tricks. Visit the Thomas Jefferson Building, known for its magnificent 19th Century architecture and decoration and changing historical exhibitions.

National Zoo - 3001 Connecticut Ave., NW. Closest Metro Station: Woodley Park/ Zoo /Adams Morgan and Cleveland Park. Open: October 30 to April 1: Grounds are open 8 am -5 pm. Buildings are open 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Admission is FREE! The National Zoo is a part of the Smithsonian Institution with more than 435 different species of animals. Open year round, the world-class property offers the opportunity to view and learn about favorites including giant pandas, elephants, tigers, cheetahs, sea lions and many more.



Monuments & Memorial on the Mall: Memorials are open 24 hours a day throughout the year and admission is free.

- DC War Memorial (15)
- Declaration of Independence Memorial (16)
- FDR Memorial (17)
- George Mason Memorial (18)
- Korean War Memorial (19)
- Lincoln Memorial: (20)
- Martin Luther King Memorial (21)
- Thomas Jefferson Memorial (22)
- WW II Memorial (23)
- Vietnam Veterans Memorial (24)



Source: thebirdist.com

Other Museums with a fee for Admission:

Newseum - 555 Pennsylvania Ave. NW. Metro: Archives-Navy Memorial-Penn Quarter, Judiciary Square (Green, Red and Yellow lines). Open 9 am-5 pm. Admission: \$22:95/adults; \$13:95 kids 7-19; 6 and under free. Purchase online and receive a discount. Museum designed with future journalists in mind. Kids can deliver the weather forecast in front of a green screen, get critiqued by a professional photojournalist after snapping photos of a news scene and view front-page stories from around the globe.

National Geographic Museum - 1145 17th St. NW. Metro: Dupont Circle, Farragut North, Farragut West (Blue, Orange and Red). Open Daily 10 am-6 pm. Admission: \$15/adult; \$12/student; \$10 kids 5-12. Explore the world and all that is in it at the National Geographic Museum. Great for all ages, the museum features a variety of changing exhibitions, from interactive experiences to stunning photography.

National Building Museum - 401 F St. NW. Metro: Gallery Pl-Chinatown, Judiciary Square (Green, Red and Yellow lines). Open Monday through Saturday, 10 am-5 pm, and Sunday, 11 am-5 pm. Admission: \$10/Adult; \$7/Student and ages 3-17; 2 and under free. Museum devoted to the history and impact of the built environment with exhibits telling the stories of architecture, engineering, and design. Have interactive activities for kids.

International Spy Museum - 800 F St. NW. Metro: Archives-Navy Memorial-Penn Quarter, Gallery Pl-Chinatown, Metro Center (Blue, Green, Orange, Red & Yellow lines) Open 9 am-7 pm. Admission: 21:95/adult; 14:95/Youth 7-11; Kids 6 and under free

Hop-On Hop-Off Bus Tours:

- DC Trails: \$35/adult: <https://www.expedia.com/things-to-do/hop-on-hop-off-bus-tour.a348496.activity-details?srp=true&location=Washington-DC>
- Big Bus Tours: \$45/adult: <https://www.expedia.com/things-to-do/hop-on-hop-off-bus-tour-by-big-bus.a278055.activity-details?srp=true&location=Washington-DC>
- Moonlight Trolley Tour of National Monuments: Historic Tours of America: Approx. 35/adult <https://www.expedia.com/things-to-do/moonlight-trolley-tour-of-national-monuments.a169306.activity-details?srp=true&location=Washington-DC>

Other events special events in the area if you are arriving earlier or leaving later:

- **The 45th Annual St. Patrick's Parade of Washington, D.C.:** Will be held on Sunday, March 13, 2016 beginning at 12:00 Noon, and will proceed down Constitution Avenue from 7th to 17th Streets, N.W. Over 100 marching bands, military units, dance schools, floats and a variety of other groups and organizations participate in the St. Patrick's Parade of Washington DC each year.
- **National Cherry Blossom Festival:** This celebration is held for two week March 20-April 17, 2016.and culminates with a parade. It is truly breathtaking to see 3,000 trees come to life at the Jefferson Memorial & Tidal Basin

References: Individual websites of places; dc.about.co; Washington.Org