



## Things to Do in Washington, D.C.

Washington, D.C. is a city rich in history, graced with natural and architectural beauty, and home to people from all around the country and across the globe. As the seat of government for one of the most powerful nations in the world, it's a nexus for ideas, information and innovation. For a student, life in our nation's capital provides a wealth of opportunities to learn and explore in conjunction with and beyond one's studies, as well as a variety of ways to take a break and have fun.

From natural history to modern art to air and space technology, Washington's museums house some of the world's finest collections. The National Zoo, home of the beloved baby panda Tai-Shan, is one of the country's best. Thanks to the Smithsonian Institution, admission to all of these exhibits is free of charge: <http://www.si.edu/>. The John F. Kennedy Center showcases performing artists from around the world, and every day at 6 p.m. hosts Millennium stage, a free performance by one of the world-renowned performers the Kennedy Center features: <http://www.kennedy-center.org/programs/millennium/>.

Tours of national monuments, memorials and government offices such as the White House, the Bureau of Engraving or the Voice of America are opportunities only to be found in this area. Spend a morning watching the Supreme Court deliberate on a case (all sessions are open to the public: <http://www.supremecourtus.gov/>), or take a tour of the National Archives.

In early spring, the Cherry Blossom festival ([www.nationalcherryblossomfestival.org](http://www.nationalcherryblossomfestival.org)) draws visitors from throughout the world to admire the spectacular pink flowers. Washington, D.C.'s uniquely beautiful landscape – its wide open mall bordered by its famous white buildings – is surrounded by natural landmarks such as Rock Creek Park, the Potomac River, and the C&O Canal. For a less urban experience of nature, Washington area residents don't have far to go for a hike in Shenandoah National Park, a visit to the Chesapeake Bay or a trip to the ocean at Maryland's Eastern Shore. Baltimore is another city to explore, just 45 minutes away. Between Metrorail, Metrobus, Greyhound and Amtrak it's easy to get around or even out of town without a car, but for times when you need one you can use a Zipcar by the hour or day: <http://www.zipcar.com/>.

For live music of all kinds, Washington's concert halls, stadiums, night clubs and coffeehouses always draw nationally known names and appreciative crowds. Washington, D.C. is one of the country's best areas for social dancing, from swing to tango to salsa. Glen Echo Park in Bethesda holds dances several days a week in its Spanish ballroom; most sessions begin with a lesson for beginners: <http://www.glenechopark.org/>. The lawn at Wolf Trap Farm Park is a popular site for outdoor summer concerts: <http://www.wolf-trap.org/>.