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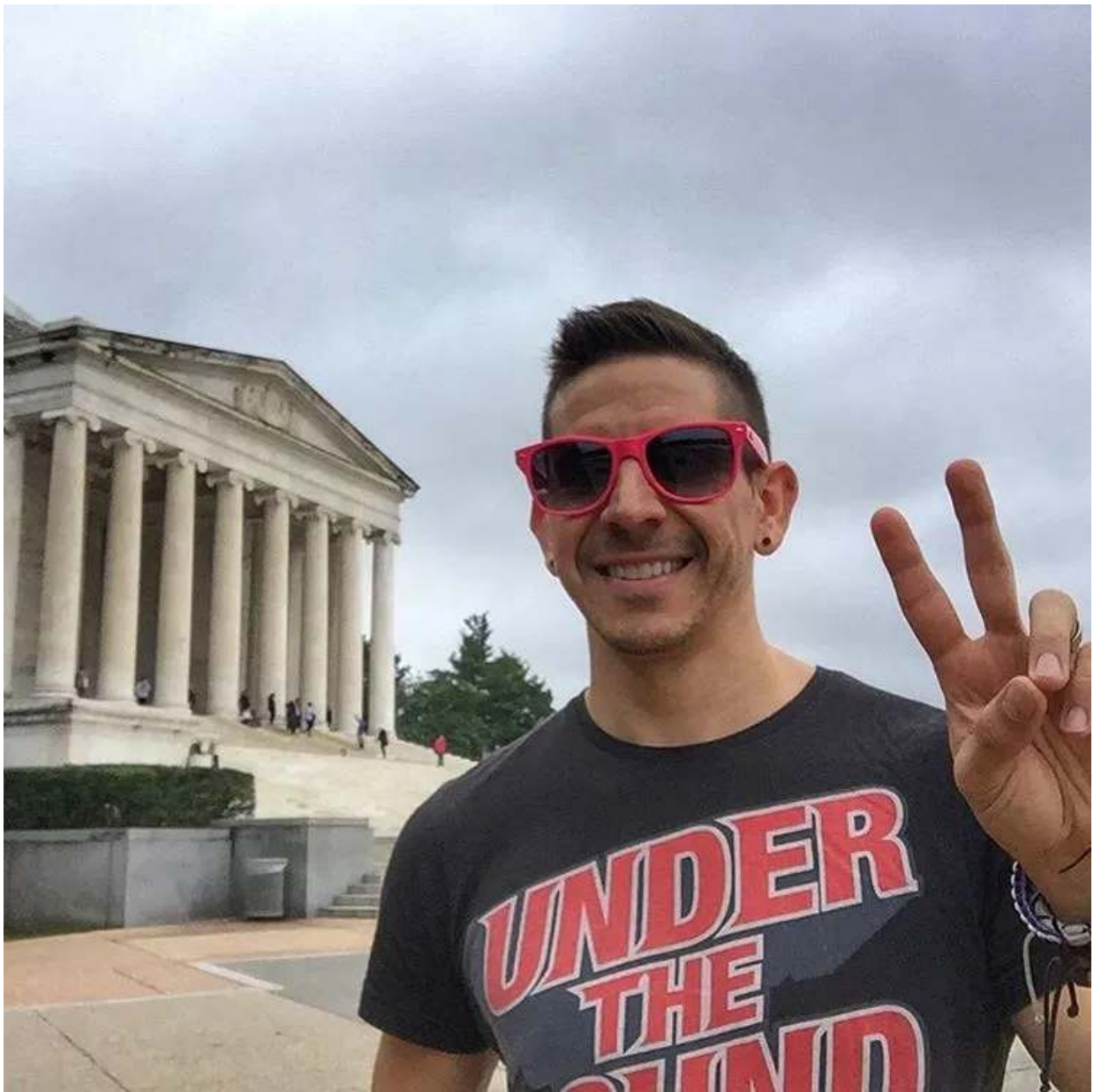


Gay Washington DC – the best gay
hotels, bars, clubs & more

Washington DC is a vibrant city. Even though it is best known as the home of the federal government, and the capital city of the [United States](#), it has much more to offer tourists interested in exploring the area's history. Entertainment, shopping, dining, and other recreational opportunities abound; there is certainly something for everyone in the District of Columbia.

Aside from the chance to see the U.S. government at work, the city is full of museums and monuments sure to appeal to the history buff in all of us. The Smithsonian Institute calls Washington DC home and offers individual museums for the exploration of Natural History, Art, Air and Space, and American History. In late 2016, the Smithsonian Institute will open its latest museum, the National Museum of African American History. You can combine education and entertainment, creating a unique vacation that is sure to stick with you.

One of the top destinations in the city is the White House. Families can enjoy the National Zoo, including the baby panda, Bei Bei, who was born in August 2015. Festivals are also commonplace. You can enjoy celebrations ranging from the Chinese New Year events, the National Cherry Blossom Festival, and the Smithsonian Folklife Festival.



The city is also a celebration of diversity. The 2016 Washington Blade's Best of Gay DC Awards are scheduled on October 20 while the Capital Pride's Holiday Heatwave starts on December 6. During the summer, there is an annual Capital Pride Celebration. It features a variety of events, including a large parade. The celebration will take place on June 10 and June 11, 2017.

General Tips

Washington DC always has something to offer so that you can enjoy a variety of events throughout the year. For those interested in attending the Cherry Blossom Festival, aim for late March or early April. Similarly, the Capital Pride Celebration is scheduled in early/mid-June.



If you are planning to come for the museums, any time of year can be right as long as you are prepared for the weather. The low season is traditionally in the winter, meaning many attractions will be less busy. However, the area can have harsh winters, including snow and freezing temperatures. If you aren't used to hot, humid weather, it is best to avoid Washington DC during the heat of summer.

In most cases, spring and fall are the busiest tourist seasons as the weather supports being outdoors. Whether you are touring the zoo or walking between museums, you'll be much more comfortable from September to November and from March to May.

For those looking for their ideal neighborhood, the Shaw district has become one of the newest “it” neighborhoods in the area. This section of the city is trendy, but still feels authentic, and offers a range of bars, cafes, and breweries to enjoy. For those looking for something more upscale, Logan Circle has an elegant feel, with chic boutiques and wine bars to match. Columbia Heights has a strong Latino and hipster population, providing a mix of ethnic restaurants and quirky taverns.

If you are looking for nightlife, then the [U Street Corridor](#) should be your destination. Once known as “Black Broadway,” the area was reborn into a haven for creatures of the night. Music and clubs abound, along with a variety of restaurants.

For those looking for great gay hangouts, your best bets are the U Street Corridor, Dupont Circle, and Logan Circle. Stop in at Cobalt and 30 Degrees for the ground-level restaurant and attached gay entertainment complex, or go “old-school” at DIK Bar. If you want to go on a bit of a location hunt, cult favorite Green Lantern can be hard to find but is known for its welcoming atmosphere. There are also some excellent bars, including Bachelor’s Mill, in the Capital Hill area.

Transportation

Washington DC is home to a host of transportation options. You can quickly get around town using the vast metro system. Whether you prefer bus or rail, you can find a way to get from point A to point B with relative ease. You can use the trip planner online for exact directions and timing or browse the [metro rail](#) and [bus transit](#) maps for a custom adventure.



Metro fares vary depending on your starting point and destination, as well as the time of day. Children under four can ride for free with a paying adult, and those 65 and over are eligible for reduced fares through the SmarTrip card service.

The SmarTrip card also offers discounts for transfers and connections during the same two hour period. Currently, no day pass is available, so you will need to budget properly to manage the expense associated with bus or rail transportation options. Uber is evolving the way the world moves and it's also a great way to get around DC.

Airports and Transfers

Washington DC is home to three major airports including Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, Washington Dulles International Airport, and Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport.

Reagan National Airport is home to its own metro stop, providing connections to the blue or yellow line. If you get a SmarTrip card, your maximum cost into DC on the rail system will be less than \$6. A taxi from Reagan National Airport to downtown will run between \$15 and \$20, depending on your exact destination.

Dulles Airport has an exclusive deal with Washington Flyer taxi. Stands are located outside the main terminal, and rides into downtown will cost around \$60 to \$70, making this a more expensive option than those available through Reagan. However, the taxi service also has a Silver Line Express Bus that can take travelers to the nearby Wiehle-Reston East rail station for \$5. Then, the rail portion of the trip would cost no more than \$6.

Though considered a Washington DC airport, Baltimore/Washington International is technically located in Baltimore. Amtrak trains are available to bring travelers into DC, with a reserved seat costing between \$15 and \$30.

Car rentals are available at all three airports, but a car is not required to enjoy the Washington DC area. With that in mind, it may be wise to skip the rental car and rely on public transit or other options instead.

Gay Hotels in Washington DC

There aren't many [gay hotels](#) in Washington DC, but there are many gay-friendly options. There is one gay B&B at the end of this list.

Luxury

[The Hay-Adams Hotel](#) – This is the type of accommodation where you might expect to find visiting dignitaries. You too can feel like a senator or regal royalty while making this your temporary home. The lush surroundings are most definitely dressed to impress.

[Mayflower Renaissance](#) – Because it’s right across from the White House, this hotel is referred to as the “White House Hotel”. That, and its walking distance location from the gay hoods of Logan and DuPont, and The Mall, make it highly desirable. Watch out for politician sightings (not all of them highly desirable, however).

Mid Range

[Hotel Monaco](#) – After National Mall walking and shopping till you’re dropping, both you and your pet (the 4-legged kind as well) can find something on the room service menu, be pampered with an in-room spa treatment, and partake in a hosted wine reception. Spend a little extra for that plush robe at the spa.

[The Beacon](#) – Only a mile from the White House and a quick walk to the metro station, this hotel offers on-site dining options such as a D.C. view enhanced Seasonal Bar and an American restaurant for the casual diner. After eating out, work out in the fitness center.

[The Carlyle Hotel DC](#) – Right in the heart of DuPont Center, this gay-friendly, happening hotel is conveniently close to many of D.C.’s best attractions. A perfect fit with the gay scene, it is both elegant and charming with outstanding amenities.

[Donovan House Hotel](#) – A short distance from the Walter E. Washington Convention Center and the metro station, this upscale Kimpton ultramodern hotel offers free bike rentals. Eat at a chic restaurant that serves Asian fusion cuisine, or appreciate the incredible city view from the roof’s trendy cocktail lounge and seasonal pool.

[The Pod DC](#) – Washington, D.C.’s first pod accommodation! Made with millennials in mind, this 245-room is for those who want to get out and enjoy the city – not sit and waste away in their room. Not to worry – the hotel’s designers also have other generation’s interests at heart.

Budget

[HighRoad Hostel DC](#) – Here, bathrooms are shared, dorms sleep 4-12 mixed and single-sex occupants, and the setting is basic Victorian row-house. There are also some spartan private rooms for the squeamish. Dorms include bunk beds, reading lights, and lockers.

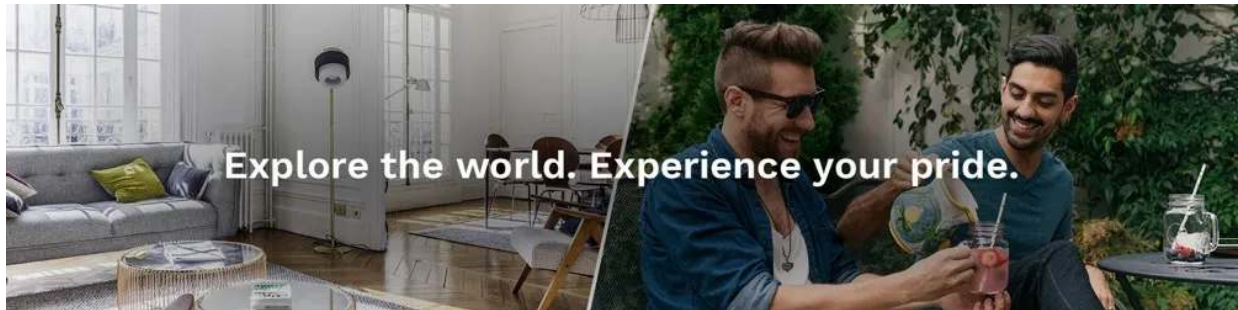
Guest Houses / B&B

[Malolo B&B](#) – The theme here is casual South Pacific. Mornings feature a breakfast bar served in a cozy dining area. Additional perks include shuttle service to the train, metro, and airport, a beautiful deck and garden, guest lounge, and loaner cell phones. Through prior arrangement, cooking classes and dinners are also available.

[The William Lewis House B&B](#) – This gay-owned blast from the past has merely 10 rooms but all are cared for with the utmost TLC. Both gays and lesbians can enjoy these Edwardian style furnished rooms all year round.

Apartments

There are many sites for apartment rentals in Washington DC, with [AirBnB](#) probably being one of the most popular. Prices are generally comparable to budget hotels, especially if you're willing to get a room in a shared apartment. [Book AirBnB →](#)



There are even a few LGBT-oriented booking sites like [misterb&b](#) with listings from gay hosts for gay guests where you can either rent a whole apartment or a private room in a shared apartment. Understanding Washington DC's gay scene is much more easily done with the help of a local and apartment sharing is one of the best ways to meet someone living in the city who knows how things work, where and when are the best nights to go out, and what places to eat at and which to avoid.

Special Offer!

Sign up with [AirBnB](#) or [misterb&b](#) and you will receive a free \$25 credit to use on your first booking!

[Join AirBnB](#) [Join misterb&b](#)

Sightseeing & Activities in Washington DC

[Newseum](#) – An interactive museum whose mission is to defend, explain, and promote, the 5 freedoms of the First Amendment: petition, assembly, press, speech, and religion and to encourage free expression. The 2016 admission price for adults is \$22.95 plus tax. [Book tour →](#)

[Bureau of Engraving](#) – The best place to learn all there is to know about America's paper currency. While you walk the production floor, you will observe the printing of millions of dollars. The experience takes about 40 minutes with the tour, gallery, and film. Do they hand out free samples? Sadly no, but some currency products are for sale.

[The Capitol Building](#) – The building is famous for its history. Adults and children alike can learn to better understand America's government and its workings through a tour. Advanced tickets can be obtained through your congressional representative. They may also supply you with tickets to visit both house chambers. Good food at good prices is available at the cafeteria on the bottom floor. [Book tour →](#)



Arlington Cemetery – [Tours are available](#) to view Arlington’s rich history. Whether you imagine the stories housed here, reflect on the names engraved on headstones, wander throughout the monuments, enjoy the beautiful landscape, or witness the time-honored ceremonies, you will forever remember your visit to Arlington. [Book tour →](#)

[Library of Congress](#) – Tours are also available for this, the largest library in the world and oldest federal cultural institution in the United States.

[National Air & Space Museum](#) – This museum houses the world’s largest collection of historic spacecraft and aircraft. Here you can experience the larger-than-life world of space travel and aviation, run your hands over moon rocks and see the 1903 Wright Flyer.

[National Museum of African American History & Culture](#) – Through interactive exhibitions you can explore the history of African American culture. Revel in this specific history with the aid of unique experiences and opportunities.



[The White House](#) – Thanks to First Lady Michelle Obama, visitors may take their own photos during their White House tour for the first time ever. For years, this privilege had been strictly off limits!

[US Holocaust Memorial Museum](#) – See for yourself how, even through unimaginable atrocities and horrors, there were many acts of courage and bravery by countless individuals, both non-Jews and Jews. Starting with the rise of power of the Nazis, the museum is laid out in chronological order.

Tours in Washington DC

[Carpe DC Food Tour](#) – Attention all Foodies! Take the Shaw Neighborhood Tour, or (currently available) the African American Foodways Tours while eating your way through some of the best culinary stops in D.C. Food, culture, and history all rolled into one. [Book tour →](#)

[Bike and Roll Tour](#) – A truly unique way to learn the history and see the Capital City. Bikes and Segways allow you to explore the National Mall, Smithsonian, Mount Vernon Estate, Monuments, and the Lincoln Memorial. [Book tour →](#)

[DC Design Tour](#) – Through six fascinating neighborhoods... From Brutalist to Neo-Classical... learn the history behind the mortar and brick on one of the best architecture focused walking tours in the Washington D.C. area.

Restaurants and Cafes in Washington DC

[Biergarten Haus](#) – With two beautiful bars stretched over two floors, it's an unbelievable 400+ capacity Bavarian bar with German pub beer and grub, sports on the TV, and a big, heated patio/beer garden. Here, it's Oktoberfest all year round!

[The Coupe](#) – This sleek, 24/7 coffeehouse & lounge serves up specialty cocktails, milkshakes, American gastropub fare. Prices can range between \$11 and \$30, all depending on whether you're in the mood for a snack or full meal.

[The Diner](#) – Retro-style eatery serves creative comfort food 24/7, with full bar, homemade desserts & shakes. Great comfort food served up by experienced staff and, yes, there's a Happy Hour!

[Dukes' Grocery](#) – Kick back and enjoy at this comfy, double level East London-inspired hangout offering craft-cocktails and farm-fresh cuisine. Past guests highly recommend the "Brunchie Burger". The patio even welcomes dog lovers.

[Amsterdam Falafel Shop](#) – open until 2:30 in the morning, this is the best restaurant in Washington DC for falafel sandwiches (build your own with your choice of 22 toppings), fries, and more.

[Annie's Paramount Steakhouse](#) – DC's gayborhood iconic gay restaurant. Home of oversized salads, steaks, and huge fries – your basic comfort food – in an updated and seriously queer steakhouse. Annie's cavernous interior has an upstairs that is now a swanky lounge. Traditionally the best seat in the house... an expansive view of the 17th Street gay cruising crowd from a table in the front room.

[Afterwords Café](#) – Open until 1:00 am, this is a landmark indie cafe and bookstore with a menu of draft beer, wine, and upscale American fare. From neighbors to tourists, the political elite to college students, at Kramerbooks & Afterwords, you'll find something for everyone.

[Barcelona](#) – Wine and Spanish small plates in elegant yet rustic digs with outdoor and courtyard fireplaces. The chef here believes in keeping it simple, sensible, and sustainable.

[Red Hen](#) – With a large bar and open kitchen, this American restaurant with Italian influence (located in the historic Bloomingdale neighborhood) creatively serves, wood-fired Italian eats in an airy, rustic-industrial atmosphere.

[The Iron Gate Inn](#) – The courtyard only serves to enhance this swanky spot, offering not just a tasting menu but Greek and Italian small plates. Its historic carriageway houses the bar and dining area, while the grapevine clad courtyard offers an awning allowing for protected, nearly year-round outdoor dining.

Washington DC Gay Bars

[JR's](#) – With friendly bartenders, campy videos, and great drink specials, this D.C 17th Street icon is located right in the very heart of gay-town. Whether you come to play “pin the tail on the closeted Republican Hill staffers,” or are just looking for a casual place to enjoy a cocktail, this place is packed with potential 7 days a week.

[Nellie's Sports Bar](#) – Not in the middle of the gay scene but definitely worthwhile, Nellie's offers summers-on-the-roof, poker tournaments, drag luck buffets, drag bingo, trivia night, outdoor patio, and big screen TVs.

[Green Lantern](#) – Perfect for your Average Joe, this bar is popular even though it's a tad off the beaten path. Each 2nd Sunday of the month features Tea Dances. Other attractions include theme [parties](#) – like underwear night, Thursday's 10-11pm shirtless-guys-drink-free, and more.

[Number Nine DC](#) – Serving creative cocktails and classics, this plush, new D.C. bar has nightly happy hour specials until 9pm, cocktail masters behind the bar, plenty of plush seating and is housed in the center of Logan Circle in a 2-level, re-purposed, and fully renovated setting.



Photo via Cobalt / Washington Blade

Washington DC Gay Clubs & Parties

In recent years, all of DC's traditional gay nightclubs have closed. While there are still a few gay bars to be found, dance clubs in the nations capitol haven't been able to stick around. Given the lack of dance venues, there are a number of weekly themed gay parties that happen either weekly or monthly in different venues, including the popular [Cherry Pop](#) weekend, which has been going on for 25 year.s

Washington DC Gay Sauna's and Cruising Bars

[Ziegfeld's / Secrets](#) – A 2-level club setting where the draw is most definitely Secret's chorus of all-nude male dancers (yes... all nude) and Ziegfeld's entire cast of female illusionists. This is the rebirth of D.C.s gay entertainment complex.

[The Crew Club](#) – reportedly one of the cleanest bathhouses you can find, offering guy on guy cardio and workout equipment, a technogym, hydro-massage bed, tanning, huge lounges, gang showers, a Finnish sauna, Maze steam room, and an utterly fabulous staff.

Gay Events in Washington DC

[Capital Pride](#) – Save these dates... June 8 – 11, 2017. The opening party takes place on Friday, Saturday features the Capitol Pride Parade, and Sunday wraps up with the remainder of the festival and concerts.



Photo via Capital Pride / Dennis LARGERON

[DC Black Pride](#) – One of the nation's largest African-American Pride events, attracting more than 50,000 participants, DC Black Pride takes place in Washington, DC in late May – the dates for this year are May 26 to May 29, 2017. But book way in advance! It's also Memorial Day Weekend.

[Cherry Pop Weekend](#) – One legendary weekend. Dance, vogue, pose and walk into Cherry's 25+ years of houses of ball culture, extravaganza and glamorous escape from reality! Beyond the definition of circuit.

Day Trips from Washington DC

Alexandria – This is a great combo – [the Mt. Vernon/Old Alexandria day trip](#). Galleries, theaters, and more history than you ever thought possible! From Union Station, take the M Red, then M Yellow (or M Blue), then a very short walk to get Alexandria. The entire trip takes roughly 35-45 minutes. Tours involve restaurants, art galleries, and cruises. [Book tour →](#)

[Gettysburg](#) – Civil War buffs simply cannot miss this opportunity. The trip is over 11 hours by bus, so you may want to rent a car for a far shorter 1.5 – 2-hour drive. And if you're also a fan of the paranormal, this violently influenced land has numerous haunted tours. Educational and creepy... perfect! [Book tour →](#)

Annapolis – If sailing is your passion, this is a must-do day trip. Beware the tourist-trap “antique” shops... unless, of course, you've been searching in vain for that perfect, one of a kind, utterly fantastic tchotchke. In that case, fire up the credit card. You can drive US 50 most of the way for about 45 minutes, or save yourself the hassle and bus it from Union Station – take 2 buses or 3, depending on your preference – which will take you roughly 1.5 – 1.75 hours.