

WASHINGTON DC

The city of Washington is also a state, namely the “District of Columbia”. And, just to confuse you even more, there is - far away on the west coast, a state called Washington. To undo the confusion, Americans refer to the state that you are now in, as “DC”. There are also another fifteen towns and cities in the United States that are called Washington. Have pity on the poor Postal Service.

Washington DC is the capital city of the United States. As such it is the seat of the Congressional House of Representatives (a sort of parliament) and of the Senate. And, also the location of the White House, which is both the residence and the headquarters of the President.

The hotel which is to be your home is “The Harrington Hotel”, the oldest continuously operational hotel in the USA. It is a family-owned and managed hotel, out of the old school. Not many exist in these days of franchises and conformity. It was built in 1914, and apart from the en suite bathrooms, has hardly been modernised since.

But, it is extremely comfortable, impeccably clean, well managed and exceptionally well located. Being in the middle of the downtown area of the city, it is within walking distance of almost all of the places of interest. The more remote places are easily accessed by the very modern underground system, which is the pride of Washington.

The hotel operates a reasonable low cost cafeteria restaurant, and a very popular bar-restaurant. <http://www.hotel-harrington.com/>

At reception you will find excellent, and complimentary, street maps of the city area, on which all of the significant places to be visited are marked, as are the transport routes.

A very good option is the “hop-on-hop-off, continuous commentary” tour tram operation, which pass the hotel every thirty minutes, plying the tourist route. However, this is a relatively costly experience (2016) rates are \$40 for a day – but if you purchase a ticket after 1530h you will get the balance of that day and all of the next).

Washington is a very good “walking” city. The buildings are set back from the streets, and they may not be higher than the George Washington Monument (about 10 floors high). The result is wide boulevards, lots of sunshine, and good views of the special architecture.

You might therefore, consider walking to the many places of interest. At the end of this document you will find a schedule of distances and directions to each of the “must see” sites in Washington.

The underground system in DC is likely the safest, cleanest, easiest to use, and most attractive underground system in the World. It represents a very reasonable cost alternative at (2016) - \$2.85 per journey, or \$14.50 for an all day pass.

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The Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum.

Hanging from the rafters in the main entrance gallery, are the “Milestones in Flight” exhibits, including the original handmade plane in which the Wright Brothers made the first powered flight in 1903, Charles Lindbergh’s “Spirit of St Louis”, in which he made the first solo transatlantic crossing, and the black X-15, the world’s fastest airplane. From here, move on to experience the incredible century of advance in aviation technology.

The Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History.

Features an insect zoo and a naturalist centre for close-up learning and is said to be the best in the world. There are 125 million specimens on display, some are brand new, but the collection spans 200 years. The exhibitions focus on “the earth” and its evolution into the world we live in today, featuring wondrous displays of animals, plants, fossils, rocks, minerals and cultural artefacts. The total area of the museum covers 18 rugby fields.

The Smithsonian National Museum of American History.

An amazing, not to be missed, collection of furniture, equipment and machinery. Most were transferred from the US Patents office and the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition. Exhibits include a “hands-on” science centre, the Hall of Electricity, the Lighting Revolution, America on the Move with a majestic Steam Locomotive; Americans at War – including the first US gun-boat, and even an exhibit on the lives and music of Celia Cruz and Ella Fitzgerald.

Other Smithsonian’s, all within walking distance of the Hotel, being located along the Washington Mall:

The National Postal Museum
The Museum of Technology
The National Museum of the American Indian
The Arthur M Sacker and the Freer Galleries
The African Art Museum
The Hirshorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

Arlington National Cemetery. Thousands of headstones mark the graves of American soldiers who have died in battles from the American Revolutionary war to the present time. Many famous persons are buried here including John F and Robert Kennedy, Oliver Wendel Holmes and Joe Louis. The Changing of the Guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier takes place every half-hour, and should not be missed. The precision drill is mesmerising.

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Vietnam Veterans' Memorial. A long, low black granite wall inscribed with the names of the 58,000 who died or were missing in action during the war.

The National Gallery of Art. Its Sculpture Garden is a national [art museum](#). Free of charge, the museum was established in 1937 for the people of the United States of America by a joint resolution of the [United States Congress](#), with funds for construction and a substantial art collection. The Gallery's collection of paintings, drawings, prints, photographs, sculpture, medals, and decorative arts traces the development of Western Art from the Middle Ages to the present, including the only painting by [Leonardo da Vinci](#) in the Americas and the largest mobile ever created by [Alexander Calder](#).

The Gallery's campus includes the original neoclassical West Building designed by [John Russell Pope](#), which is linked underground to the modern East Building designed by [I. M. Pei](#), and the 6.1-acre (25,000 m²) Sculpture Garden. Temporary special exhibitions spanning the world and the history of art are presented frequently.

The White House. For nearly two hundred years the White House has been residence and office of the President of the United States and therefore an obvious selection given the world wide importance and power emanating from its portals. Visits into the White House, are, sadly, a thing of the past

The Kennedy Centre for the Performing Arts. Aside from their theatre programme, the Kennedy has frequent programmes of mime, puppetry and musical theatre.

National Geographic Explorers' Hall. Has an interactive Geographic exhibit putting the world at your fingertips with forays into human evolution, sea and space exploration.

Washington Monument. The tallest freestanding masonry structure in the world built in memory of George Washington, the first US president. No other building in Washington may be higher.

Lincoln Memorial. Patterned after a Greek temple. Inscribed on the walls is Lincoln's famous Gettysburg Address. A craggy likeness of Abraham Lincoln sits firmly grasping the arms of his throne-like chair, deep in thought. The view from the memorial is breathtaking.

The National Building Museum. A stunning building within, and the museum's shop is one of the best. These two factors alone, make the short walk from the hotel a very rewarding experience. It is housed in the former Pension Bureau building that dates back to 1887, and is

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recognized as a marvel of architectural engineering. The Great Hall is impressive with its Corinthian columns and four-storey atrium, at its highest point, it is actually 15-storeys high.

The museum examines America's architecture, design, engineering, construction, and urban planning. The exhibits include photographs and models of buildings in Washington, DC and offer insight into the history and future of America's built environment. There is no entry fee.

The International Spy Museum. The museum showcases more than 200 gadgets, weapons, bugs, cameras, vehicles, and technologies used for espionage throughout the world. Learn about microdots and invisible ink, buttonhole cameras and submarine recording systems, bugs of all sizes and kinds. Find out why and how these artefacts were developed. Uncover stories of individual spies from Moses to Harriet Tubman, Elizabeth I to George Washington, Cardinal Richelieu to Joseph Stalin. There is an entry fee payable to this privately operated museum (about \$12), and there is a very intriguing spy gadget shop.

The National News Museum. Recently opened, the "Newseum" is a six-level, high-tech and interactive museum tracing the history of news reporting from the 16th century to the present day. In 250,000 square feet of exhibit space, the Newseum offers visitors 15 theatres, 14 major galleries, two state-of-the-art broadcast studios and a 4-D time-travel experience. The exhibition galleries explore news history, electronic news, photojournalism, world news and how the media have covered major historical events. The FBI museum artefacts are now housed at the Newseum.

Georgetown Park. The area is known for its speciality shops and historic homes. The Georgetown Park is a vast complex in the Victorian style and features over 100 shops forming a unique, one of a kind, shopping experience and a superb food court.

Ford's Theatre. A block from the hotel, the site of the assassination of Lincoln. Well worth a visit, especially to experience the duty ranger's verbal description of the events leading up to the actual assassination, the act itself and the consequences.

The Holocaust Museum. Opened in 1993, represents the tragic history of the Nazi persecution and murder of millions of Jews from 1933 to 1945, featuring permanent exhibitions and special exhibitions. At the Hall of Remembrance visitors may light a candle in remembrance of victims of the holocaust.

The Pentagon. This is the world's largest building, (not highest), the total floor area of over 6.5 million square feet, three times that of the Empire State Building. It is the headquarters of the USA Armed Forces.

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Union Station. One of the city's most splendid buildings, an architectural wonder, recently restored and housing 100 retail shops and restaurants. Also a major "food court".

United States Navy Memorial. This is the "living" memorial to all who have served in the U.S. Navy since 1775. It features a 70mm film spectacular called "At Sea" and interactive video displays.

United States Air Force Memorial. The views of the city are absolutely stunning from this location.

The Udvar-Hazy Aviation Museum.

The finest "aviator's" aviation museum in the world.

This little known gem of aviation was known as the Paul E Garber Museum, and was located near to Washington. It featured some 335 aircraft stored in about 23 hangars. The facility was not open to the public, except by arrangement. The Garber closed in March 2003, in preparation of the move to the new facility near Dulles Airport, which opened in December 2003 to coincide with 100 years of flight.

The new Garber is called the **Steven F Udvar-Hazy Centre** (he was the major benefactor). Some 200 aircraft and 135 large space artefacts are on display in a superb setting of 760,000 square feet.

Visitors walk among the artefacts on the floor, and view hanging aircraft from elevated walkways. Many engines, rockets, satellites, helicopters, airliners, ultra-lights and experimental aircraft are displayed for the first time in a museum setting.

Amongst the many highlights are the Boeing B-17 Swoose, Boeing B-29 Enola Gay, Boeing P-26A Peashooter, Caudron G4, Cessna 180 Spirit of Columbia, Chance-Vought F4U-1D Corsair, Curtiss JN-4D Jenny, Curtiss P-40E Warhawk, Grumman F5F-3 Hellcat, Lockheed P-38J Lightning, Lockheed 5C Vega Winnie Mae, Lockheed SR-71 Blackbird, McDonnell F-4S Phantom 11, North American F-86A Sabre, Piper J-3 Cub, Dash 80 prototype of the Boeing 707, de Havilland Chipmunk, Spacelab Module, Space Shuttle Orbiter Enterprise, and many others.

The new facility is located at Dulles International Airport, and features an observation tower from which the air traffic can be watched, restaurants, an IMAX theatre and gift shops. The museum operates a no-charge shuttle service to and from the city, starting from the Air and Space Museum on Washington Mall.

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Most places of interest are easy walking distance from the hotel:-

Northerly and easterly from the hotel:-

- Metro Centre Underground Station (N .1km)
- The Spy Museum. (NE .2km)
- Fords Theatre (E .01km)
- FBI Headquarters (E .01km)
- National Building Museum (E .03km)
- The National News Museum (E .5km)
- Union Station (E 1.5km)

Southerly and westerly from the hotel:-

- Old Post Office Pavillion – Now the Trump Hotel (S .02km)
- Washington Mall (S .5km)
- Smithsonian Natural History (S 1.25km)
- Smithsonian Air and Space and Natural History (SE 1.25km)
- Holocaust Museum (SW 1.25km)
- Washington Monument (SW 1.25km)
- National Geographic Explorers Hall (SE 1.5km)
- Vietnam War Veterans Memorial (SW 2.0km)
- Capitol Hill (House of Representatives, Senate) (SE 2.00km)
- Lincoln Memorial (SW 2.25km)
- Korean War Veterans Memorial (SW 2.3km)
- The White House (W .75km)

Directions by Underground

Your “home” station is “Metro Centre” Blue, Orange and Red lines)

- Jefferson Memorial (NE 2.25km) (Yellow line L’Enfant station then .75km)
- Arlington National Cemetery (SW 4.5km) (Blue line)
- Ronald Reagan Airport (aka National Airport) (S 4.5km) (Blue line)
- The Pentagon (S 3.75km) (Blue and Yellow lines)
- Pentagon City Shopping Mall (S 3.9km) (Blue and Yellow lines)