

Simply Smart Travel

Washington, D.C.

BY JEFFREY R. ORENSTEIN, PH.D.



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Editor's Note: If you enjoy travel, this column is for you. My goal is helping people over 50 (and under too) leverage the most satisfaction from their precious travel time and dollars. I'll share what I have learned on trips near and far and provide travel ideas and tips from experts.

The spectacular view from inside the dome in the Capitol Building.



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Washington, D.C. is not just the capital of a great nation. It is a great place to visit. This wonderful city has world-class architecture, streetscapes and monuments and a kaleidoscope of food and entertainment. If you're there on business, take time to explore. If you're looking for a memorable vacation, this city has quite a lot to offer anyone.

BEFORE YOU GO

- Plan Your Itinerary to maximize your time and suit your pace because there is a lot to see. Once you determine how long you can stay and how much you want to cover in a day, start researching www.washington.org/travel-tips and www.travelchannel.com/destinations/washington-dc. Another quirky but good site is www.thedistrict.com
- Pack casual clothes and comfortable shoes for touring. Dressy or formal wear is only needed for business.

GETTING THERE

Washington is accessible by plane, train or car.

- Nearby Reagan (DCA), Baltimore/Washington (BWI) and Dulles (IAD) airports are conveniently tied to the city by commuter rail and/or bus and offer flights to nearly everywhere.
- Going by train is a good option for anybody on the U.S. east coast or Midwest. Washington Union Station has frequent high speed service from Boston, New York, Philadelphia and daily service (often overnight on the train) from the Midwest and South.
- Driving to Washington is viable because of easy freeway access and its many surrounding attractions within daytrip range. However, frequent traffic congestion and scarce and expensive in-town parking can be frustrating.

WHEN YOU ARE THERE

- Don't drive in Washington. When I lived there, I usually kept my car home and used public transportation. Leave your car at the hotel and use the superb bus and Metro Rail systems.
- Alternatively, get a multi-day ticket on one of the many hop-on-hop-off bus services. Explore the town on day one and return to attractions you want to explore in depth later.

Cherry blossoms adorn the Mall each Spring.



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The Washington D.C. Metro commuter rail line is the way to get around the area.

IF YOU ONLY HAVE TWO OR THREE DAYS:

Must-sees for a short trip are the Mall, including the Viet Nam and World War II Memorials and the Smithsonian Museums. Visit the Capitol Building, White House, the Jefferson Memorial, Georgetown and the zoo.

IF YOU HAVE SEVERAL DAYS:

Explore the inner workings of government (Check with your Congressman for passes, tours, etc.), visit Arlington National Cemetery and dine in Old Town Alexandria. Take a boat tour on the Potomac. Good options for nearby daytrips include Mount Vernon, Monticello, Harpers Ferry, Annapolis and the Inner Harbor of Baltimore.



ORENSTEIN IS THE CO-PUBLISHER AND EXECUTIVE EDITOR OF *LIVING ON THE SUNCOAST* MAGAZINE. HE AND HIS WIFE VIRGINIA ENJOY SIMPLY SMART TRAVEL AND WRITING ABOUT IT. HE CAN BE REACHED AT ORENSTEIN@LIVINGONTHE SUNCOAST.COM COMMENTS FOR POSTING ON THE *LIVING ON THE SUNCOAST* SIMPLY SMART TRAVEL BLOG ARE WELCOME.