

# NEW YORK POST

## #7 WASHINGTON, DC BETTER THAN EVER

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**TRAVEL TIME** 4 hours by train

**WHY?** Good food, great neighborhoods, great outdoors --Washington hasn't been this fun in years.

**MUST DO** This town gets toasty in the summer time -- bank on some quality time with the Potomac River. Rent a kayak for \$8 an hour at the **Thompson Boat Center** in Georgetown and paddle across to often forgotten **Theodore Roosevelt Monument**, hidden away in the woods on peaceful Roosevelt Island. Afterward, plan on a hike through the 2,000-acre forests of **Rock Creek Park**, a good starting point is the nifty nature center off of Glover Road. Back in civilization, the **Smithsonian** holdings are all well and good, particularly the renovated **National Museum of American History**. But it's worth coughing up the \$20 for the **Newseum**, the city's all-news-all-the-time museum interactive make-your-own-broadcasts for kids, an impressive hall of Pulitzer-winning photographs the cool wall of presidents and their cuddly pooches. Not new but still entirely must-see is Dupont Circle's marvelous **Kramerbooks & the Afterwords Café**, which has to be the only legit bookstore in the country that's open 24/7 (1517 Connecticut Ave. NW, [202] 387-1462). Save your appetite, however, for **Busboys & Poets**, a bookstore, restaurant and speakeasy in the of-the-moment **U Street** neighborhood. Bring

your favorite vegan here for brunch - tofu scrambled "eggs" and warm vegan cookies are second to none (2021 14th St., [202] 387-7638). For a serious case of house envy, take a Sunday morning stroll through the scenic **Embassy Row** district, roughly centered on Massachusetts Avenue. Afterwards, catch the lively green market in **Dupont Circle**.

**STAY HERE** No car? No problem. Hop off the train and dump your bags at the **Hotel George**, an ultra-modern gem in the Capitol Hill business district (from \$399; [202] 347-4200).

Or save a couple of bucks without sacrificing much -- and choose from the six-choice pillow menu (no, really!) -- at the **Affinia Liaison Capitol Hill** (from \$224; [202] 638-1616). For a more "neighborhood" setting, the **Fairfax Embassy Row** -- across from The Phillips Collection and near Dupont Circle -- is cute and quiet (from \$375, 2100 Massachusetts Ave., [202] 293-2100).

**HAPPENINGS** Check out the **Memorial Day Parade** (May 25); the **Barbecue Battle** (June 20-June 21) where area restaurants and travelers compete for the top prize and attendees sample food and participate in interactive cooking displays. **Capitol Pride** (June 5-June 14) is the fourth-largest gay pride celebration in the country; hungry types should plan a trip around **DC Summer Restaurant Week** (August 11-August 17).

**HOT TIP** Everyone knows about U Street's **Ben's Chili Bowl**, where President Obama and Bill Cosby eat for free. But did you know about their excellent veggie chili? Which can also be served over cheese fries? (1213 U St., [202] 667-0909).

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