



# Making the Most of Your Trip

*The D.C. area offers plenty of diversions for convention attendees.*

By Laura Fries

Finding things to do in the Washington area isn't a problem. The real dilemma is keeping your top choices down to a manageable list.

While you are in town for the SSA Spring Conference & Trade Show, you might have some time to explore the rich history, art, culture and natural beauty that Washington, D.C., has to offer. The good news is that there is something for just about everyone. The bad news is that you might not have time to do it all.

SSA *Globe* has come up with this cheat sheet of sorts to help you enjoy your stay. We have included some hidden gems, best bets and insider tips to help you on your way.



Photo: National Harbor

## National Harbor

The first dilemma SSA conventioners face will be finding any reason to leave National Harbor. With more than 150 shops and nearly 30 restaurants in a downtown designed after Barcelona's Las Ramblas, don't feel bad if you don't even make it out of the riverfront event site. (See the map on page 22.)

The Tanger Outlet Shopping Mall—a bargain hunter's paradise—is a short, free shuttle bus ride away. If you want a bird's eye view of the area, the Capital Wheel, like the famous London Eye, offers a stunning vista of the city and the Potomac River from 42 climate-controlled gondolas. There's even a tricked out VIP gondola complete with wine chillers, couches and a DVD. Even if you don't go high-end, each ride is \$15 for adults.

*Insider Tip: Close to the water's edge is *The Awakening*, a famous D.C. sculpture of a man coming out of the ground, which makes for a great photo opportunity.*

## Old Town Alexandria

Just across the river is historic Old Town Alexandria, Virginia. George Washington really did sleep, eat and play here. With its charming cobblestone streets and shops, Old Town is a great way to combine history, dining and fun. Tour Gadsby's Tavern and try some of George's favorite Peanut Soup, or check out the Torpedo Factory, a transformed weapons plant turned indoor artist village.

Nearby you can find just about any style of food and price range. For something really fun and different, why not really go back in time—say the 15th Century—at John Strongbow's Medieval Tavern, or enjoy Irish music and a pint at Murphy's Pub? Free trolley service takes folks up and down the main drag of King Street daily, running every 15 minutes with stops along the way.

Water taxis won't run again until April, so from National Harbor, a cab or Uber will cost about \$12 to \$14 one way. You can take the city bus to the Branch Avenue Metro and take that to King Street, or go on an extended Old Town Trolley Tour (not to be confused with the free King Street trolley), which might include more sights and cost around \$40.

*Insider Tip: Plan a candle-lit walking tour at night of Old Town led by costumed historians with the Ghosts and Graveyards Tour, just the right mixture of fact, fun and spooky.*



Photo: R. Kennedy for ACOA

See *Sightseeing*, page 20

## Our Strength is Your Market Advantage

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*Below is a Sampling of Our Recent Listings*



**Fort Knox Self-Storage**  
Pompano Beach, FL | 58,477 sf  
Agents: Michael A. Mele,  
Douglas K. Mandel, Christopher Everett



**Hallmark Mini Storage**  
Killeen, TX | 36,350 sf  
Agents: Nicolas Ling, Jon Danklefs



**Hickory Hill Self Storage**  
Memphis, TN | 77,405 sf  
Agent: Anne Williams



**Uncle Bob's Self Storage**  
St. Louis, MO | 45,976 sf  
Agents: Sean M. Delaney, Will Holman



**Mini Storage Box**  
Clearwater, FL | 24,497 sf  
Agents: Michael A. Mele, Luke Elliott



**World of Storage**  
Lanett, AL | 43,725 sf  
Agents: Brett R. Hatcher,  
Eddie Greenhalgh



**Picacho Self Storage**  
Las Cruces, NM | 30,700 sf  
Agents: Nicholas Ling,  
Jonathan Okies, Jon Danklefs,  
John Herbst



**Fayette Self Storage**  
Fayetteville, GA | 151,918 sf  
Agents: Stacey Gorman,  
Mike MacManus



**Kings Bay Mini Storage**  
Saint Marys, GA | 49,800 sf  
Agents: Michael A. Mele,  
Luke Elliott, Brian Baldwin,  
Stacey Gorman

*To access the investment market, contact the market leader.*

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## Smithsonian and the National Mall

D.C. is home to some world-famous museums, monuments and galleries, but the best part is that Smithsonian Institution museums are all free to visit. Chances are, however, you won't be able to get to them all, so choose your top three if you are short on time.

The Natural History and Air & Space museums are the most popular, so try checking out others like the newly renovated American History or Native American museums. While the art is free to see, the restaurants can be pricey. To save some money, pack a lunch or try one of the street vendors that often line the mall. Parking is limited, so taking a bus tour or the Metro is your best bet.

The National Zoo is also part of the Smithsonian, but is located well north of the Mall (on Connecticut Avenue, NW, between the Woodley Park-Zoo/Adams Morgan and Cleveland Park Metro stations on Metro's Red Line). It's also worth the trip to see Bao Bao, the baby panda. Best viewing times for the panda and all the big animals is early morning. Be sure to also stop at the visitor's desk for information on daily exhibits and demonstrations.

*Insider Tip: National Harbor is on the Washington Metro transit system via a limited-stop bus route. The bus can get you to the nearby Branch Ave. Metro, but we suggest taking the free shuttle to Reagan National Airport, which has a Metro stop and more frequent trains.*

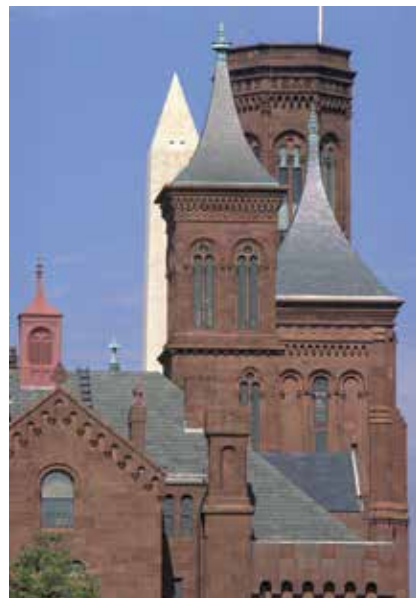


Photo: Destination DC



Photo: Destination DC

## Downtown Washington

The hustle and bustle of the nation's capital is far easier to navigate by foot than by car. The Gaylord offers shuttle service every 90 minutes, seven days a week, for about \$20 round trip for adults to the Reagan Office Building, which puts you right in the heart of some great sights.

Although Ford's Theatre has evening performances, a visit during the day is a step back in time to the dramatic moment when President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated in 1865. Tours include a trip to the Petersen House where Lincoln died as well as the new Center for Education and Leadership.

Nearby are the International Spy Museum, The Crime and Punishment Museum and the Newseum, all of which have great tours and programs, depending on availability.

Chances are you won't get to see the President on your visit, unless you head to Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum, where you can pose with the "POTUS" in a reproduction of the Oval Office to impress your friends.

*Insider Tip: The Reagan Building has an affordable food court and nice bathrooms, a bonus when you are spending the day sightseeing. It does close earlier on weekends; 6 p.m. on Saturday; 5 p.m. on Sunday.*

## Other Sites to See

A trip to D.C. isn't complete without a stop at Mount Vernon, home of George Washington. Down the Potomac from National Harbor, this historic house is accessible by shuttle or cab and is worth the trip. Be sure to pick up some corn meal from George's own Grist Mill (along with Martha's free cornbread recipe) for a great souvenir. Don't miss the visitor's center and the wonderful film that recreates the crossing of the Delaware complete with snow!

Pay tribute to our fallen heroes with a tour of Arlington National Cemetery, which takes you to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and JFK's final resting place.

Georgetown is the Rodeo Drive of Washington, and it's here that you will find some of the swankiest shops and bistros. Reality TV show fans can visit the home of the TLC show DC Cupcakes and get their own taste of the sweet treats. With more than 100 flavors to choose from, don't be surprised to find a long line! ❖