

GETTING AROUND WASHINGTON, D.C.

Transportation Options

Driving in Washington can be a headache. Traffic is usually congested, and the road layout is designed for frustration, with one-way streets popping up at just the wrong moment. Once you've reached your destination, the real challenge begins: Washington may be the most difficult city in America to find a place to park. All of which means, if you have a car, you'd be wise to leave it at your hotel and use public-transit whenever possible.

Metro & Bus: The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority operates a network of subway lines (known locally as the metro) and bus routes throughout D.C. Most popular tourist attractions are near metro stops, though certain areas are only accessible by bus, most notably Georgetown and Adams-Morgan.


Metro fares depend on the distance traveled. Fares range from \$1.35 to \$3.90 during morning and evening rush hour and after 2 AM, and from \$1.35 to \$2.35 at all other times. Bus fares are \$1.25 (exact change only) for regular routes, and \$3 for express routes. Transfers between buses are free; transfers from the metro to the bus take 90¢ cents off your bus fare. One-day passes are available for \$3 on buses and \$6.50 on the metro.

For fare information, route maps, and trip planning help, visit www.wmata.com or call 202/637-7000.

Taxi: Taxicabs are abundant throughout the District. With more than 6,000 servicing the city, DC has one of the highest ratios of taxis per person. DC has begun to convert all cabs in the District to a metered system just like every other city in the USA.

Getting Your Bearings

Four Quadrants: The address system in D.C. takes some getting used to. The city is divided into the four quadrants of a compass (NW, NE, SE, SW), with the U.S. Capitol at the center. Because the Capitol doesn't sit in the exact center of the city (the Washington Monument does), Northwest is the largest quadrant. Northwest also has most of the important landmarks, although Northeast and Southwest have their fair share. The boundaries are



North Capitol Street, East Capitol Street, South Capitol Street, and the National Mall. That's where street addresses start and climb as you move up the numbers and alphabet.

Numbered Streets & Lettered Streets: Within each quadrant, numbered streets run north to south, and lettered streets run east to west (the letter J was omitted to avoid confusion with the letter I). The streets form a fairly simple grid--for instance, 900 G Street NW is the intersection of 9th and G streets in the northwest quadrant of the city. Likewise, if you count the letters of the alphabet, skipping J, you can get a good sense of the location of an address on a numbered street. For instance, 1600 16th Street NW is close to Q Street, Q being the 16th letter of the alphabet if you skip J.

Avenues on the Diagonal: As if all this weren't confusing enough, Major Pierre L'Enfant, the Frenchman who originally designed the city, threw in diagonal avenues recalling those of Paris. Most of D.C.'s avenues are named after U.S. states. You can find addresses on avenues the same way you find those on numbered streets, so 1200 Connecticut Avenue NW is close to M Street, because M is the 12th letter of the alphabet when you skip J.