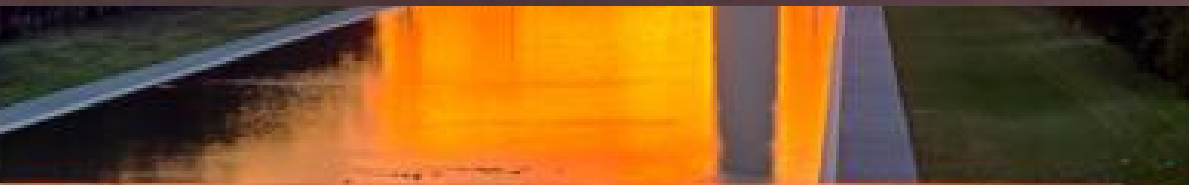


Weekend in DC

A Perfect 48 Hours in the Capital



By Ray Collins



The Insider's Guide to Doing Washington,
DC, in a Weekend!

There are few cities—or districts—where you can visit and never need to rent a car. Nashville, Las Vegas...and Washington, DC.

Here are some tips to seeing our nation's capital in a weekend:

- *Line up a hotel around Capitol Hill and/or the Smithsonians. There are plenty of choices. You'll have a centralized base of operations.

- *Fly into Ronald Reagan National Airport and take the Metro within blocks of your hotel. The fare is only about \$2 and it is one of the easiest and safest subway systems in the country.

- *If you arrive before your room is ready, let the hotel check your luggage—and then head out for some amazing sightseeing.

- *Ask your Congressperson's office to get you on a tour of the Capitol. We made the request a few weeks out and that wasn't enough. They recommend three MONTHS. White House is even more difficult.

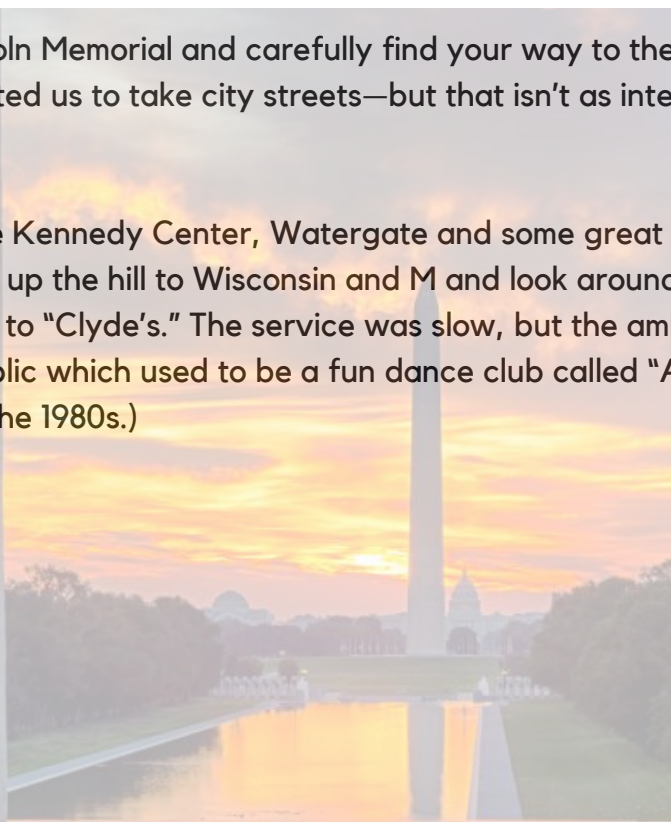
- *There are many Smithsonians from which to choose. We picked American History and immersed ourselves in our nation's amazing path to present day. If you're going to see one, this is the one.

- *You can get to the top of the Washington Monument by getting a reservation with the park service. This was a bucket list item delayed by recurring construction. Great photo ops!

- *The Lincoln Memorial is a good place to sit and re-group, take pictures of the Reflecting Pool in front you as well as the Capitol dome peeking around the Washington Monument.

Now, walk behind the Lincoln Memorial and carefully find your way to the trail along the Potomac. This took some effort. GPS wanted us to take city streets—but that isn't as interesting as this path which leads to Georgetown.

On the way, we passed the Kennedy Center, Watergate and some great vistas overlooking the water. Once in Georgetown, head up the hill to Wisconsin and M and look around! Plenty of choices for a cold drink. We went a block left to "Clyde's." The service was slow, but the ambiance made up for it. (We also walked by a Banana Republic which used to be a fun dance club called "Annie's" during my semester interning on Capitol Hill in the 1980s.)





This is your time to walk toward Pennsylvania Avenue and in front of the White House. Take pictures, listen to protesters and head to dinner at a place called The Hamilton. (14th and F Streets. It's a former department store that now is a restaurant the size of a city block. Eat at the bar and chat with the bartender.)

We did all the above on the first day. We treated ourselves the next day to a Big Bus double-decker tour of DC. There are a variety of ticket options available. They have a recorded tour narration, and you can jump off—and back on. Nice way to see the rest of the spots you didn't see the day before. (www.bigbustours.com or check out their app.)

Get going! You can sleep when you get home.

Ray Collins is a travel writer, former award-winning TV news anchor and now in the top 2% of Realtors in the Sarasota area. www.raycollins.cbintouch.com