

# The National Mall and Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park

The National Mall & Memorial Parks in Washington, D.C., contain some of the oldest protected park lands in the country. Areas provide visitors with ample opportunities to commemorate presidential legacies; honor the courage and sacrifice of war veterans; and celebrate the U.S. commitment to freedom and equality.

## THE NATIONAL MALL

The National Mall was part of Pierre L'Enfant's 1791 plan for the District of Columbia. Stretching nearly 2 miles from the steps of the United States Capitol to the Lincoln Memorial, and from the Jefferson Memorial north to Constitution Avenue, it is home to nationally recognized memorials to presidents, wars, and veterans, as well as lesser known memorials to American heroes. The National Mall also boasts beautiful open spaces such as the Tidal Basin, which is surrounded by thousands of cherry trees. Places on the National Mall include the following:

- **The Washington Monument** — The Washington Monument is the most prominent, as well as one of the older, attractions in Washington, D.C. Shaped like an Egyptian obelisk, the marble monument is 555 feet 5.6 inches high and can be seen from 30 to 40 miles in clear weather.
- **Lincoln Memorial** — The Lincoln Memorial honors the Great Emancipator and preserver of the nation during the Civil War. The statue of Abraham Lincoln is 19 feet high. The memorial marks the western end of the National Mall, and the Reflecting Pool in front of the memorial is over 2,000 feet long.
- **Thomas Jefferson Memorial** — The circular domed design of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial is based on the Pantheon in Rome, which Jefferson believed to be a perfect model of a circular building and a style that Jefferson himself used for Monticello and the University of Virginia.
- **Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial** — The Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial is divided into four outdoor galleries, or rooms, one for each of FDR's terms in office. Quotations from FDR are carved into the granite walls. Water cascades and quiet pools are present throughout. Each room conveys in its own way the spirit of this great man.
- **World War II Memorial** — The memorial commemorates the sacrifice and celebrates the victory of the World War II generation. The design balances classical and modernist styles of architecture, harmonizes with its natural and cultural surroundings, and connects the legacy of the American Revolution and the American Civil War with the great crusade to rid the world of fascism.
- **Korean War Veterans Memorial** — This memorial commemorates the “Forgotten War of 1950 to 1953.” Nineteen stainless steel sculptures stand silently under the watchful eye of a sea of faces on a granite wall. Carved into a granite wall at the high point of the memorial are the words “Freedom is not Free.”
- **Vietnam Veterans Memorial** — The Vietnam Veterans Memorial is an elegantly simple design that in the words of Maya Lin, the designer, “allows everyone to respond and remember.” *The Three Servicemen* and the *Vietnam Women's Memorial* were added later.
- **Ulysses S. Grant Memorial** — Located near the Capitol Reflecting Pool at the east end of the National Mall, the memorial to President Ulysses S. Grant represents the Union victory during the Civil War. The memorial is the largest equestrian statue grouping in Washington, D.C. The statue of Grant on his favorite horse, Cincinnati, sits on a marble pedestal 22 feet high, with sculptures on either side.
- **George Mason Memorial** — The memorial honors the Virginia patriot and colleague of Washington, Jefferson, and Madison. Mason authored in 1776 the Virginia Declaration of Rights, which inspired Thomas Jefferson as he drafted the Declaration of Independence and which served as the basis for the Bill of Rights in the U.S. Constitution, as well as the French Declaration of the Rights of Man.
- **Constitution Gardens** — Constitution Gardens serves as an oasis within the bustling city for visitors, residents, and wildlife. A memorial island in the middle of an artificial lake has stones bearing the names and signatures of the 56 men who signed the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776.

Other sites of interest on the National Mall include memorials to inventor John Ericsson and naval hero John Paul Jones, the D.C. War Memorial (World War I), the Jefferson Pier Marker (the first meridian of the United States), the First Air Mail Flight marker (occurred on May 18, 1918), sculptures west of the Lincoln Memorial known as the *Arts of Peace* and the *Arts of War*, the Lock Keeper's House (dating from when Constitution Avenue was a canal), the German-American Friendship Garden, and the Japanese Pagoda and Lantern (gifts from Japan).

## PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK

Pennsylvania Avenue is the national ceremonial avenue designed to physically connect the legislative and executive branches of government. Integral to Pierre L'Enfant's plan for Washington, D.C., Pennsylvania Avenue offers vistas of the United States Capitol and includes various memorial park areas — the U.S. Navy Memorial, Freedom Plaza (recognizing the L'Enfant plan), John Marshall Park (honoring the Chief Justice of the United States), and Pershing Park (commemorating the World War I general). Other memorials include those to Benjamin Franklin, Franklin Roosevelt, philanthropist Andrew Mellon, revolutionary war hero Casimir (Kazimierz) Pulaski, Civil War Generals George Meade and Winfield Hancock, the Grand Army of the Republic, and the Temperance movement.