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Washington DC / BOOKS



Books to Read Before You Visit Washington, D.C.



Kirsten Ballard 
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People in Washington, D.C. love to read. The city is home to the largest library in the United States—the Library of Congress—and the District has over 25 public libraries and countless independent bookstores. Before your visit, pick up one of these amazing books.

EDIT ARTICLE

Guidebooks



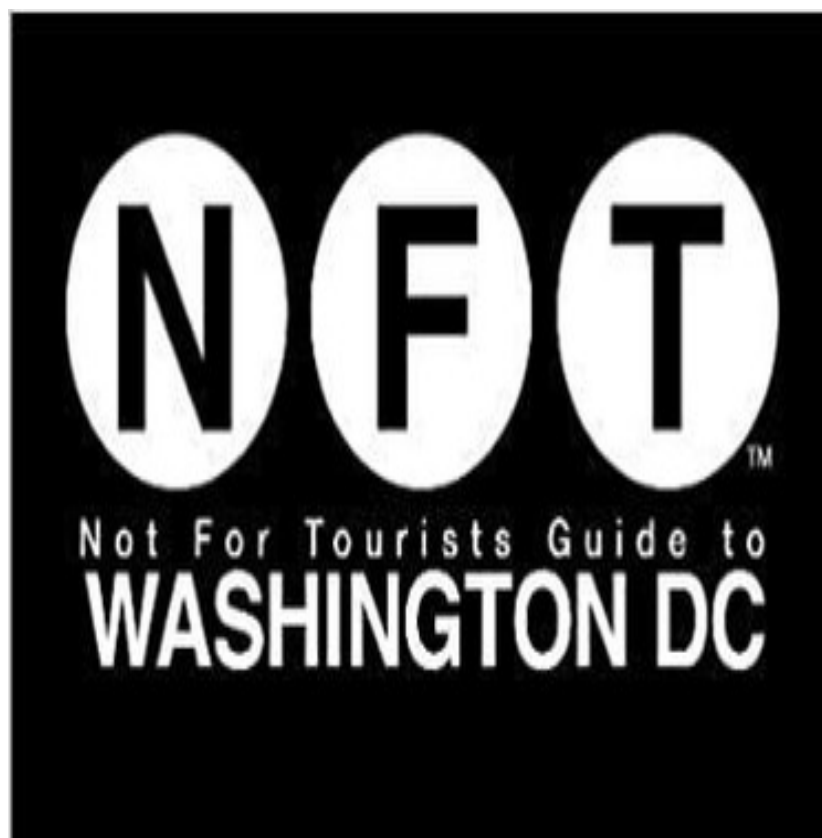
[to the Smithsonian](#), which is about the 142 million artifacts in the Smithsonian collection. Get a jump start on planning which museums to visit and learning about the background of some of D.C.'s most famous exhibits.

BUY NOW

Not For Tourists Guide to Washington, D.C.

After you're done learning about all of the museums and tourist attractions in the Smithsonian Guide, dig into the latest edition of the [Not For Tourists Guide to D.C.](#) This easy-to-follow book breaks Washington, D.C. down by [neighborhood](#) and highlights cultural attractions you won't find on the National Mall.

BUY NOW





The Not For Tourists Guide to Washington, D.C. | © Not For Tourists

For the Romantic

The Hopefuls

Jennifer Close brilliantly spins the tale of a young couple's move to D.C. in [The Hopefuls](#). The husband falls seamlessly into the hustle and bustle of politics, but the wife struggles with fitting in. It touches on how D.C. works, the city, and social life of a transplant in a humorous and witty way. Close's husband worked on the Obama campaign, and she uses her personal experience to add realism to this novel. It will make you appreciate the city in a whole new way.





The Hopefuls by Jennifer Close | © Vintage

Heartburn

Nora Ephron (of [When Harry Met Sally](#) fame) wrote [Heartburn](#), which is loosely autobiographical and about the collapse of a marriage. Ephron was married to Carl Bernstein (of [All the President's Men](#) fame) but left him over his wandering eye. She channels that experience into this laugh-out-loud novel, complete with delicious recipes you can replicate at home.



White Houses

Amy Bloom rewrites history with this gripping account of an affair between First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and Lorena Hickok. [White Houses](#) is a mix of fact and fiction, bringing intrigue to history. Hickok did [live in the White House](#) and was especially close to Roosevelt—often referred to as “First Friend.” Bloom creates a romantic and captivating tale of an illicit affair.





White Houses by Amy Bloom | © Random House

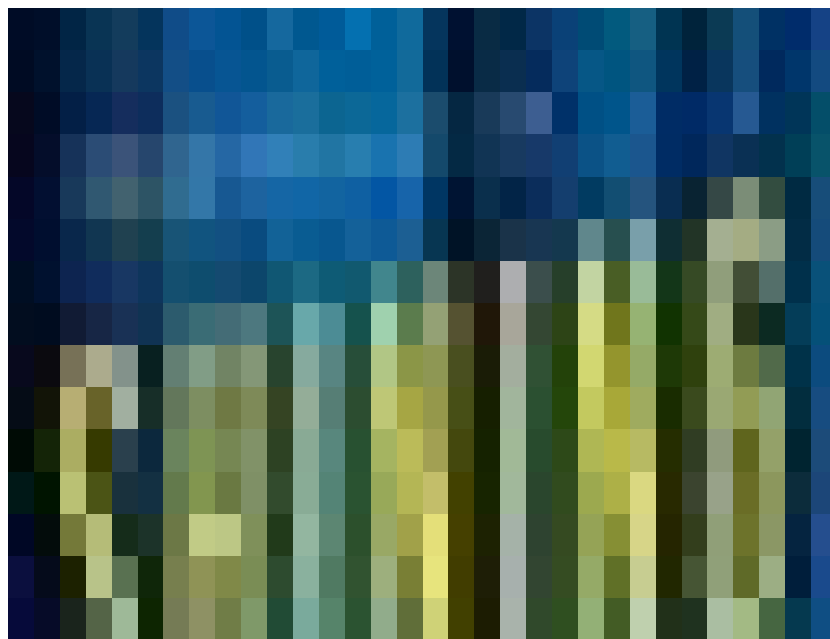
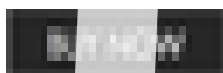


You'll stay up late reading this suspenseful novel involving a string of murders in Washington, D.C. George Pelecanos combines veteran cops and a disgraced police officer to try to solve a cold case that has suddenly gotten very hot again. The author mixes twists and turns with police procedure. *The Night Gardener* will have you guessing until the end.



Shining City

If you like the show *Scandal*, you'll love Tom Rosenstiel's *Shining City*. It follows "fixer" Peter Rena as he and his partner are hired by the *White House* to vet the Supreme Court Justice nominee. Things go awry with murders, sneaky senators, and journalists. It is a perfect novel of political ambition and action.





Shining City by Tom Rosenstiel | © HarperCollins Publishers

All the President's Men

All the President's Men dives into the Watergate Scandal. Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, both reporters at *The Washington Post* in the age of Nixon's presidency, wrote this true story. They share the insider scoop of their Pulitzer Prize-winning



history and journalism.





All the President's Men | © Simon & Schuster

For the Foodie

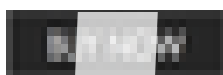
The Cupcake Diaries

Go behind the scenes and into the kitchen of [Georgetown Cupcake](#). Part cookbook, part memoir, [this book](#) tells about how sisters Katherine Kallinis Berman and Sophie Kallinis LaMontagne went from jobs in fashion and finance to stars of TLC's *DC Cupcake*. Try your own takes on their cakes, and when you get to D.C., you can try the real deal.



The White House Chef: Eleven Years, Two Presidents, One Kitchen

In this [tell-all book](#), Chef Walter Scheib talks about his time in the Clinton and Bush White House. He changed the traditional French fare into modern, fresh American cooking. This memoir blends history, like serving Nelson Mandela during the Clinton Administration, with delightful food writing and will leave you hungry for more.





The White House Chef: Eleven Years, Two Presidents, One Kitchen by Walter
Scheib and Andrew Friedman | © Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

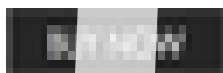


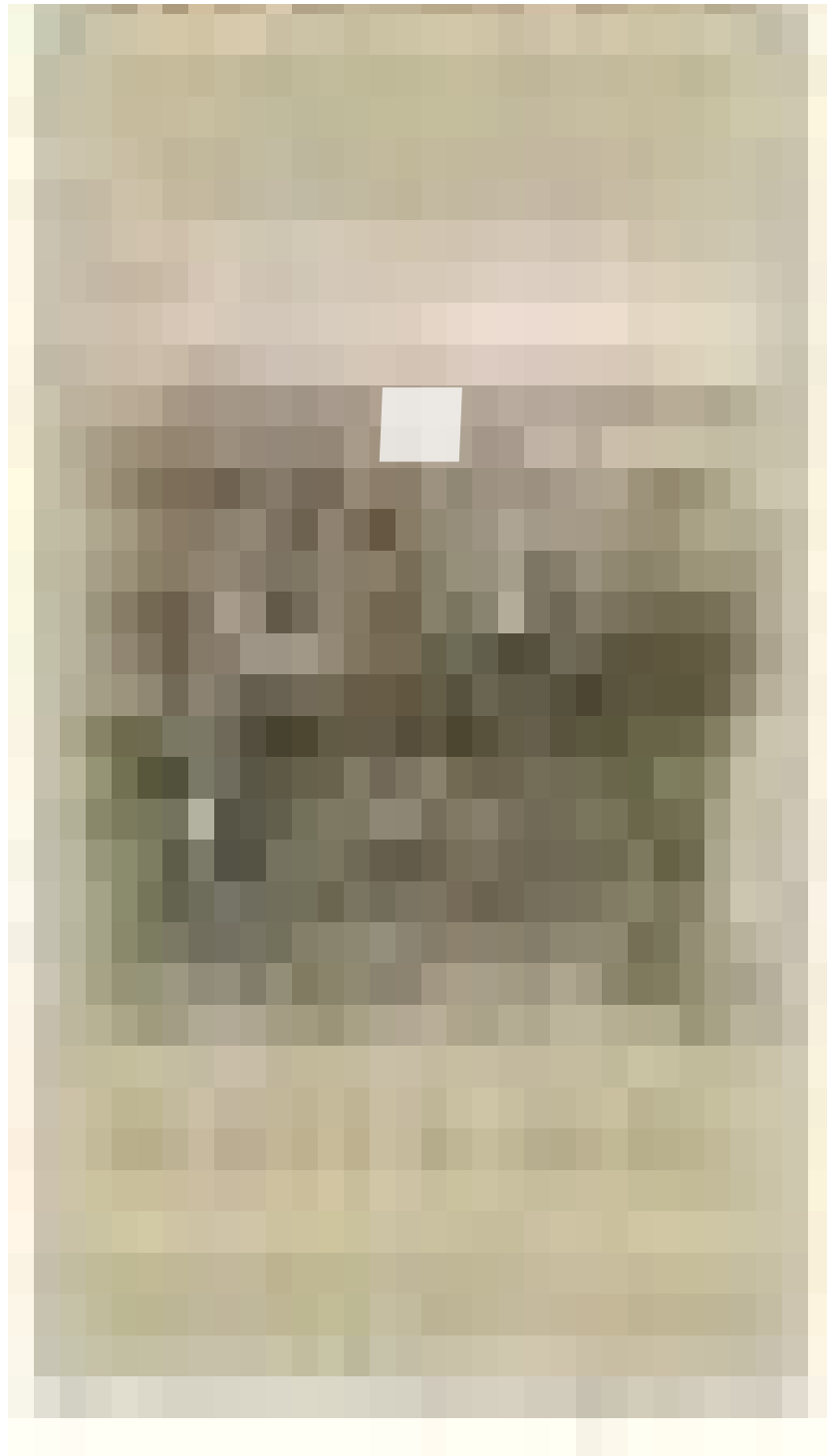
This [spooky book](#) explores the most popular ghost stories around D.C. Author and local tour guide Tim Krepp takes you through the Capitol exploring history's unexplained happenings and hauntings. Learn about the [Demon Cat](#) of the Capitol and the spirits guarding the Congressional Cemetery, along with some fascinating historical tidbits of information.



Grand Avenues: The Story of Pierre Charles L'Enfant, the French Visionary Who Designed Washington, D.C.

Discover the [little-known backstory](#) of Pierre L'Enfant, architect and designer of Washington, D.C. The young artistic genius only lasted 11 months on the job, but his designs and plan for D.C. are still in use today. This book will give you a new perspective on the city and the forgotten man behind it.





Grand Avenues by Scott W. Berg | © Vintage





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