

# Vacations at Home

Bill H. Cheng

Vacations at Home are defined as leisure time away from work devoted to pleasure and recreation without leaving town. Just like a tourist in town on vacation, you could visit a flowering garden, go hiking in a park, and dine out in a four-star restaurant every night. If you are a resident of Washington DC area, you could explore and rediscover the beauty and grandeur of the Nation's Capital and its suburbs within a few hours in the comfort of air-conditioning cars. You might revisit the reasons why you chose to move to Washington DC years ago and reminisce what a great place it has been to build your career and raise a family. Vacations at Home offer a relaxed setting to socialize and improve communications with friends and family you care.

In recent years, Washington DC has become a desirable home base for an increasing numbers of retirees and their families. After settling down here for many years, they find it even harder to leave when their children also find good jobs in the proximity of the Federal Government. This article serves as a quick reference to Vacations at Home for the benefits of residents in the Washington DC area. Our recommendations include physical and cultural activities that were selected based on two criteria:

- Driving within two hours
- Best value

These recommendations aim at enhancing your quality of life without expensive airline tickets and hotel bills although dining out in four-star restaurants could cost you arm and leg. Recommendations are listed for eleven (11) categories below to indicate places to go and things to do:

- (1) **Gardens and Flower**
- (2) **Hiking and Biking**
- (3) **Fresh Fruits**
- (4) **Birding**
- (5) **Museum/Library**
- (6) **Church/Cathedral**
- (7) **Movies**
- (8) **Afternoon Tea**
- (9) **Potomac River Cruise**
- (10) **Dining Out**
- (11) **Weekend Get Away**

Readers are welcome to check out recommended places on weekdays and weekends, depending on your mood and occasion. These activities offer more insights into how local people really live and require a slower pace than guided tours available commercially.

Our recommendations are largely based on subjective opinions and personal experiences as residents in Montgomery County, MD during the last 30 years. To expand this partial list, we definitely need to incorporate more entries from Virginia and DC into this list and provide updates every year. Readers are encouraged to send your feedback or suggestions to [billhcheng@yahoo.com](mailto:billhcheng@yahoo.com). This article is considered as a “stone” we throw out to attract “jades” in return.

## (1) Gardens and Flowers

PLACE	ADDRESS/ WEBSIT	PHONE	COMMENTS
Brookside Gardens	1800 Glenallan Ave. Wheaton, MD 20902 <a href="http://www.brooksidegardens.org">www.brooksidegardens.org</a>	301- 962-1400	Rose Apr & May. Dahlias Sep & Oct. Christmas lights Dec
Homestead Gardens	743 W. Central Ave. Davidsonville, MD 21035 <a href="http://www.homesteadgardens.com">www.homesteadgardens.com</a>	410- 798-5000	Crape myrtle festival in Jul Visit Llamas barn 10 AM – 3 PM
Kenwood Neighborhood	5400 River Road Chevy Chase, MD		Cherry Blossom walking tour Mar & Apr
Kenilworth Park & Aquatic Gardens	1900 Anacostia Drive, SE, Washington, DC 20020 <a href="http://www.nps.gov/keaq/">www.nps.gov/keaq/</a>	202- 426-6905	Lotus in Jul
Lilypons Water Gardens	6800 Lily Pons Road Adamstown, MD 21710 <a href="http://Lilypons.com">Lilypons.com</a>	800- 999-5459	Water Lily in Apr & May. Lotus in Jul.
US National Arboretum	3501 New York Avenue, NE, Wash. DC <a href="http://www.usna.usda.gov/">www.usna.usda.gov/</a>	202- 245-2726	Spring, Summer & Fall
Tidal Basin Jefferson Memorial, Roosevelt Memorial	Independence Ave., Wash. DC		Cherry Blossom festival Late Mar – Early Apr. <a href="http://www.nationalcherryblossomfestival.org/">www.nationalcherryblossomfestival.org/</a>
U.S. Botanic Gardens	245 First Street, SW Wash, DC 20024 <a href="http://www.usbg.gov">www.usbg.gov</a>	202- 225-8333	Christmas decorations Nov-Dec.

## (2) Hiking / Biking

PLACE	ADDRESS/ WEBSIT	PHONE	COMMENTS
Capital Crescent Trail	Bethesda Ave. Bethesda, MD <a href="http://www.cctrail.org/">www.cctrail.org/</a>		Hiker-biker trail from Silver Spring, Bethesda to Georgetown. All Year Around
Cunningham Falls State Park	Thurmont, MD 21788 <a href="http://www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/western/cunninghamfalls.html">www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/western/cunninghamfalls.html</a>	301- 271-7574	Hiking and fall foliage around the 78-foot cascading waterfall near Camp David, MD

PLACE	ADDRESS/ WEBSIT	PHONE	COMMENTS
			Sep & Oct
Great Falls National Park, MD	11710 MacArthur Blvd Potomac, MD 20854 <a href="http://www.nps.gov/grfa/">www.nps.gov/grfa/</a>	301-767-3714	Hiking and birding Mar – Nov
Great Falls National Park, VA	9200 Old Dominion Dr. McLean, VA <a href="http://www.nps.gov/grfa/">www.nps.gov/grfa/</a>	703-285-2965	Hiking and birding Mar – Nov.
Lake Needwood	15700 Needwood Lake Circle Rockville MD 20850 <a href="http://montgomeryparks.com">montgomeryparks.com</a>	301-762-9500	Hiking trails around the lake and connecting with Rock Creek Parkway
National Zoo	3001 Connecticut Ave NW Washington, DC 20008 <a href="http://nationalzoo.si.edu">nationalzoo.si.edu</a>	202-633.4800	Admission is always FREE! See Tai Shan, the Zoo's panda cub. Accessible by Metro
Sugarloaf Mountain	7901 Comus Road Dickerson, MD 20842 <a href="http://www.sugarloafmd.com/">www.sugarloafmd.com/</a>	301-869-7846	Hiking in Spring and Fall
Theodore Roosevelt Island	George Washington Memorial Parkway, VA <a href="http://www.nps.gov/this/">www.nps.gov/this/</a>	703-289-2500	Stroll in the park All Year Around
C&O Canal Towpath Bike/Hike	<a href="http://www.bikewashington.org/canal/index.php">http://www.bikewashington.org/canal/index.php</a>		The 184.5 mile long Chesapeake & Ohio Canal is located along the north bank of the Potomac River, starting in Washington, DC and ending in Cumberland, MD.
The Mount Vernon Trail - Bike/Hike	<a href="http://www.bikewashington.org/trails/vernon/index.php">www.bikewashington.org/trails/vernon/index.php</a>  <a href="http://www.nps.gov/archive/gwmp/mv_tmap.html">www.nps.gov/archive/gwmp/mv_tmap.html</a>		Located just across the river from Downtown Washington D.C. is a great multi-use recreation trail. Nearly 18 miles long, the Mount Vernon Trail follows the Potomac's Virginia shoreline from Theodore Roosevelt Island (near Rosslyn, Va) to George Washington's Estate located at Mount Vernon.
The Rock Creek Trail - Bike/Hike	<a href="http://bikewashington.org/trails/rockcreek/md.htm">http://bikewashington.org/trails/rockcreek/md.htm</a>  <a href="http://bikewashington.org/trails/rockcreek/dc.htm">http://bikewashington.org/trails/rockcreek/dc.htm</a>		Maryland's 14 mile long Rock Creek Trail is a collection of paved multi-use paths through southern Montgomery County.

PLACE	ADDRESS/ WEBSIT	PHONE	COMMENTS
	<a href="http://www.montgomeryparks.org/PPSD/ParkTrails/trails_MAPS/rock_creek.shtm">http://www.montgomeryparks.org/PPSD/ParkTrails/trails_MAPS/rock_creek.shtm</a>		The northern trail head is located in Lake Needwood Regional Park, just a few miles east of downtown Rockville. The trail ends at the Washington DC. border, where Beach Drive enters the District.

### (3) Fresh Fruits

PLACE	ADDRESS/ WEBSIT	PHONE	COMMENTS
Butler Orchard	22200 Davis Mill Rd Germantown, MD 20876 <a href="http://www.butlersorchard.com/">www.butlersorchard.com/</a>	301-972-3299	Pick your own fruits strawberry in May & Jun
Homestead Farm	15600 Sugarland Road, Poolesville, MD 20837 <a href="http://www.homestead-farm.net">www.homestead-farm.net</a>	301-977-3761	Pick your own apples In Sep and Oct
Kingsbury Orchard	19415 Peach Tree Road Dickerson, MD Off Rt. 28 West	301-972-8755	Buy White Lady peaches developed in CA In Jul & Aug

### (4) Birding

PLACE	ADDRESS/ WEBSIT	PHONE	COMMENTS
Audubon Naturalist Society	8940 Johns Mill Road Chevy Chase, MD <a href="http://www.audubonnaturalist.org/">www.audubonnaturalist.org/</a>	301-652-3606	Guided tour at 8AM on Saturdays rain or shine
TPC Club at Avenel	10000 Oakley Drive Potomac, MD 20854 <a href="http://www.tpcatavenel.com/">www.tpcatavenel.com/</a>	301-469-3700	Birding on Mondays when the clubhouse is closed for business.

### (5) Museum/Library

PLACE	ADDRESS/ WEBSIT	PHONE	COMMENTS
National Air and Space Museum, National Mall	6 <sup>th</sup> and Independence Ave, Wash. DC 20560 <a href="http://www.nasm.si.edu/">www.nasm.si.edu/</a>	202-633-1000	Museum. All Year Around
National Air and Space Museum, Udvar-Hazy Center	14390 Air and Space Museum Parkway Chantilly, VA 20151 <a href="http://www.nasm.si.edu/">www.nasm.si.edu/</a>	202-633-1000	Museum. All Year Around

Library of Congress	101 Independence Ave SE, Wash. DC 20540 www.loc.gov	202- 707-9956	Library. All Year Around
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## (6) Church/Cathedral

PLACE	ADDRESS/ WEBSIT	PHONE	COMMENTS
Mormon Temple of Wash	9900 Stoneybrook Dr Kensington, MD 20895 www.ldschurchtemples.com/washington/	301- 587-0144	Architecture. Christmas lights and decorations December
Washington National Cathedral	3101 Wisconsin Ave. NW Washington, DC 20016	202- 537-6200	Architecture. Took 100 years to build. Sunday Parking is Free

## (7) Movies

PLACE	ADDRESS/ WEBSIT	PHONE	COMMENTS
AMC Theaters	11301 Rockville Pike White Flint Mall Kensington, MD 20895	202- 333-3456	Free movies on the third Wednesday of each month at 930AM
Bethesda Row Cinema	7235 Woodmont Ave Bethesda, MD 20814	301- 652-7273	Specialize in award-winning foreign films.
P&G Montgomery Mall Cinemas	Westfield Mall 7101 Democracy Blvd., Bethesda, MD 20817	301- 767-9555	Free movies on the first Wednesday of each month at 930AM

## (8) Afternoon Tea

PLACE	ADDRESS/ WEBSIT	PHONE	COMMENTS
Strathmore Tea Room	The Mansion at Strathmore 10701 Rockville Pike North Bethesda, MD 20852 www.strathmore.org	301- 581-5108	Tue and Wed 1 PM-3 PM \$18. Musicians perform in the background.

## (9) Potomac River Cruise

PLACE	ADDRESS/ WEBSIT	PHONE	COMMENTS
Capitol River Cruises	Washington Harbor 31st & K Streets, NW, Washington, DC	301- 460-7447	A 45-minute historical narrative sightseeing tour of Washington, DC aboard a small river boat. \$12

## (10) Dining Out

PLACE	ADDRESS/ WEBSIT	PHONE	COMMENTS
<b>Chinese Restaurant</b>			
A & J Restaurant 半畝園	1319 Rockville Pike # C Rockville, MD 20852	301- 251-7878	*** Northern dim sum
Bob's Noodles 台菜66	305 North Washington Street Rockville, MD 20850	301- 315-6668	***Taiwanese style food
China Jade 貴妃樓 Chinese Restaurant	16805 Crabbs Branch Way Rockville, MD 29855	301- 963-1570	*** Cantonese and Sichuan Styles food
Chopstix 家香園	820 Muddy Branch Rd Gaithersburg, MD 20878	301- 330-8886	*** Offer party room with a huge dining table for 16.
Fortune Star Buffet 滿天星	5541 Nicholson Lane Rockville, MD 20852	301- 468-1168	*** Try "Cook to your order" dishes
Full Key Restaurant 富記	2227 University Blvd West Wheaton, MD 20902	301- 933-8388	*** Offer Hong Kong style food. Rated among the top 100 cheap eat restaurants by Washingtonian. 淨雲吞
Gui Lin 恆隆達 Chinese Restaurant	10054 Darnestown Road Rockville, MD 20850	301- 424-2888	*** Order Cantonese style soups
Harvest Moon 會賓樓 Restaurant & Lounge	7260 Arlington Blvd Falls Church, VA 22042	703- 573-6000	*** Offer banquet facility for 300 people
Hunan Champion Restaurant 華西街	6124 Arlington Blvd Falls Church, VA 22044	703- 533-1114	*** Taiwanese style food
Hunan Palace 福順樓	9011 Gaither Rd Gaithersburg, MD 20877	301- 977-8600	*** Offer party room with three tables
Hunan Manor 富友	7091 Deepage Drive Columbia, MD 21045	410- 381-1134	***炸茄子
Hunan Manor 富友	15504 Old Columbia Pike, Burtonsville, MD 20866	301- 476-9638	***炸茄子
Mandarin Wok 美味香	5268-O Nicholson Lane Kensington, MD 20895	301- 816-1662	*** Cantonese food
Ma Ma Wok 龍泉小館	595 Hungerford Dr. Rockville, MD 20850	301- 309-6642	*** Taiwanese cuisine and sushi
Ma Ma Wok 龍泉小館	9900 Key West Ave North Potomac, MD 20850	301- 838-0380	*** Offers several round tables
Mark's Duck House 大旺記	6184-A Arlington Blvd Falls Church, VA 22044	703- 532-2125	*** Hong Kong style Dim Sum. 乳豬
Michaels's Noodles 小金華	10038 Darnestown Rd Rockville, MD 20850	301- 738-0370	*** Mr. Ho was the new chef in 2007.
Pacifica Café 桃源	621 Center Point Way Gaithersburg, MD 20878	301- 519-1488	*** Chefs are from Taiwan. 八寶鴨
PJ's Rice Bistro 華豐	Wheaton Mall Plaza 11160 Veirs Mill Rd. #164	301- 933-8668	*** Cantonese seafood. Offer lunch specials 7 days a

PLACE	ADDRESS/ WEBSIT	PHONE	COMMENTS
	Wheaton, MD 20902 www.pjricebistro.com		week.
Seven Seas 海珍樓	1776 E. Jefferson St Rockville, MD 20852 www.sevensesrestaurant.com	301-770-5020	*** Seafood banquet
Silver Fountain Restaurant 怡和	13533 Connecticut Ave Wheaton, MD 20906	301-460-1200	*** Cantonese food Dim Sum
Shanghai Village 味香村	4929 Bethesda Avenue Bethesda, MD 20814	301-654-7787	*** Rated the best Chinese restaurant in Bethesda in 2008. Peking Duck \$30
South East Asia Corner 一定好	2972 Gallows Road Falls Church, VA 22042	703-560-6868	*** All you can eat Asian Buffet
Tai Shan Asian 大富貴	19204 Montgomery Village Ave., Gaithersburg, MD	301-963-8088	***
Tyson Buffet and Restaurant 泰山聚	5550 Randolph Rd Rockville, MD 20852	301-770-5666	*** Grand opening in June 2007
<b>Japanese Restaurant</b>			
Raku-Asian Dining & Sushi Bar	7240 Woodmont Ave Bethesda, MD 20814	301-718-8680	*** Rated best Asian restaurant in Bethesda in 2008. Brazilian whole fish
Makoto	4822 MacArthur Blvd NW Wash DC 20007	202-298-6866	*** Expensive authentic Japanese food.
Matuba Japanese Restaurant	4918 Cordell Ave Bethesda, MD 20814	301-652-7449	*** Sushi specials on Mondays
Sushi King Japanese Restaurant	6490 Dobbin Rd Columbia, MD 21045	410-997-1269	
Toda I Restaurant	Fair Oaks Shopping Center 11717L Fair Oaks Mall Fairfax, VA 22033 www.todai.com	703-273-0120	*** Japanese Sushi & Seafood Buffet
Yuraku Japanese Restaurant	19773 Frederick Rd Germantown, MD 20876	301-515-7448	
<b>Korean Restaurant</b>			
Arirang Korean Restaurant	1326 E. Gude Dr Rockville, MD 20850	301-279-0023	*** Korean food
Il Mee Buffet Restaurant	7031-5A Little River Turnpike Annandale, VA 22003	703-642-2100	*** Seafood buffet
Woo Lae Oak	1500 South Joyce Street Arlington, VA 22202	703-521-3706	*** Tables with grills. Beef

PLACE	ADDRESS/ WEBSIT	PHONE	COMMENTS
	kimyongim@hotmail.com		
<b>Italian Restaurant</b>			
Sergio's Ristorante Italiano	8727 Colesville Road Silver Spring, MD 20910	301-585-1040	*** Located "In the Hilton Hotel". Lamb chops. Close on Sundays
Trattoria Sorrento	4930 Cordell Ave Bethesda, MD	301-718-0344	*** Opera night live on the first Sunday of each month Serve three course meals at \$50.

<b>French Restaurant</b>			
L'Auberge Chez Francois	332 Springvale Road Great Falls, VA 22066	703-759-3800	**** A French Country Inn. Reservation is a must.
La Ferme Restaurant	7101 Brookville Rd Chevy Chase, MD 20815 www.lafermerestaurant.com/	301-986-5255	*** Five course dinner.
<b>American Restaurant</b>			
Bethesda Bagels	4819 Bethesda Ave, Bethesda, MD 20814	301-652-8990	*** Popular place for Sunday morning breakfast
Bethesda Crab House	4958 Bethesda Ave Bethesda, MD 20814	301-652-3382	*** Call Mr. Lee to reserve large crabs ahead of time.
Café Dulexe	4910 Elm St Bethesda, MD 20814	301-656-3131	*** Family restaurant. Mussels. Wine half price on Monday night.
Clyde's	5441 Wisconsin Ave Chevy Chase, MD 20815	301-951-9600	*** American Seafood
Dave and Buster	White Flint Mall, MD www.daveandbusters.com/	301-230-5151	*** Video games and billiards after meals
Five Guys	4829 Bethesda Avenue, Bethesda, MD 20814 www.fiveguys.com/	301-657-0007	*** Burgers and fries
Gifford Ice Cream	7237 Woodmont Ave Bethesda, MD 20814	301-907-3436	*** Ice cream menu changes monthly
O'Donnell's Seafood Restaurant	311 Kentland Blvd Gaithersburg, MD 20878	301-519-1650	*** Crab cakes and lobsters
Persimmon	7003 Wisconsin Ave Bethesda, MD 20815 damian@persimmonrestaurant.com	301-654-9860	**** American Bistro. Rated best overall restaurant in Bethesda in 2008.
Ruth's Chris Steak House	7315 Wisconsin Ave Bethesda, MD 20814 www.ruthschris.com	301-652-7877	*** Rated best Steak House in Bethesda



PLACE	ADDRESS/ WEBSIT	PHONE	COMMENTS
Timbuktu Restaurant & Lounge	1726 Dorsey Road Hanover, MD 21076 www.timbukturestaurant.com	410-796-0733	*** Crab cakes

Miscellaneous Restaurant			
Burma Road 金谷	617 S. Frederick Ave Gaithersburg, MD 20877	301-963-1429	*** Authentic Burmese & Asian cuisine
Benjarong Thai Restaurant	Wintergreen Plaza 885 Rockville Pike Rockville, MD 20852	301-424-5533	*** Thai food
Divino Lounge & Restaurant	7345-B Wisconsin Ave Bethesda, MD 20814	301-497-0300	*** Argentina food. Tango on Sunday evenings
Jaleo	7271 Woodmont Ave Bethesda, MD 20814	301-913-0003	*** Spanish tapas - bar
Killarney House	584 W Central Ave Davidsonville, MD 21035 www.galway2006.com	410-798-8700	*** Irish food Corn beef
Mykonos Grill	121 Congressional Lane Rockville, MD 20852 www.mykonosgrill.com	301-770-5999	*** Greek food. Lamb and whole fish
Nova Europa	1311 Lambertson Drive Wheaton, MD 20902	301-649-6690	*** European and Portuguese cuisine. Early bird specials, Sunday – Thursday, 5PM-630PM
Penang Malaysian Cuisine 馬來檳城	4933 Bethesda Ave Bethesda, MD 20814	301-657-2878	*** Malaysian and Chinese menus
PHO 95	785h Rockville Pike Rockville, MD 20852	301-294-9391	*** Vietnamese food

## (11) Weekend Get Away

PLACE	ADDRESS/ WEBSIT	PHONE	COMMENTS
Back Creek Inn	210 Alexander Lane Solomons, MD 20688 bbonline.com/md/backcreek/	410-326-2022	Bed & Breakfast in Southern Maryland. Best to visit in Spring & Summer
Berkeley Springs State Park	2 S. Washington St. Berkeley Springs, West Virginia 25411 www.berkelyspringssp.com	800-CALL WVA	Best to visit in Spring and Summer Fresh mountain air . First bath house in US
Graves Mountain Lodge	Rt. 670 Syria, VA 22743-9999 www.gravesmountain.com/	540-923-4231	Southern family style meals. Excellent rainbow trout on Friday nights. Many return customers.

<b>PLACE</b>	<b>ADDRESS/ WEBSIT</b>	<b>PHONE</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
			Apple festival in Oct
Inn at Little Washington	Middle and Main St Washington, VA www.theinnatlittlewashingt on.com	540- 675-3800	**** Five star inn and restaurant. By reservation only
Longwood Gardens	Rt 1 Kennett Square PA 19348 Longwoodgardens.org	610- 388-1000	Fireworks four time a year Spring - Fall.
Wades Point Inn on the Bay	Route 33 St. Michaels, MD 21663 www.wadespoint.com/	888- 923-3466	Bed and Breakfast in Eastern Shore

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