

GREATER WASHINGTON, DC AREA PACKING CHECKLIST



For adventurers exploring Washington, DC,
Northern Virginia, and suburban Maryland

Whether you're strolling the National Mall, hiking through Rock Creek Park, exploring historic neighborhoods in Alexandria, or walking wooded trails in Greenbelt Park, the Greater Washington, DC area offers four distinct seasons and plenty of opportunities to spend time outdoors. Comfortable footwear, weather-ready layers, and a lightweight daypack will keep you prepared for everything from museums to miles of scenic trails.



CLOTHING & FOOTWEAR



EVERYDAY WALKING ESSENTIALS

- ☐ Moisture-wicking T-shirts (2-4)
- ☐ Lightweight long-sleeve shirt
- ☐ Comfortable pants or shorts (season dependent)
- ☐ Casual outfit for dining or evenings



LAYERS

- ☐ Lightweight fleece or sweater
- ☐ Packable insulated jacket (spring, fall, winter)
- ☐ Light scarf (cool seasons)



OUTERWEAR

- ☐ Lightweight rain jacket
- ☐ Compact travel umbrella
- ☐ Waterproof shell (optional for hikers)



FOOTWEAR

- ☐ Comfortable walking shoes
- ☐ Hiking shoes or trail runners (for parks and nature trails)
- ☐ Comfortable sandals (summer)
- ☐ Extra moisture-wicking socks



ACCESSORIES

- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ Baseball cap or sun hat
- ☐ Warm hat and gloves (winter)
- ☐ Cooling towel (summer)

CITY WALKS & PARK ADVENTURES



WALKING ESSENTIALS

- ☐ Small daypack (15-25L)
- ☐ Reusable water bottle
- ☐ Portable charger (power bank)
- ☐ Snacks for longer walks
- ☐ Offline maps downloaded to your phone
- ☐ Camera or smartphone for photos



PARK ESSENTIALS

- ☐ Picnic blanket
- ☐ Lightweight binoculars for birdwatching
- ☐ Trail map (optional)
- ☐ Trekking poles (optional for longer hikes)



HEALTH & SUN PROTECTION

- ☐ Sunscreen (SPF 30+)
- ☐ Lip balm with SPF
- ☐ Insect repellent (especially spring through fall)
- ☐ Hand sanitizer
- ☐ Wet wipes
- ☐ Small first aid kit
- ☐ Blister treatment (moleskin or blister pads)
- ☐ Prescription medications

ELECTRONICS



- ☐ Phone
- ☐ Camera
- ☐ Charging cables
- ☐ Portable charger
- ☐ Wall charger
- ☐ Headphones or earbuds
- ☐ Smartwatch charger (if needed)



TRAVEL ESSENTIALS

- ☐ Driver's license or photo ID
- ☐ Credit and debit cards
- ☐ SmarTrip card or mobile transit app
- ☐ Hotel confirmations (if applicable)
- ☐ Reservations for timed attractions
- ☐ Copies of important documents



EXTRAS THAT HELP

- ☐ Reusable shopping bag
- ☐ Travel journal
- ☐ Packing cubes
- ☐ Lightweight towel (optional)
- ☐ Zip-top bags for electronics during rain

SEASONAL ADDITIONS



SPRING (MARCH-MAY)

- Light rain jacket
- Layers for cool mornings
- Umbrella
- Allergy medication



SUMMER (JUNE-AUGUST)

- Lightweight breathable clothing
- Wide-brim hat
- Cooling towel
- Electrolyte packets
- Extra water bottle



FALL (SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER)

- Light fleece
- Comfortable hiking pants
- Rain jacket
- Light gloves for late fall



WINTER (DECEMBER-FEBRUARY)

- Insulated jacket
- Thermal base layer
- Hat and gloves
- Warm socks
- Waterproof boots (during snow or ice)

BEFORE YOU GO

- ☐ Download offline Google Maps
- ☐ Download the WMATA Metro app or SmarTrip app
- ☐ Check attraction reservation requirements



- ☐ Review weather forecasts
- ☐ Charge all electronics before heading out
- ☐ Leave room in your bag for books, local finds, or museum souvenirs

PRO TIPS



Comfortable walking shoes are the most important item you'll pack—you can easily walk 8-12 miles in a day exploring the National Mall and surrounding neighborhoods.



Carry a reusable water bottle. Free bottle filling stations are available in many museums and parks.



Summer in the DC area is hot and humid. Start outdoor adventures early and take advantage of museums during the hottest part of the afternoon.



Spring and fall offer the best weather for walking, but a light rain jacket is useful year-round.



Cell service is generally excellent throughout the region, though it can be limited in a few wooded park areas.



Public transportation is excellent for reaching many attractions, but comfortable footwear is still essential.