

# TIPS FOR VISITING THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS IN WASHINGTON D.C.

TAMIEKA SMITH PHOTOGRAPHY, LLC

## SPRING IS HERE

Cherry Blossoms in D.C.

We're getting closer to the peak bloom of **Cherry Blossoms in Washington D.C.** and **Northern Virginia**. Which means there will be an influx of visitors and an increase in traffic in the surrounding area for the Cherry Blossom festival. Seeing pictures online of the pictures of the Cherry Blossoms doesn't give the

beauty of these flowers' true justice; they must be seen in person. After several years of visiting the Cherry Blossoms in D.C., I want to share my experience with those traveling into the city. Below you'll see some **helpful tips** to see the D.C. Cherry Blossoms.

## WHERE Popular

The most

popular location is Washington D.C. is the **Tidal Basin!** The Cherry Blossoms trees line the walkway around the Tidal Basin. Anywhere you stand along the Tidal Basin, you'll have amazing views of the gorgeous pink and white flowers. Many of the popular monuments are visible like, the Washington Monument, and the Jefferson Memorial. Spring is a great time of year to visit D.C. not only because of the beautiful sight of D.C., but there are the

*Tidal Basin & National Mall.*

## TO SEE Locations

monuments, museums,

and of course the Cherry Blossoms. However, if you're planning to visit D.C. around peak bloom, without proper preparation, you might become upset and extremely frustrated. Other locations to visit and see Cherry Blossoms to avoid the hecticness of the Tidal Basin; The United States National Arboretum and Meadowlark Botanical Gardens. To see a list of other locations to visit while in the local area, visit last week's [Friday Fives](#).

**When is Peak Bloom for Cherry Blossom?**

## CHERRY BLOSSOM TIPS

### Plan

Plan as much of your visit as possible. Peak bloom is April 3-6, 2019.

### Wear Comfortable Shoes

Be prepared for lots of walking.

### Getting There (Public Transportation is Best)

The National Mall & Tidal Basin are the most popular locations. Metro is recommended.

### Other Places to Visit

- National Arboretum
- Dumbarton Oaks
- National Cathedral
- Old Town Alexandria

The National Park service has indicated the Washington D.C. Cherry Blossoms are tentatively projected to be in peak bloom **April 3-6, 2019**. You can visit the National Park Service predictions on their [website](#). The peak bloom is dependent upon the weather, it's difficult for the NPS to nail down the exact date until 10 days out from the actual peak bloom date.

In previous years, we have gotten rain, wind storms, or freezing temperatures which knocked most of the buds right off leaving dead looking blossoms. As time gets closer, I usually check with the NPS website once a week (or daily) to close attention to NSP's predictions.

### **Best Time to see Blossoms**

*The quick answer - mornings and weekdays.* Once the blossoms have reached peak bloom, be prepared for mass crowds and horrible traffic. EVERYONE wants to see the blossoms; even out of towners. It's so crowded it's hard to walk around the Tidal Basin; especially after 10 am. If you have kids, please do not bring a stroller and do not bring your pets. The best way to see the blossoms is to go as early as possible; best time is at sunrise. Wake up early and be in D.C. when it's still dark. By the time the sun comes up, you'll be able to enjoy the blossoms without the crowds and enjoy the sights. If you're not a morning person, be there and enjoy the blossoms before 10am. After 10am through the rest of the day is when it gets way too crowded to enjoy; unless you like crowds of people and circle several times for a place to park. If you plan a week day trip, even better! The weekends are the most crowded and overwhelming.

### **D.C. Weather**

Like many places, the weather in Washington D.C. is unpredictable. If you're traveling into D.C. to see the blossoms, bring a jacket, umbrella, and anything else you feel you need to keep warm or cool with unpredictable weather. Bring comfortable, waterproof walking shoes and sunscreen. I make it a day by bring water and lunch. Keep everything in a little book bag that you can easily put on your shoulders and enjoy walking around.

### **Transportation**

Finding a parking space can be difficult and a little bit tricky. It's hard to say if there could be parking available. There are several parking lots on Ohio Dr Southwest; however, these fill up quickly, but if you keep driving down Ohio there will usually be street parking. The metro is the best way to get around D.C. The Smithsonian museums stop on the Blue, Yellow, and Silvers lines is the closest. You will not be able to park anywhere close to the Tidal Basin since all roads surrounding it are closed for the race. Another option is using Uber or Lyft. As you get closer to the Cherry Blossom festival, there is even a shuttle available. There are a few locations with [parking availability](#) (you'll have to arrive super early).

### **Cherry Blossom Family Portraits**

Many visitors coming to Washington D.C. and even people living in the local area want to have portraits with the Cherry Blossoms, make sure your photographer retrieves a permit. Many are unaware of the requirement to obtain a permit and overlook the significance. The permit process takes approximately 2 weeks. However, many **Northern Virginia family photographers** have other options available if you're willing to avoid the madness of Downtown Washington. The permit is a total of \$140. It's a \$90 nonrefundable

processing/application fee plus a \$50-\$200 permit fee, (depending on the number of people – under 10 people will be \$50).

Yes, the **permit is required**, if photographing anywhere in Washington D.C. If the park rangers discover your photographer doesn't have one and they're photographing you or your family without a permit, there is a significant fine and possibly a night in the jail.

To avoid the significant crowding, I have my own private location where I take clients to get beautiful family portraits. If you're interested in receiving continuous information about the Cherry Blossom festival and scheduling your family spring pictures with Tamieka Smith Photography sign up for the [newsletter](#) to stay informed with the latest news. If you have any questions about scheduling your family, don't hesitate to contact me at (571) 250-5073.



### **D.C. Cherry Blossom Festival**

In 2018, the National Cherry Blossom Festival ran from March 20 – April 15. The Cherry Blossom Parade took place April 15th which is the most crowded day at the Tidal Basin. If the parade and peak bloom occur on the same day, good luck. D.C. will be insanely crowded! To view the Cherry Blossom festival calendar, click here: <https://nationalcherryblossomfestival.org/all-events/>.

### **Parade**

Yes, there is also a Cherry Blossom Parade. The parade is scheduled for April 13, 2019 from 10:00am to 12:00 pm (Constitution avenue from 7<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> St NW). It truly a sight to see. Check out the video below to get a glimpse of a previous year's parade. This year's Honorary Grand Marshal will be Anthony Anderson from ABC's "black-ish". To get a ticket at the Grand Stand it starts at \$20 per person. However, you can stand along the parade route for free.

### **Afternoon Tea**

Another great option is Afternoon Tea at The Willard Hotel (1401 Pennsylvania Avenue) in Washington D.C. It's only a few blocks away from the Tidal Basin and Mall. It's a beautiful hotel across the street from the White House. Afternoon tea is served in Peacock Alley, with seasonal cherry blossom teas. There is also a kimono-clad member gracefully plucking a *koto*, a Japanese string instrument from the zither family. **\*Reservations are recommended.**

Other Locations for Afternoon Tea:

- The Ritz-Carlton (Pentagon City)
- The St. Regis Washington D.C.
- Park Hyatt DC

### **Missed Peak Bloom?**

Because the weather around this area is so unpredictable you may miss peak. After the peak blooms, the Japanese cherry blossom trees look like normal trees with green leaves and all the magic is gone. However, there are other types of cherry blossoms! I have a Kwanzan cherry blossom tree in my front yard and it blooms about 2 weeks after the Japanese cherry blossom trees reach peak! The blooms look a lot different as well. The flowers are pinker, a lot larger, super fluffy, and gorgeous. These blossoms are just as pretty to see and photograph. They bloom all over the DMV (D.C., Maryland, and Virginia) areas so you're bound to see some if you're in town.

### **Too Early for Peak?**

Cherry Blossom trees are so dependent upon the weather. You may arrive in D.C. before they bloom. Last year, peak was pushed back 3 times making peak almost an entire month after the initial peak date. If you arrive early, don't worry, there are beautiful magnolia trees and other spring blossoms in the area you don't want to miss.

### **Being Prepared**

When going to the National Mall to see the cherry blossoms during the peak time can be crazy, there are some things you can do to help yourself out.

1. There are not a lot of bathrooms available around the National Mall. There are port-a-potties and public bathrooms in Smithsonian will be your only options during the festival. Go before you come and avoid long lines.
2. Be prepared for lots of walking. So, I highly recommend wearing comfortable shoes. Even getting dropped off close to your desired locations, there will still be a lot of walking. The tidal basin is large, and the festival is located near the trees but toward the National Mall, so it is a walk.

3. Parking is extremely difficult and hard to find, that's why I recommend using the metro. If you desire taking a chance in finding a place to park, you may try using [ParkMobile](#)'s to reserve a parking spot or do not drive! To see a quick list of parking possibilities, visit last week's [Friday Fives](#).
4. There will be crowds...lot of crowds Be prepared to wait a long time for food, drinks, and anything you want to buy. There are street vendors who sell drinks and ice cream that have shorter lines and sell for cheaper than stands along the National Mall.
5. You can buy cherry blossom souvenirs at several different shops around D.C. Don't feel like you must buy something at the actual festival.
6. The weather during this time of year can be tricky. It can get hot or cold. Spring in D.C. is a time when the weather is constantly changing. Bring a light jacket to wear and short sleeves for during the day.

I hope you found this blog post helpful. Have fun visiting Washington D.C. and viewing the Cherry Blossoms.

To schedule your family's cherry blossom session, visit [here](#).

Tamieka Smith Photography is a veteran based company in Northern Virginia  
looking to serve you and document your family's legacy.

---

Tamieka Smith

Tamieka Smith Photography, LLC

**Telephone:** (571) 250-5073

**Email:** [tamieka@tamiekasmithphotography.com](mailto:tamieka@tamiekasmithphotography.com)

**Address:** P.O. Box 653  
Lorton, VA 22199

**Website:** [www.tamiekasmithphotography.com](http://www.tamiekasmithphotography.com)

**Facebook:** [facebook.com/tamiekasmithphotography](https://facebook.com/tamiekasmithphotography)

**Instagram:** [Instagram.com/tamiekasmithphotography](https://Instagram.com/tamiekasmithphotography)