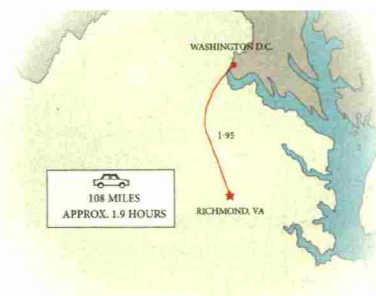


TRAVEL

# A Capital Idea

The latest news from a trip to Washington, D.C. ➔ *By Joan Tuppence*



**A**fter countless e-mails from friends raving about the 250,000-square-foot Newseum in Washington, D.C., and what the city was doing to spruce up for the upcoming inauguration, I decided it was time to take a trip to our nation's capital.

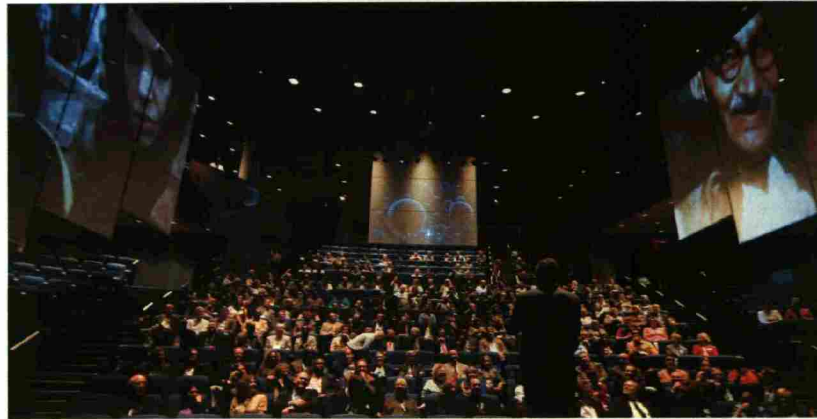
Thankfully my daughter was behind the wheel, so we didn't get lost the way I normally do whenever I try to maneuver through the streets of D.C. Dedicated to journalism, the **Newseum** (888-639-7386 or [newseum.org](http://newseum.org)) is located at the intersection of Pennsylvania Avenue and Sixth Street N.W., not far from the National Mall.

The museum features seven levels of galleries, with everything from a section of the Berlin Wall to a news helicopter, so we started at the bottom and worked our way up. Luckily, we made it to the Walter and Leonore Annenberg Theater just in time to slip on our 3-D glasses and head into the 4-D presentation of "I-Witness." The time-travel experience puts you in the action — think moving seats and unanticipated surprises — as you travel through history. It was as good as similar attractions we've experienced at Walt Disney World.

Just as engrossing, but for different reasons, was a gallery of Pulitzer Prize-winning photos, with images such as the haunting picture of a fireman holding a baby after the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, and the Comcast 9/11 Gallery, with photographs, artifacts and front pages from newspapers related to the 2001 terrorist attacks. The latter gallery also includes a short documentary featuring intense first-person accounts from journalists covering the event.

We capped our visit by dashing up to the museum's terrace to take in one of the best views of the U. S. Capitol and the National Mall in the city, then we stopped by the Newseum store to buy a "Trust me, I'm a reporter" magnet for my office.

After more than two hours in the museum, it was time

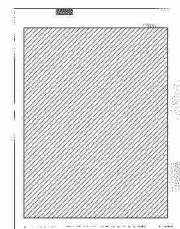


*Clockwise from top: "I-Witness," at the Newseum's Walter and Leonore Annenberg Theater, brings journalism history alive; the Blue Duck Tavern restaurant; viewing the Capitol from the Newseum's terrace.*

for lunch at **Oyamel** (202-628-1005 or [oyamel.com](http://oyamel.com)). The upscale Mexican restaurant is a delightful departure from typical combination-plate establishments. Plates are small, so you can get a varied sampling of the menu. We particularly enjoyed the tableside guacamole, plantain fritters stuffed with black beans, and tamal verde (a tamale with shredded chicken breast and green salsa).

A cab took us back to our hotel, the **Park Hyatt** (202-789-1234 or [parkwashington.hyatt.com](http://parkwashington.hyatt.com)), just a few blocks from Georgetown. The property recently completed an extreme renovation and redesign guided by designer Tony Chi. Its rooms carry a pleasing modernistic design with a homelike ambiance — think walnut flooring, folk art, comfy swivel chairs and a collection of books.

Just off the hotel's lobby is the Tea Cellar lounge, with more than 50 rare and vintage teas. For a treat, check out ➤



➤ **TRAVEL CONT'D**

the Reserve Tea, the rarest available, which retails from \$150 to \$850 per pound. And if you want to have a private chat, ask to be seated in one of the “Capitol Hill” glass-enclosed booths so no one can overhear your conversation.

That night we ate at the hotel’s Blue Duck Tavern, which features an open kitchen with a wood-burning oven. My daughter raved over the roasted diver scallops, while I devoured the jumbo lump crab cakes. We shared the pole and shell beans en papillote, a heavenly mix of beans steamed with delicate seasonings. To finish, we split the restaurant’s signature apple pie, which we both deemed the best we’d ever eaten.

Before leaving, we talked with a couple of folks about must-see experiences during the holiday season. Suggestions included a visit to the lobby of the Willard Hotel (202-628-9100), which adopts a festive atmosphere with a towering Christmas tree featuring flowing red ribbons and golden decorations, large red poinsettias, and a gingerbread house. Union Station (202-289-1908 or unionstationdc.com) is also known for decking out every holiday season. Decorations include a massive model-train display that runs through a snow-covered replica of a Norwegian village and a 30-foot Christmas tree with thousands of sparkling lights. ■



**Don't Miss This**

Brunch at **Brasserie Beck** (202-408-1717 or bekdcc.com) is a show, whether you’re people-watching on the patio during warmer months or checking out the action in the eatery’s large open kitchen year-round. My Belgian waffle with brandied cherries and apples was delightful, but the highlight of the meal was the pear tarte tatin with cinnamon-honey ice cream. The soft, sweet dough and the pears poached in apricot jus were as close to perfection as one can get.