

Local Guide to Georgetown

Though Georgetown is *luxe* DC at its white-collar best, over-spending on luxury goods is not required to enjoy the cobbled streets of this historic and stately neighborhood. M and Wisconsin Sts. NW are the main commercial corridors that attract Georgetown University students, the international shopping elite, and residents alike. Off these congested corridors one can find the old C&O Canal—Georgetown’s original claim to fame as a 19th century waterway port; the surprisingly scenic Potomac waterfront; and a neat grid of fantastic mansions, many with gorgeous gardens peeking from behind the gates. Add to this the sprawling estate-museums of Dumbarton Oaks and the Tudor Place and you can craft an afternoon of Secret Garden delights and discoveries. If gardens aren’t your thing, plenty of shopping opportunities might satisfy your search for earthly pleasure.

—Anna Simon, Georgetown University Librarian

Get there: 15 minute cab ride or public transit. Bus options: From the hotel walk to New York Ave NW and 9th St. NW and take the [Circulator](#) bus west (\$1). The Circulator goes all the way down M Street. Or, from Dupont Circle grab the G2 bus west at P and 20th Sts. NW. The last stop is Georgetown University.

Walk-about: If time is on your side, stroll from Dupont Circle into Georgetown via the [Dumbarton Bridge on Q Street NW](#). Four magnificent cast-iron buffalo by [Alexander Phimister Proctor](#), c. 1914-15, stand guard over the bridge’s arches, designed to emulate the curves of Roman Aqueducts. The view up and down Rock Creek Park is stunning, too.

The [Tudor House Historic House and Garden](#) is a few blocks west at 31st and Q Sts. NW. Built by the granddaughter of Martha Custis Washington, the Tudor House was preserved by six contiguous generations of family, and it remains much as it was in 1816. Costumed interpreters do an excellent job of showing the grounds and house.

- 1644 31st St. NW; house tours are \$10, self-guided garden tours \$3

One large block north on 31st St. is the [Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection](#), a Harvard-run institution specializing in Byzantine, pre-Columbian, and garden and landscape studies. While the museum and libraries are impressive, the various gardens recall an English Versailles and are worth the entrance price to tour.

- 1703 32nd St. NW; \$8 for the garden, museum is free

You’ll need some sustenance after your garden jaunt; try [Patisserie Poupon](#) (1645 Wisconsin Ave NW). The French bakery and café has lunch fare, pastries, and great coffee, as well as a charming, private café terrace.

From here stroll south down Wisconsin Ave. and take in the shops, or wander south-west through the Georgetown neighborhood and gaze upon the homes of the very well-off. Depending on your wandering direction you'll pass a [John Flevog](#) shoe store (1265 Wisconsin Ave NW), best described as "artisanal" shoes. There's also a [Camper shoe store](#) (3219 M St NW) and a [Frye Company](#) store (1066 Wisconsin Ave NW).

Other specialty stores include [Fleurir Hand Grown Chocolates](#) (3235 P St NW); [Georgetown Emporium](#), an antique and vintage shop (2613 P St. NW); and [Just Paper & Tea](#), an independent store stuffed with both kinds of wares (3232 P St. NW).

Dining:

When the dinner bell tolls, be wary of the M St. tourist traps with mediocre fare and inflated prices. The following restaurants are listed in order of proximity to Dumbarton Oaks for post-reception dining convenience. Keep in mind you can hop a 30 bus line north or south on Wisconsin if you prefer not to walk, and cabs are plentiful.

[Bistro Lepic](#) (1736 Wisconsin Ave. NW)

Fancier French restaurant, good for groups. The closest you'll get to Dumbarton.

[Café Divan](#) (1834 Wisconsin Ave. NW)

Under-the radar modern Turkish restaurant with a large room in back for groups.

[Los Cuates](#) (1564 Wisconsin Ave. NW)

Casual Mexican.

[Café Bonaparte](#) (1522 Wisconsin Ave. NW)

Reasonably-priced French café with a dedicated following, and slightly distanced from the M St. hordes.

[Martin's Tavern](#) (1264 Wisconsin Ave NW)

DC's oldest family-owned restaurant has booths dedicated to past patrons, including Lyndon Johnson, George Bush, and Madeline Albright. A plaque commemorates where the Kennedys, who used to live down the street, became engaged.

[MaiThai & Peacock Café](#) (3251 Prospect Ave. NW)

MaiThai has good Japanese and Thai food that won't break the bank. Peacock café has yummy contemporary American, but is pricer. Both are great for groups and have outdoor seating in front and back.

[Neyla](#) (3206 N St. NW)

Fancy Lebanese. Outdoor seating. Reservations recommended.

[Pizza Paradiso](#) (3282 M St. NW)

Solid pizza with an accompanying emphasis on craft brews (there's another location in Dupont Circle). Try happy hour in the basement bar.

[Unum](#) (2917 M St. NW)

Locally-owned contemporary American; one of the *Washingtonian's* top restaurants of 2013. Recommended for foodies. Make reservations online.

[Bandolero](#) (3241 M St. NW)

Sleek, modern Mexican—everything is tasty. Happy Hours are usually quiet and a good deal. Try the suckling pig tacos.

[Kafe Leopold](#) (3315 Cady's Alley NW)

European-style bistro where everything comes a-la carte. Outdoor seating, but it gets crowded.

[Bodega](#) (3116 M St. NW)

Busy Spanish tapas restaurant with black and red matador theme.

[Farmers, Fishers, Bakers](#) (3000 K St. NW)

Farm-to-fork food with farmer-sized portions. You can get anything that falls into one of the titular categories—sushi, pizza, steak, burgers, organic salads, etc. It's a weird hybrid but it's really good—and they feature local art throughout the restaurant. Homemade soda bar for those who prefer mocktails.

After dinner, try strolling along the [C&O Canal](#) (parallels the Potomac between M and K Sts.) or [Georgetown Waterfront Park](#) (3000 K St. NW). The early 19th century canal remains much as it was, complete with stone bridges, locks, and a quiet walking path.

The Potomac promenade features views of the Key Bridge, Roosevelt Island, the Kennedy Center, and uh, Virginia. Walking west will take you by the boat houses and the kayakers; walking east take you past Washington Harbor, eventually leading you to the Kennedy Center.

Just north of the waterfront is [Georgetown University](#), the oldest Catholic and Jesuit university (classes began in 1792) in the country. Several buildings recall this history, like the neo-Gothic [Healy Hall](#), Dahlgren Chapel, and [Old North](#), where George Washington gave an address ca. 1795.

Back on M St. is the [Old Stone House](#), the oldest building in Washington (1765!). This National Park Service site closes at 5, but you can still admire this historical holdout from the street.