

1



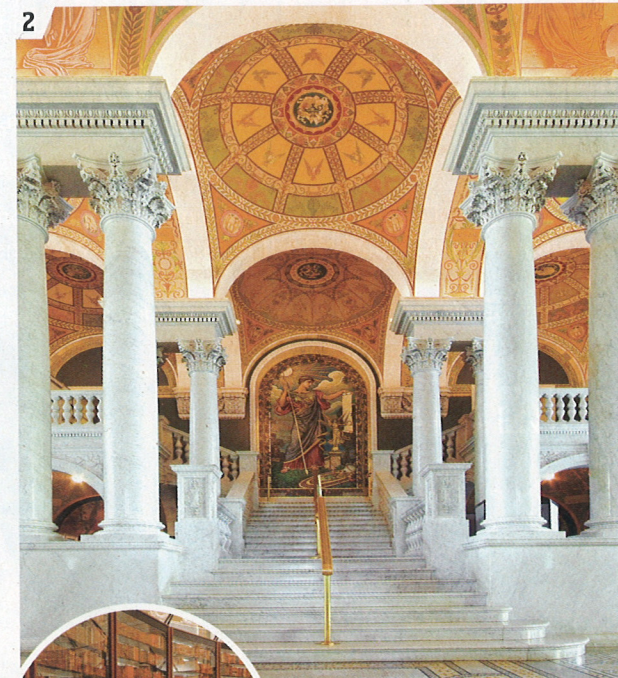
# Great Escapes // Washington, D.C. and Other Bibliophile Destinations

In a city of magnificent monuments and world-class museums, Washington, D.C.'s libraries, bookshops and literary events will give any bookworm plenty to explore. By Shawn Gilliam

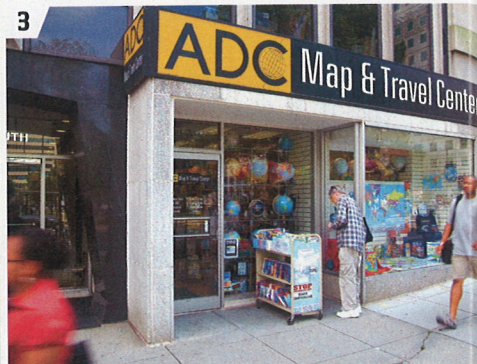
## The World's Top Libraries

Key among Washington's sights is the monumental **Library of Congress**. As the largest library in the world, it boasts nearly 142 million items on 650 miles of shelves. Each working day, the library receives some 22,000 items, from which it pulls 10,000 for its collections. (Items not chosen are used in exchange programs.) Among its most notable books is one of the three perfect vellum copies of the Gutenberg Bible in existence.

Tour the library's elaborately decorated **Great Hall** and **Main Reading Room**, and check out the **Bibles Gallery**, which features murals that trace the evolution of the book from the cairn and oral traditions to Egyptian hieroglyphics and the printing press. The Library of Congress Experience opened in 2008, bringing the library's rare collections to life digitally. Using touchscreens in the exhibition galleries, you can turn the pages of rare books and examine rare documents, including edits made to the rough draft of the Declaration of Independence.

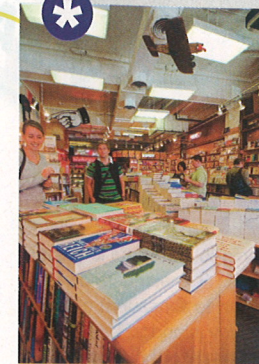


- 1 Washington at night
- 2 Library of Congress
- 3 ADC Map & Travel Center
- 4 Afterwords Cafe's famous "Goober" pie
- 5 The Library of Congress Experience



See the world in various forms—maps, globes, atlases, puzzles and more—at ADC Map & Travel Center, just blocks from the White House.

White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel has been spotted at Kramerbooks.



Politics & Prose

Idle Time Books

Kramerbooks

ADC Map & Travel

Library of Congress

Folger Shakespeare

Find the world's largest and best collection of Shakespeare materials and major collections of rare Renaissance books, manuscripts and works of art next door at the **Folger Shakespeare Library**. Always on view is one of Shakespeare's first folios; curators rotate through other works periodically. The touchscreen display next to the first folio lets you page through the work and read notes in the margins of one of the first plays in the folio, *Romeo and Juliet*. The library also houses an intimate indoor stage called the **Elizabethan Theatre**, where rafters, multiple levels and plaster-and-timber walls evoke the London inn yards often used for staging plays in Shakespeare's day. Check out *Much Ado About Nothing*, October 21–November 29.

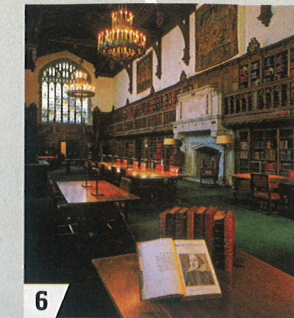
above Dupont Circle. The store, which opened in 1976, packs books into two rooms and feels rather small by chain standards. About half of the space is devoted to **Afterwords**, the country's first bookstore café, which features espresso, food and a full bar. Late nights can be crowded, with long opening times (7:30 a.m.–1 a.m. Sunday–Thursday, 24 hours Friday and Saturday) and music in the evening; so if you want a quieter, more bookish experience, come in the morning or afternoon.

Find **Politics and Prose** farther up Connecticut Avenue. The store does a huge business in politics and history, and it's known for its readings—publishers fight for one of about 40 spots a month. Expect visits from Michael Chabon (*Manhood for Amateurs*) and Jonathan Safran Foer (*Eating Animals*) in October and December.

**Top-shelf booksellers** An institution among Washington's independent bookstores is **Kramerbooks**, just



The smallest book in the Library of Congress is *Old King Cole*. At 1/25-by-1/25 inches, its pages must be turned with a needle. The library's largest book is a 5-by-7-foot book featuring color images of Bhutan.



- 6 Folger Shakespeare Library
- 7 Library of Congress
- 8 Maps at ADC Map & Travel Center
- 9 The Gutenberg Bible at the Library of Congress
- 10 Afterwords Cafe
- 11 Politics & Prose



It has boasted an exceptional children's book department since the **Cheshire Cat**, the preeminent children's bookstore, moved in 10 years ago.

Second-hand books are the focus at **Idle Time Books**, a mom-and-pop fixture in an historic townhouse on Northwest 18th Street, the main commercial strip in the colorful Adams Morgan neighborhood. Chairs tuck into corners on three tidy levels filled with about 30,000 books, many out of print.

**ADC Map & Travel Center**, owned by the publisher that produces Michelin and Insight guides, is a traveler's dream. Located two blocks north of the White House on I Street, it features more than 6,000 titles from several hundred publishers, as well as bilingual dictionaries, phrasebooks, wall maps and globes.

## Where to Stay

The newly renovated **Dupont Hotel** (doubles from \$169) sits close to the action just off Dupont Circle and around the corner from Kramerbooks. Metro access to downtown stores and sights as well as Politics and Prose, farther up Connecticut Avenue, is one block away.

## Where to Eat

In Dupont Circle, **Restaurant Nora**, the country's first certified organic restaurant, is known for its fresh, innovative cuisine. For dessert, head to **Afterwords Cafe**, the full-service restaurant at Kramerbooks, and try the "Goober" pie, a sinful concoction of chocolate and peanut butter.

