



# Travel Blog



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By *Kate Parham*

One of our Washington, D.C., correspondents rounds up the best the city has to offer before the year is out, from a brand new influx of restaurants to blockbuster museum shows to capital's best holiday traditions. Be sure to check out these top picks if you're heading to D.C. in the next couple of weeks.



## Eats from Tennessee BBQ to Northern Thai

The weather may be chilly, but the kitchens in D.C. are heating up—with two new and notable restaurants hitting the dining scene this month alone.

Chris George and Dr. William George, the father and son duo from Tennessee, have brought a taste of their hometown to [Arlington, Virginia](#) with [Memphis Barbeque](#). The authentic BBQ joint slow-cooks meats over hickory and finishes them with a variety of tomato- and vinegar-based sauces. One of our favorites on the menu is the brisket enchiladas. Trust us—you won't have ordering regret.

Meanwhile, Enzo Fargione's latest venture, [Elisir](#), is a fine dining Italian restaurant located in Penn Quarter. Make selections from the extensive, seasonal a la carte menu, or opt for the multi-course tasting menu, which has featured everything from baked Chilean sea bass to roasted veal filet with seared sweetbreads.

Johnny Monis, the famed young chef of the Greek-inspired eatery [Komi](#), recently opened his passion project, [Little Serow](#). At this intimate, 28-seat spot that only takes walk-ins, Monis serves up sour and spicy northern Thai, with dishes such as catfish *laap* (fish mixed with lime juice, onion, garlic, mint, and chilies) and herbal pork sausage. The prix fixe menus (\$45 per person) change weekly.

And there's one more to come on the horizon. In [Alexandria, Virginia](#) Cathal and Meshelle Armstrong, known for local eateries [The Majestic](#) and [Restaurant Eve](#), are opening [Society Fair](#), a new epicurean market with a bakery, butchery, wine bar, and demo kitchen. Check Society Fair's [Facebook page](#) for updates on the opening.

## Don't-Miss Museum Exhibits

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One of the most exciting shows to come to the capital this season is at the [Phillips Collection](#), where "Degas Dancers at the Barre" showcases the impressionist master's first exhibition in Washington, D.C., in 25 years.

For some more glamour, and gawk at stunning inaugural gowns on the recently-redressed models inside the [First Ladies](#) gallery at the [National Museum of American History](#). And on the other side of the costume spectrum, run upstairs to take a peek at the original [Kermit the Frog](#) before you leave.

Lovers of decorative arts will want to stop into the [Renwick Gallery](#)—just steps away from the White House—to see "Something of Splendor: [Decorative Arts from the White House](#)".

With 100 sparkling artifacts valued at \$5 million, the [National Geographic Museum](#) is showing "Anglo-Saxon Hoard: Gold from England's Dark Ages". And there's ancient history to be had at the [National Museum of Natural History](#), with the newly-opened "Eternal Life in Ancient Egypt".

### Hot Holiday Happenings

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The free, annual [Messiah Sing-Along](#), at the Kennedy Center on December 23, is a long-standing D.C. holiday tradition. For more free music, attend the [Willard InterContinental's](#) holiday program, through December 23, featuring accomplished choirs and vocal ensembles from around the city.

Those who can't let the season pass by without seeing The Nutcracker should attend a performance at the [Warner Theater](#), running through Christmas Eve. And Dickens fans won't want to miss *A Christmas Carol* at [Ford's Theater](#), through December 31.

### The Sweetest Season

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No matter what form of entertainment you choose, there's nothing like capping off any evening in town with dessert. We recommend the decadent four-course tasting menu (\$25 per person) crafted by Chef Matthew Petersen from "Top Chef: Just Desserts, Season 2" at the [Mandarin Oriental Washington, D.C.'s](#), swanky [CityZen](#). If it's a chocolate fix you're after, [The Ritz-Carlton's Chocolate Decadence Buffet](#) is a must. Every Saturday during December, Executive Pastry Chef Daniel Mangione transforms the Lobby Café into a haven for chocolate connoisseurs with candy, cakes, and tarts galore, alongside flights of Champagne.

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For up-to-the-minute restaurant and hotel recommendations, planning information, and more, check out our online travel guide to [Washington, D.C.](#)

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