Museums

The world-famous Smithsonian Museums are some of the most popular Washington, DC attractions. Now that you live just 24 kilometers from the city, make sure you visit these iconic sites. Almost all the Smithsonian Museums are located on the National Mall, pictured below.

Smithsonian Museums

These museums are free to enter.

• National Air and Space Museum
• National Museum of Natural History
• National Museum of American History
• National Museum of the American Indian
• National Portrait Gallery
• African American Museum
• US Botanical Gardens
• US National Archives

Other Popular Museums

These museums cost $22 to enter.

International Spy Museum

• Learn about the world’s greatest spies, missions, and historical events.

Newseum

• Experience an interactive museum of news & journalism.

Madame Tussauds Wax Museum

• See lifelike recreations of US Presidents and celebrities.
DC Neighborhoods

**Chinatown**

1. *Friendship Archway*
   The Friendship Archway was created to celebrate friendship with Washington’s sister city of Beijing and is a great photo opportunity. **H St. NW & 7th St. NW**

2. *Full Kee*
   This authentic Chinese restaurant serves traditional dishes. **509 St. NW**

3 & 4. *Gallery Place and CityCenterDC*
   Gallery Place is a large, modern, shopping area with dozens of photo opportunities. **616 H St. NW**

4. *CityCenterDC*
   CityCenter is a bustling shopping and restaurant area in the center of the city that’s often decorated with the changing seasons. **10th & H St. NW**

**Capitol Hill**

1. *US Supreme Court*
   This building is home to the nation’s highest court. It is open to the public weekdays from 9:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. **1 First St. NE**

2. *Eastern Market*
   This bustling marketplace has been a DC favorite since 1873. **225 7th St. NE**

3. *Art & Soul*
   A southern-style, themed restaurant that has won many awards. **415 New Jersey Ave NW**

**Georgetown**

1. *Georgetown Waterfront Park*
   Quaint restaurants and shops line the waterfront. **31st St. NW & K St. NW**

2. *M Street*
   A central part of the Georgetown experience and DC history. **M St. NW**

3. *Old Stone Home*
   Built in 1765, this is the oldest home in Washington, DC. **3051 M St. NW**
Shopping

Near George Mason, it’s easy to find the things you need to enjoy life in your new city. Some of the best shopping in the East Coast is located right here, in the Washington, DC area. Looking for ingredients to cook a special meal? You have a lot to choose from at the many grocery stores and markets nearby.

Shopping & Grocery Stores

Fair Oaks Mall
- The Gunston Go-Bus provides FREE shuttles from campus to Fair Oaks Mall with your Mason ID!

Tyson’s Corner Center
- One of the top 10 largest shopping centers on the East Coast! You will always find students hanging out here on Saturdays.

Fairfax Corner
- This shopping center features a movie theater, boutiques, and restaurants. FREE shuttles from campus on the Gunston Go-Bus!

George Mason University Bookstore
- Located in the Johnson Center, this is your one-stop-shop for official Mason gear and your class textbooks!

Giant
- Walking distance from the Global Center, this is the go-to place for on-campus students for any food or toiletry needs.

Walmart
- On a budget? Walmart has everything you need at a cheaper price; from food to clothes, and school supplies!

Aldi
- This is another popular option among students for groceries at a discounted price close to campus.

Trader Joe’s
- This is the most recommended grocery store by students! If you’re looking for organic, vegetarian, or any specialty items, make sure you stop by here!
Restaurants & Dining

You can find any type of food imaginable in the Washington, DC area. Do you want to try Mexican, Japanese, or Ethiopian? You and your friends can go to a new place every month. Travel around the world, without leaving Washington, DC, one restaurant at a time!

Artie’s
- You can find a menu of American seafood and meat classics here.
  
  *Duoyichi, from China, recommends: the crab cakes and prime rib.*

BonChon Chicken
- A popular option among students, BonChon specializes in Korean-style fried chicken and a variety of savory Asian fusion dishes.
  
  *Kenny, from USA, recommends: the Tteokbokki (a traditional Korean dish).*

Marumen
- Craving some ramen? Try this minimalist Japanese restaurant that provides sizable specialty ramen dishes.
  
  *Jiayi, from China, recommends: the braised short rib ramen.*

Panera Bread
- Here you can find a wide selection of pastries and baked goods. They also offer great soups and salads. You can find the nearest location in the Johnson Center!
  
  *Nebal, from Jordan, recommends: the soups, especially the broccoli soup.*

Sarku Japan Teriyaki & Sushi Express
- Features made-to-order teppanyaki-style Japanese dishes cooked on sizzling grills, plus sushi!
  
  *Dildora, from Uzbekistan, recommends: the California roll set.*

Taco Bamba
- Located across the street in University Mall, this is a local favorite among George Mason students. The chef and owner is even a George Mason alum!
  
  *Duoyichi, from China, recommends: the Nature Boy, Taco Bamba, and Fairfax 4 Way.*

On-Campus Dining
- Make sure to try all three dining halls on campus: The Globe, Southside, and Ike's!

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Student Testimonial

"At INTO Mason, I can make friends from different countries, this helps me learn about different cultures. I think this is a good experience for me."

Xu Han, China
Accounting '19
Graduate Pathway Program

Student Testimonial

"On weekends, my friends and I will go to Washington, DC because there is so much to do. We like to get dinner and see the monuments."

Daniel Encaoua, Venezuela
Marketing '19
International Year One

Student Testimonial

"Studying here has been really good for me, and coming to study so close to Washington, DC is like a dream come true."

Ade Olua, Indonesia
Environmental Science '21
International Year One
Recreation Activities

You can always find memorable, fun, and historic things happening in the Washington, DC metro area. In addition to the list of museums found on page 2, there are many other activities you can participate in to help you become familiar with American culture.

Parks & Memorials

Burke Lake Park
- Located just 10 minutes away from campus this is the perfect escape from your studies. You can picnic, fish, bike, camp, or walk around the beautiful lake trail!

Great Falls Park
- A popular hiking destination among George Mason students located close to campus along the banks of the Potomac River.

Lincoln Memorial
- This iconic memorial built to honor the 16th US president is a must-see for every visitor! It towers over the Reflecting Pool in the western end of the National Mall.

Washington Monument
- This monument is a defining feature of the Washington, DC skyline and one of the nation's most recognizable structures. It was built to honor the first president of the US.

Festivals

March-April: Cherry Blossom Festival
- More than 1.5 million people visit DC each year to admire the Cherry Blossom trees. The cultural festival includes events like Petal-palooza, Festival Parade, and the Kite Festival!

May: Passport DC
- A month-long celebration of international cultures in DC! Visit any of the 50+ embassies in the Around the World Embassy Tour.

July: Independence Day (Fourth of July)
- Each year, Washington, DC celebrates July 4th with a bang! There are events all day, from parades and concerts to a firework show and concert on the National Mall.

Nov-Dec: National Christmas Tree
- A major holiday season attraction, this living tree is decorated every year near the White House. It is surrounded by 56 other trees representing the US states, territories, and DC.
Phone Services

To make a local or long distance call within the US; dial the three-digit area code then the seven-digit number: xxx xxx xxxx. To make an international phone call, dial the International Access Code and the country code (found on countrycallingcodes.com). When calling from the US, the International Access Code is 011. For example, if you want to make a call to China from the US, dial the International Access Code, then the country code (China’s country code is 86), then the phone number.

Getting a Cell Phone

**Fast-Grade Upgrade Plans** allow you to pay off your phone in monthly installments in exchange for a discount, and get a new phone every year or so if you return the old one back to the carrier.

**Prepaid Virtual Carriers** are smaller carriers like Boost Mobile or Cricket Wireless that can save you a lot of money per month, though sometimes with higher up-front device prices. If you would like to purchase a SIM card for your phone, you could visit AT&T, Best Buy, or Walmart.

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Childcare & Preschool

Some childcare programs have a long waitlist. You may need to visit a few daycare options to find the best fit for your child.

**Mason’s Child Development Center**
- hr.gmu.edu/cdc
  - On Campus: 4402 University Dr., Fairfax, VA
  - +1 703 993 5960

**Teddy Bear Day Care & Preschool**
- tbdcva.com
  - 10615 Braddock Rd., Fairfax, VA
  - +1 703 352 3188

**Fairfax Presbyterian Preschool**
- fairfaxpresbyterian.org/preschool
  - 10723 Main St., Fairfax, VA
  - +1 703 273 4333

**Rise and Shine Preschool Center**
- riseandshinerek.com
  - 10185 Main St., Fairfax, VA
  - +1 703 829 0318

**Kindergarten through 12th Grade:** To register a child through Fairfax County Public Schools, you can visit: fcps.edu/registration or call +1 571 423 3000.

**Babysitting Services:** There are some great online resources to help you find a babysitter. A few are: care.com, sittercity.com, and urbansitter.com.
Money & Banking Services

There are many money and banking services available in the Fairfax area. Most of them are located within 5 to 10 miles of campus, which students can easily get to by walking or using public transportation. The following is a list of the most popular banks that our students use to open their first US bank accounts.

Banking Services

Apple Federal Credit Union
- Johnson Center, 4400 University Dr.
  Fairfax, VA 22030
  +1 703 788 4800

Bank of America
- 11190 Main St.
  Fairfax, VA 22030
  +1 703 277 2876

Wells Fargo Bank
- 10501 Main St.
  Fairfax, VA 22030
  +1 703 442 3604

United Bank
- 11185 Fairfax Blvd.
  Fairfax, VA 22030
  +1 703 219 4850

PNC Bank
- 11098 Fairfax Blvd.
  Fairfax, VA 22030
  +1 571 432 0630

Capitol One Bank
- 10670 Fairfax Blvd.
  Fairfax, VA 22030
  +1 703 267 7460

TD Bank
- 11098 Fairfax Blvd.
  Fairfax, VA 22030
  +1 571 432 0630

M&T Bank
- 11721 Lee Hwy.
  Fairfax, VA 22030
  +1 703 591 0522

When opening an account in person, most banks require two forms of identification such as a Social Security card, driver’s license, state ID, passport or birth certificate, etc. There are different types of accounts, for example: a savings or checking account. You can talk to the bank representatives and open the account(s) that work best for you.

*Attention: Please do not exchange currencies privately. The banks are the safest place for currency exchanges.
Healthcare

Student Health Services (SHS) Clinic is located on both the Fairfax and Arlington campuses. These services are provided to all INTO Mason students. SHS offers general medical services like routine check-ups, vaccines, or treatment for minor illnesses. You can make appointments by calling +1 703 993 2831.

Insurance

Every INTO Mason Student is required to purchase the UnitedHealthcare Student Health Insurance Plan.

Many services are available to students at George Mason Student Health Services for free, such as:

- Adult immunizations (such as Tdap, Meningococcal, Gardasil)
- Annual flu shot
- Routine health exams
- Prescribed contraceptives (birth control)

For hours of operation and more info on the Mason health insurance go to shs.gmu.edu.

*Attention all sponsored students:*

Please check your financial guarantee each semester to determine if you will need to pay and enroll in university health insurance.

Immunizations

All newly admitted students or newly re-admitted students must submit immunization records and the required immunization form to attend class at Mason.

For a list of required immunizations and access to the immunization form: please visit shs.gmu.edu/immunizations.

Off-Campus Services

Urgent medical conditions are ones that are not considered an emergency, but still require care within 24 hours.

- Med-First Urgent Care Center
  9452 Main Street
  Fairfax, VA 22031
  +1 703 503 1112
- INOVA Emergency Care Center - Fairfax
  4315 Chain Bridge Road
  Fairfax, VA 22030
  +1 703 877 8200
Washington, DC Metro System

The metro is a great way to travel to Washington, DC. The metro stop closest to George Mason University is Vienna/Fairfax-GMU, which is on the orange line. The Mason to Metro Shuttle is free with your Mason ID and can take you from campus to this metro stop.

Getting a Metro Card:
You must have a SmarTrip card to use when you enter and exit the metro. The SmarTrip card can be purchased at machines when you get to the station. A one-day pass costs $14.50 and can be used without limit all day.

Vienna-Fairfax GMU:
The closest metro stop to Mason is Vienna-Fairfax GMU, pictured above at the end of the Orange Line.

2900 Nutley Street
Students can get to the metro using a free shuttle service that departs from the Mason Global Center every hour.
Transportation

Fairfax City and University Mall are within walking distance of Mason’s campus! However, you may want to plan how to get around Fairfax by car or using public transportation. In order to drive a car in the US, you must obtain a driver’s license.

To drive a car you must:

- Be at least 16 years and 3 months old and have a valid driver’s license
- Title and register your vehicle at a DMV office
- Provide proof of car insurance
- Pass the two-part knowledge exam, road skills test, and vision screening test

Remember, if you plan to drive a car and park on-campus, a parking pass from Parking Services is required: transportation.gmu.edu/parking-services.

To apply for a driver’s license you must provide:

- Two identification documents (unexpired passport with visa, I-20)
- Proof of legal presence (unexpired passport with I-20)
- Proof of Virginia residency (off-campus utility/phone bill or apartment lease/agreement, or on-campus residency letter acquired at the Welcome Desk)
- Proof of social security number (if you have one)

For the most complete information on applying for a driver’s license, please call or visit:

Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)
+1 804 497 7100 | dmv.virginia.gov

11805 Fair Oaks Mall
Fairfax, VA
Hours: Mon-Sat 8:00am-5:00pm
Closed Sundays

10455 Armstrong St.
Fairfax, VA*
Hours: Mon-Sat 8:30am-4:30pm
Closed Saturdays and Sundays
*Limited DMV services

1968 Gallows Rd.
Vienna, VA
Hours: Mon-Sat 8:00am-5:00pm
Closed Sundays

Getting around Fairfax without a car:

**Mason Shuttle:** You can track the shuttles in real time by using the Ride Systems app and select George Mason University or go to mason.ridesystems.net for a map and arrival time of your bus. For more information, visit shuttle.gmu.edu.

- Mason to Metro: Goes around campus and to/from the Vienna/Fairfax-GMU metro station.
- Gunston Go-Bus: Goes to shopping centers like Fair Oaks Mall, Fair Lakes Shopping Center, Fairfax Corner, and University Mall. Runs 7 days a week and at night.

**CUE Bus:** This city bus goes to shopping centers around Fairfax City and to the metro station. There are two routes: Green and Gold. For more information, visit: fairfaxva.gov/government/public-works/transportation-division/cue-bus-system/cue-bus-map-and-schedule.
Want to Find Out More?

If you would like to find out more about any of our programs or services, please visit our website. You can also contact us via email or phone, or visit one of our education counselors in your home country.

Inquiries and Applications

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E: INTOadmissions@gmu.edu

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myin.to/MasonYouTube

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