

# WASHINGTON, DC'S HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM INDUSTRY BOOMING



Breaking the record for a fifth year in a row, Washington, DC's tourism and hospitality industry continued to grow in domestic visitation for the year of 2014, reaching 18.34 million in domestic visitors (which is a rise of 5.7% since the previous year). According to reports, DC's visitors spent around \$6.8 billion, which is an increase of 1.9%.

CEO and president of Destination DC, Elliott Ferguson, said that every visitor plays a pivotal role in supporting the local economy with every hotel stay, meal at a restaurant, and visit to attractions. **Visitors are responsible for supporting nearly 75,000 District jobs**, according to Ferguson. He was also proud to report that visitor spending for 2014 rose by well over \$100 million versus the previous year, suggesting that this is a strong indicator of the value in tourism investment.

This was the fourth year in a row in which visitor spending exceeded \$6 billion. In addition to this, retail grew by roughly 2.5%. The amount of money spent on beverage and food rose by nearly 4%, and even entertainment spending grew by almost 2%, which shows improvement from the recessionary levels when consumers had significantly reduced non-essential spending.

Ferguson stated that Destination DC's focus is to keep the District on consumers' minds by putting their famous tourist inventory, and \$9 billion planned in new development. They remain wary of challenges presented by a struggling Euro and a strong dollar, but plan to address key audiences in unique ways. Their seasonal campaign will include emojis with DC themes, a television commercial, and a print campaign featured in popular magazines.

In the year 2016, Washington, DC plans to welcome fifteen city-wide conventions in total, which include two particularly high-profile events in March and June respectively. They will also be hosting a wide variety of conferences in the year 2017, and future business contracts have recently been signed for multiple year bookings, including the American Chemical Society and Playlist Live.

According to their chief executive and president, Gregory O'Dell, Events DC's job is to oversee attraction and growth of entertainment, conventions, cultural and sports events to the cosmopolitan city - events such as the impending Foo Fighters anniversary concert on July 4th and the MLB game in 2018, which is expected to bring \$60 million to Washington, DC. These events, he says, serve as perfect examples of the ways that their mission continues to support the city's local hospitality and tourism industry, which results in significant economic benefits.

Washington, DC is also going to host many special events and familiar traditions that are certain to attract international and domestic leisure visitors during the upcoming second half of 2015, **including their impressive annual July Fourth celebrations, the Jazz Festival, the famous Renwick Gallery's reopening, and the Landmark Music Festival.**

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