

Everything you need to know about DC's cherry blossom season

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After a muted past two years, the springtime celebration of DC's cherry blossoms is back. Here's what to know.

WASHINGTON — The coronavirus pandemic has dulled the usual vibrant celebration of D.C.'s cherry blossoms over the last two years. This year, however, the festivities are back to full strength. Here's everything you need to know about the District's unique celebration to welcome spring.

Click [HERE](#) for a link to the day's events.

Cherry blossom fast facts

- There are 3,700 cherry trees on the National Mall; 90 are replaced annually
- The original Cherry Trees were planted in 1912, making this their 110th year.
- There are more than 36 million annual visits each year to the National Mall.
- Find where the trees are blooming [using this map](#)

When does the festival begin?

The Cherry Blossom Festival kicks off on March 20 with the opening ceremony. This year's celebration will include samurai sword performers KAMUI, international musicians Keisho Ohno, and Toshihiro Yuta local performances by the Unstoppable Steppers and DJ Heat.

"In honor of the 110th anniversary of the gift of trees, we've brought a number of talented artists together for a unique, one-time-only performance that isn't to be missed. While we're back in person this year, we'll once again share the celebration and joy of renewal with the world through our live-streamed program," said Diana Mayhew, president and CEO of the National Cherry Blossom Festival in a release. "We look forward to an unforgettable celebration of Japanese culture and the cherry blossoms that start at the stage and extend worldwide as we rediscover spring together once more."

When is peak bloom?

The blossoms reached peak bloom a little earlier than expected on March 21, 2022.

The official peak bloom prediction was March 22 - March 25.

The cherry blossoms have six stages of bloom, ending at peak bloom, when 70% of the trees surrounding the Tidal Basin have bloomed. Stage two was reached on March 7. We think the peak bloom might be even earlier, maybe March 19 to 22.

How did they come up with that prediction?

Estimating peak bloom is a difficult process, keeping experts on their toes all the way up to announcement day. In 2021, peak bloom came about a week earlier than anticipated. The NPS uses a combination of temperature analyses, historical records and psychic trees to make their estimate every year. Well, they're not technically psychic, but they act that way.

So what's a psychic tree? It's one that, at the Tidal Basin, every year without fail, blooms 7-10 days ahead of the rest of the Yoshino trees. According to Litterist, they don't quite know why. Despite this, that indicator tree is a helpful resource for predictions every year.

Remember, you're not supposed to touch the blooms

It's important to remember during your visit that it's illegal to harm any natural resources under the National Park Service's jurisdiction. And yes, that includes D.C.'s cherry blossoms.

Be sure not to shake, break, touch, or sit on any of the trees with the big pink or white blooms.

You can also protect the cherry trees for future generations by adopting a tree. Information on how to do that can be found [here](#).

How do I get there? Where do I stay?

The cherry blossom trees currently grow in three National Park Service locations: around the [Tidal Basin in West Potomac Park](#), in [East Potomac Park \(Hains Point\)](#), and on the [Washington Monument](#) grounds. For information on varieties of cherry blossom trees and park maps, see the [National Park Service](#) cherry blossom page.

Those coming from out of town can [find hotel information here](#).

Mike Litterst with the National Park Service suggests using public transportation to get into the Tidal Basin.

"Don't even try to drive," he said.

Organizers estimate a million and a half people will visit the area over the course of the whole festival.

"Plan ahead and pack your patience," Litterst said.

What else is going on?

[Petal Porches](#)

The National Cherry Blossom Festival is encouraging locals to get in on the fun by adorning homes with décor and crafts that have a spring theme. It's the second year that the festival encouraged the friendly, neighborly decorating competition.

[Bloom Sculptures](#)

The installation, entitled "Art in Bloom" will feature giant cherry blossom sculptures that will sit across the city and ultimately be placed in permanent locations. An interactive map will be posted in the days ahead, featuring where to find the statues.

[Petalpalooza Art Walk](#)

Locals and visitors alike can also get their art fix at this walk, which includes a series of immersive, 'Instagrammable' art installations. The series will be available from April 1 -17 at Capitol Riverfront.

[Kite festival](#)

Organizers announced that they're reviving the long-standing festival tradition. Participants of all ages are welcome at the festival, which is free to attend and will take place on the last weekend of March. Participants can bring their kites to fly on the Washington Monument grounds, other featured parks in the area or virtually in your own neighborhood.

[Pixelbloom](#)

This immersive, bloom-themed art exhibit at Southwest D.C.'s Artechouse involves grand projections of cherry blossoms, "pushing the limits of creative innovation at the intersection of art, science and technology."

[Online activities for the family](#)

Digital puzzles, kids' art, field guides to the flowers and more are available on the National Cherry Blossom Festival website. Even backgrounds for your zoom meetings are available to download.

Can't be there in person?

People from anywhere in the world can view the National Mall Tidal Basin from the roof of the Mandarin Oriental, Washington, D.C., courtesy of EarthCam.

Check out the [Bloomcam](#) to keep an eye on things at the Tidal Basin throughout the season.

The Trust for the National Mall also has two additional live streaming cameras -- [#BudCam](#) and [#MonumentCam](#) -- to offer enhanced views throughout the blooming season.

How did this whole thing get started?

The festival celebrates the famed 1912 gift of 3,000 cherry trees from Mayor Yukio Ozaki of Tokyo to the city of Washington, D.C. The classic springtime celebration highlights the enduring friendship between the people of the United States and Japan and has gone on to welcome more than 1.5 million people to enjoy the festivities, [according to the website](#).