



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



## Rock Creek Park Trails

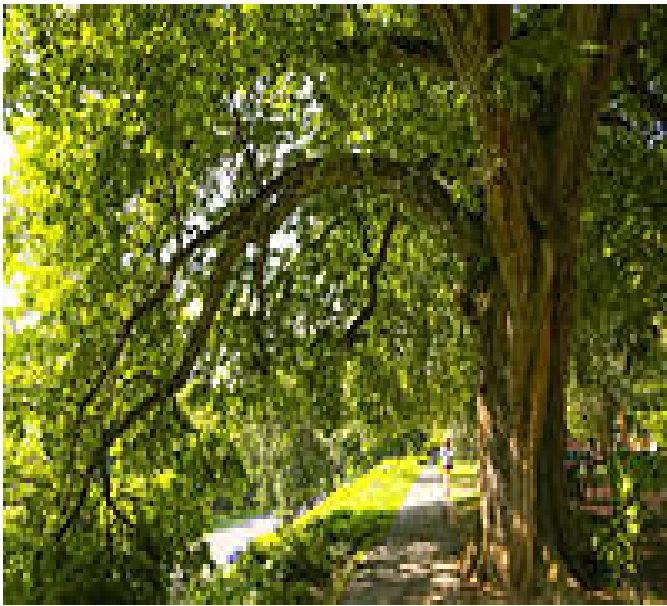
*District of  
Columbia*



# Rock Creek Park Trails

District of Columbia

*Overview Located in the northwestern neighborhoods of Washington, D.C., Rock Creek Park serves as a lush natural oasis*



## Overview

Located in the northwestern neighborhoods of Washington, D.C., Rock Creek Park serves as a lush natural oasis spanning more than 1,700 acres in the bustling heart of the nation's capital. Established in 1890, it has the distinction of being the oldest and largest urban park in the national park system. The park offers a variety of trails, consisting of a mix of dirt-surfaced paths for hikers, runners, and equestrians, as well as paved paths for bicyclists, wheelchair users, inline skaters, and walkers. The Rock Creek Park Trails offer 8.5 miles of paved multi-use trails that span large sections of the park.

## About the Route

The multi-use sections of Rock Creek Park exist in two main sections, but sections of Beach Drive open to bikers and pedestrians can help trail users traverse the whole park. The northern section's main access point is located at the Rock Creek Park Nature Center and Planetarium and forms a loop of the northern section of the park from there.

One piece of trail heads north, mainly alongside Oregon Ave. NW, passing by the Rock Creek Park Community Garden in its route. This section heads north to Wise Rd. NW, but to continue along the loop, trail users can turn right onto Bingham Rd., where the trail closely parallels the road. Where Bingham Rd. meets Beach Dr., the trail turns south again and the paved path weaves along Beach Rd. This section of trail, while paved, is much narrower than a typical multi-use trail surface, and can be crowded on the weekends. Road traffic is sparse through here, and bikers often share the road with cars.

Along Joyce Ave. NW, the trail crosses Rock Creek and heads back east along Military Dr. to complete this northern loop of the park.

The southern section of the Rock Creek Park Trails has a northern endpoint just below Broad Branch Rd. NW and heads south alongside Rock Creek on a wide asphalt trail. Shortly after this northern endpoint, the trail passes Pierce Mill, a still-operational gristmill from the 1820s. As the trail continues south, it crosses Rock Creek twice in just a mile. This section of the trail also frequently intersects with the hiking-only trails popular in Rock Creek Park, and signs point trail users in the right direction.

As the trail meanders along with the creek, it passes the Smithsonian National Zoo (which is free year-round). Just after passing one of the zoo entrances, the trail approaches the Beach Drive/Zoo Tunnel. From 7 am to 5 pm every day, the trail diverts users around the tunnel, but if traveling in the evening or morning hours, trail users must navigate the



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**States:** District of Columbia

**Counties:** Washington

Length: 8.5miles

**Trail end points:** Wise Rd. NW & Oregon Rd. NW (Washington, D.C.) to Lincoln Memorial, 2 Lincoln Memorial Cir NW (Washington, D.C.)

**Trail surfaces:** Asphalt

**Trail category:** Greenway/Non-RT

**Trail activities:** Bike,Inline

Skating,Wheelchair Accessible,Horseback

Riding,Walking,Cross Country Skiing

## Parking & Trail Access

The Rock Creek Park Trails run between Wise Rd. NW & Oregon Rd. NW (Washington, D.C.) and Lincoln Memorial, 2 Lincoln Memorial Cir NW (Washington, D.C.).

Parking is available at:

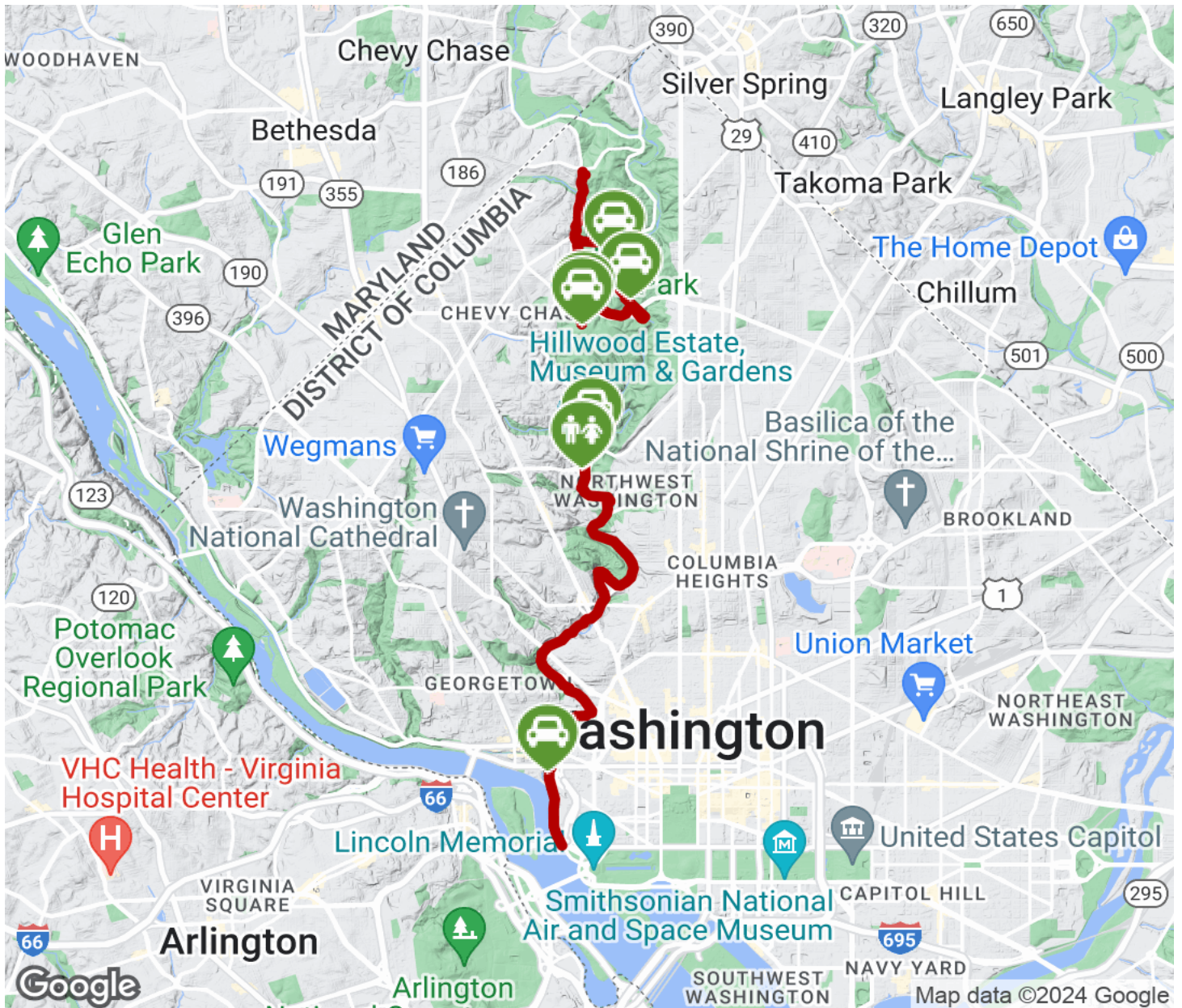
- Rock Creek Park Nature Center and Planetarium, 5200 Glover Rd NW (Washington, D.C.)
- 4100 Broad Branch Rd NW (Washington, D.C.)
- Pierce Mill, 2401 Tilden St NW (Washington, D.C.)

See [TrailLink Map](#) for all parking options and detailed directions.



# Rock Creek Park Trails

District of Columbia



Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



**TrailLink**  
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

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