

# Hemispheres

MARCH 2020

## Three Perfect Days Washington, D.C.

CHILI  
  
SMOKES

*Ben's  
Chili Bowl*

CHILI  
  
BURGER

**BEN'S...** 

A WASHINGTON LANDMARK

SINCE 1958 

1213U

**BEN'S** *Chili Bowl* **BEN'S**

Where you  
can ladle up  
a bowl of  
history on  
the vibrant  
U Street  
Corridor

*Chili* **BOWL** *Chili* **SMOKES** *Chili* **BURGERS**



By Chaney Kwak  
Photography by Scott Suchman



Three Perfect Days  
**Washington, D.C.**

Right: *hamachi tiradito* at Seven Reasons

I toy with the idea of continuing onto the new four-mile stretch of the trail on the other side of the river, but my stomach's already rumbling. After docking my bike, I use a rideshare app to zip over to another waterside neighborhood, **The Wharf**. This complex of hotels and entertainment venues, with its gleaming white marina and immaculate streets, shot up, seemingly out of nowhere, just a little over two years ago. If you like your towns scrubbed and tidy, this might be your best bet, with the bonus of upscale restaurants like the celebrated Spanish eatery Del Mar.

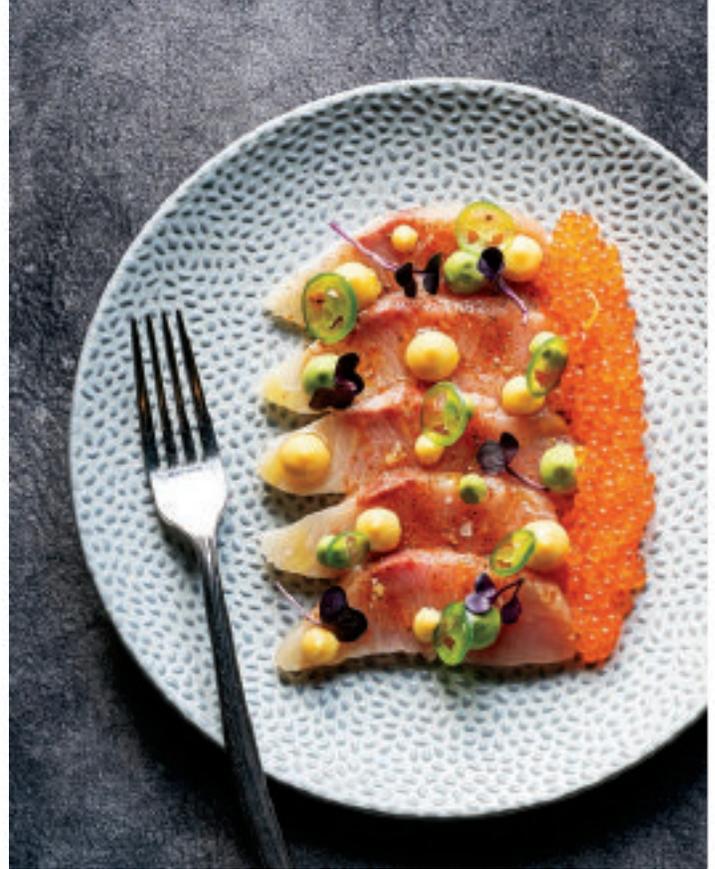
From the many choices, I decide on **Kith/Kin**, helmed by James Beard Rising Star Chef Kwame Onwuachi, who shares his Nigerian and Jamaican heritages through a mix of Caribbean and West African dishes elevated with global influences. My lunch, a monkfish *egusi* stew thickened with toasted melon seeds and served with starchy *fufu*, is the right amount of spicy and savory.

This corner of the District had come alive before this

development, though, thanks to the \$135 million Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater—three performance venues under one roof that showcase scrappy experimental performances as well as touring Broadway shows. Before I catch a production of *Newsies*, I meet up with playwright and director Psalmayene 24, who came up in the city's mid-'90s spoken word scene. "I feel so fortunate to be an artist who came

*"Just about every night you can find something unique to see on stage here, from puppetry to movement-driven theater."*

out of this community," he says. Growing up in Brooklyn demystified New York for him, he explains, so after he came to D.C. to attend Howard University, he never looked back. "I really appreciate the less hectic pace of D.C." he says. "There's more psychic and artistic head room."



Not that it means there are fewer opportunities to flaunt (and witness) talent. From Arena Stage to the Kennedy Center, Woolly Mammoth to the Theater Alliance at Anacostia, he rattles off a long list of theater companies. "Just about every night of the week you can find something exciting and unique to see on stage here, from puppetry to movement-driven theater," he says.

After the show, I head north to **Seven Reasons**, on the buzzy 14th Street corridor.

The celebrated eatery—*Esquire* named it the Best New Restaurant in America in 2019—is packed with chatty diners and a plethora of plants. Over *hamachi tiradito*, swordfish-belly tostadas, and fried octopus with charred spices, I catch up with old friends from my years in D.C., which now feel like both eons and mere days ago. The inventive dishes by Venezuelan chef Enrique Limardo have a similar effect: nostalgic yet new, comforting yet surprising. That's perhaps the magic of this intimate yet grand city. We all may come with an idea of what it should be, and in many ways it ticks off those boxes—and then it checks so many more. My friends and I toast my next visit, which will no doubt be soon. There are many more than seven reasons to return.

**Visit D.C.? What a capital idea!** It's the seat of government and the seat of one of United's premier East Coast hubs. With an average of more than 200 daily United flights into Washington-Dulles and nearly 40 into Washington-Reagan, there's only one question: **When are you leaving?**

## WHERE TO STAY

### Kimpton Hotel Monaco

In the middle of the downtown arts and theater district, across the street from the National Portrait Gallery, this 184-room hotel in the former General Post Office building features soaring vaulted ceilings and eclectic furnishings such as brightly painted chandeliers and armoires that pay homage to the structure's Neoclassical bones. From \$259, [monaco-dc.com](http://monaco-dc.com)

### The Dupont Circle

The only hotel in the U.S. from the Dublin-based Doyle Collection is named after the vibrant residential neighborhood it calls home. Locals flock to the ground-floor public spaces—a polyglot restaurant, The Pembroke, and a plush bar, Doyle—while guests can find elevated home-style comfort and panoramic views in the suites on the recently spruced-up Penthouse Level. From \$249, [doylecollection.com](http://doylecollection.com)

### Eaton DC

Part hotel, part creative workshop, Eaton DC defies categorization. Local creatives mingle at the buzzy rooftop bar and other communal spaces, but when you're ready to retreat, 209 guest rooms await with record players and one-of-a-kind prints. For extra rejuvenation, the holistic wellness center offers a wide range of yoga and meditation classes. From \$169, [eatonworkshop.com](http://eatonworkshop.com)