# WorldPride 2025 in Washington DC is geared up to put the protest back into Pride



In a piece written by JAKE director Stephen Unwin for The i newspaper this week, the conflicting forces of WorldPride to be held in Washington next month, are laid bare. Against a backdrop of promoters removing their support because of government pressure, he argues that this iteration of Pride could in fact be a return to the glory days of protest rather than corporate hijacking of the cause.

'The arrival of WorldPride coinciding with the 50th anniversary of Pride in D.C. allows us to spotlight the significance of our LGBTQ+ community,' says Ryan Bos, Executive Director of the Capital Pride Alliance. 'WorldPride 2025 will transcend symbolism, creating genuine opportunities for activism and mobilisation.'

WorldPride, held biennially, originated from a drive to big up the significance of Pride. Since Rome hosted the inaugural event in 2006, cities like London, New York, and Tel Aviv have taken turns in the spotlight. The irony of D.C. hosting this year’s WorldPride, particularly against a backdrop of growing bigotry, is certainly not lost on potential attendees.

It's noteworthy that visitor interest in the U.S. is reportedly waning; Virgin Atlantic has observed a decline in demand from the UK, and international visitor numbers fell by 11.6% in March compared to the same month in 2024. Yet, there’s a compelling case for engaging with this WorldPride occasion rather than opting for a boycott.

'Claiming space, visibility, and joy is a form of protest,' explains Simon Blake, CEO of Stonewall. Christopher Joell-Deshields, CEO of Pride in London, concurs: 'The spirit of joy, resilience, and community infuses Pride with its potency. WorldPride D.C. must serve as a moment of global resistance—reminding us all why we march.'

D.C., caricatured as 'the grand old benevolent National Asylum for the helpless' by Mark Twain, can surprise the visitor with just how much it has to offer for the gay community.

'People are astonished by how beautiful it is,' remarks Randy, who is high up at the Smithsonian, over drinks at The Little Gay Pub by Logan Circle. 'And just how queer and fun!'

For many, expectations of a city led by formidable civil servants conjure images of buttoned-up formality - power lunches, stiff hairdos, and anxious glances at gala dinners. 'Let’s go to Drag Brunch!' suggests Randy and suddenly highbrow and lowbrow combine to form D.C.'s unique selling point. From elegant dining to fantastic drag performances laced with witty banter, D.C. proves far more entertaining than initially presumed.

Drag Brunch can be found at Nellie’s, nestled in the LGBTQ-friendly U Street Corridor, one of four vibrant LGBTQ+ neighbourhoods surrounding the White House. Kiki, across the street, is notorious for its lively drag shows, while Uproar, just a block away, hosts rooftop Beer Busts for a modest fee, enticing patrons to drink the afternoon away. Thurst, D.C.’s only Black-owned LGBTQ+ bar, is located further afield towards Meridian Hill Park.

Other queer hotspots include Logan Circle’s Trade, a beloved pub with notoriously long Happy Hours, and The 9, a two-storey bar-lounge that envelops patrons in decadence. Dupont Circle houses The Fireplace, a classic venue for men who like men, alongside JR’s, a sports bar famous for its show-tune nights and more of those irresistible Happy Hours. Adams Morgan is the go-to for women, featuring A League of Her Own and Pitchers—two establishments that create a seamless transition from dancefloor to cocktail-laden rooftop.

The WorldPride festivities extend beyond D.C. into neighbouring cities, including Baltimore. Just a half-hour commuter train ride away, this city, which is a cultural tapestry of industry, progressive ideals, and convivial residents, offers its own distinctive LGBTQ+ charm.

Mark your calendars, book your tickets and pack your most outrageous outfits as the Capital Region - comprising D.C., Baltimore, and Richmond - gets ready to host the party of a lifetime. Because we gays were always good at partying in the face of adversity, right?

***worldpridedc.org***

## Bibliography

* <https://apnews.com/article/8399b87fb17792740d1c84094369c682> - This article discusses the upcoming WorldPride 2025 in Washington, D.C., highlighting the event's significance amid the current political climate and the expected attendance of up to four million visitors.
* <https://www.washingtonblade.com/2024/11/15/fabric-of-freedom-pride-theme-2025/> - This source details the theme 'The Fabric of Freedom' chosen for WorldPride 2025 in Washington, D.C., emphasizing the event's focus on unity and global action.
* <https://www.washingtonblade.com/2025/03/31/rainbow-history-project-details-worldpride-exhibition/> - This article provides information about the Rainbow History Project's exhibition 'Pickets, Protests, and Parades: The History of Gay Pride in Washington,' which will be part of WorldPride 2025.