

Discovering
American Democracy

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A Walking Tour of DC for
Hamilton Fans

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THE JEFFERSON
WASHINGTON DC

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Hamilton's legacy tour begins at the **Treasury Department**, just a few blocks from the hotel at 1500 Pennsylvania Ave., NW. Alexander Hamilton established a viable financial system for the early republic by setting up a national banking system, regulating currency, and securing credit. He was the first Secretary of the Treasury and his statue on the south patio overlooks the oldest departmental building in Washington. Hamilton would approve of the 30-column colonnade of 36-foot high columns carved from a single piece of granite that was added to the building in the 20th century as a fitting symbol of strength and stability.

As you head south on 15th St., notice **Freedom Plaza** to your left. Beneath your feet is a map of Pierre L'Enfant's original design for the "Federal City" on the site chosen by George Washington. It was Hamilton who agreed to move the nation's capital south from New York in exchange for southern states' paying for debts incurred by northern states. The deal was struck between Hamilton and James Madison at a dinner hosted by Thomas Jefferson and became known as the "dinner table bargain."



One block south and one block east will put you on Constitution Ave. at the Smithsonian's **National Museum of American History**, where you can see a collection of American currency. The federal government didn't issue paper currency until 1861, when "greenbacks" appeared in \$5, \$10, and \$20 denominations. Hamilton's face has graced more denominations than anyone else's. Since 1929, his profile has been on the \$10 bill. The museum recently acquired a portrait of Eliza Hamilton and the green silk suit Lin-Manuel Miranda wore in *Hamilton: An American Musical*.

Cross the National Mall on 14th St. and give a nod to the **Washington Monument**. The cornerstone was laid in 1848 and Hamilton's widow Eliza was very active in the Washington Monument Society's fundraising efforts.

14th and C Streets, SW, houses the **Bureau of Engraving and Printing**, an agency Hamilton helped found by supporting the U.S. Mint and Coinage Act of 1792. The building is open weekdays until 2:00 p.m. Watch the introductory film, observe the production facility from the gallery, and don't miss the \$1 million in uncut \$10 bills in the lobby.

Head back across the Mall to 9th St. and Constitution Ave., NW, to enter the **National Archives**, open every day except Thanksgiving and Christmas. The Charters of Freedom exhibit in the main rotunda displays original copies of the Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and Bill of Rights. (While you're in line to see them, notice the large mural on the right. It's a fictionalized version of the presentation of the Constitution. Hamilton is the second figure from the left with his back partially turned.

Hamilton's vigorous defense of the Constitution was instrumental in its ratification. He wrote most of *The Federalist*, (aka the Federalist papers), 85 anonymous essays that urged the reluctant NY state legislature to adopt the document. Once NY ratified, eight other states followed suit.

Hungry or thirsty? Exit the Archives on the 7th St. side and walk north a few blocks to find plenty of cafes, restaurants, and bars. Then walk west to the Smithsonian's **National Portrait Gallery** at 9th and G Sts., NW. Inside you will find a bust and paintings of Hamilton along with portraits of many of his contemporaries.

Make your way back toward the Jefferson Hotel via 13th and H Sts., NW. In 1848, Hamilton's widow Eliza (age 91) moved into her daughter's residence at this location. She entertained here and proudly displayed a wine cooler given to her late husband by George Washington.

Back at the Jefferson, what better way to relax than at Quill? Perhaps a cocktail with rum to honor Hamilton's birth on St. Croix? Or enjoy some coffee, a beverage Hamilton enjoyed strong and drank daily. One of his friends even attributed Hamilton's productivity to his coffee habit.



If you have more time, consider a visit to the **U.S. Capitol Building** at First and E. Capitol Sts., NE. One of the large paintings in the rotunda memorializes the surrender of British General Cornwallis at Yorktown, the last major battle in the Revolutionary War. It was also the only battle in which Hamilton led troops. He is shown in the front row on the right, standing just to the right of the horse.

East of the Capitol across First St., SE, the **Library of Congress** houses many of Hamilton's papers and a first edition of *The Federalist* that belonged to his wife. Eliza gave it to her sister Angelica (Schuyler) Church, whose friend Thomas Jefferson eventually acquired and annotated it. Jefferson called it the "best commentary on the principles of government which ever was written."