

Tour of the US Capitol

Plans proceed for our tour of the US Capitol.

Getting there

Take the green line from College Park to L'Enfant Plaza. Transfer to the Blue or Orange (downstairs) in the direction of New Carrollton or Largo Town Center. Go two stops to Capitol South. As you come up the escalators you are on First St. SE. Walk north on this street, cross Independence Ave. and continue to walk until you are on the East Front of the capitol. There you will see signs directing you to the underground Capitol Visitors Center.

Within the Visitor's Center

You will need to pass through security. You will need to avoid bringing backpacks and other large bags. (See <http://www.visitthecapitol.gov/>) Go to Emancipation Hall which is the large hall a floor below the entrance. We will meet in front of the Helen Keller statue.

Time to be there

We will meet at 2:45 PM on Friday, October 22. Leave yourself plenty of time. If we leave without you, you will not be able to catch up with the tour. If you arrive early you may wish to visit the museum on the Congress. Take a look at the material on the early 19th century that is on display there.

What we will see

My understanding is that we will get the normal Capitol tour with two additions: the Old Supreme Court Chamber and the Old Senate Chamber. The [former](#) was a part of the reconstruction after the British burned the Capitol in 1814, and housed the Supreme Court from 1819 until 1860. Thus, this was the chamber in which John Quincy Adams argued the Armistead case, the Dred Scott decision brought the issue of slavery to a head, and Daniel Webster made his many appearances as a constitutional lawyer. The [latter](#) was the home of the US Senate from 1819 until 1859 (except for the years when the capitol was being rebuilt after it was burned). This is the chamber where the famous slavery debates of the early 19th century took place. Since the new visitor's center opened, these two chambers are no longer part of the normal capitol tours.

Our tour arranger from Senator Milkulski's office has secured permission for us to have the Old Supreme Court Chamber on our tour. She is still working to secure the permission for the Old Senate Chamber. She and I will talk next week and I will let you know if it is cancelled for any reason.