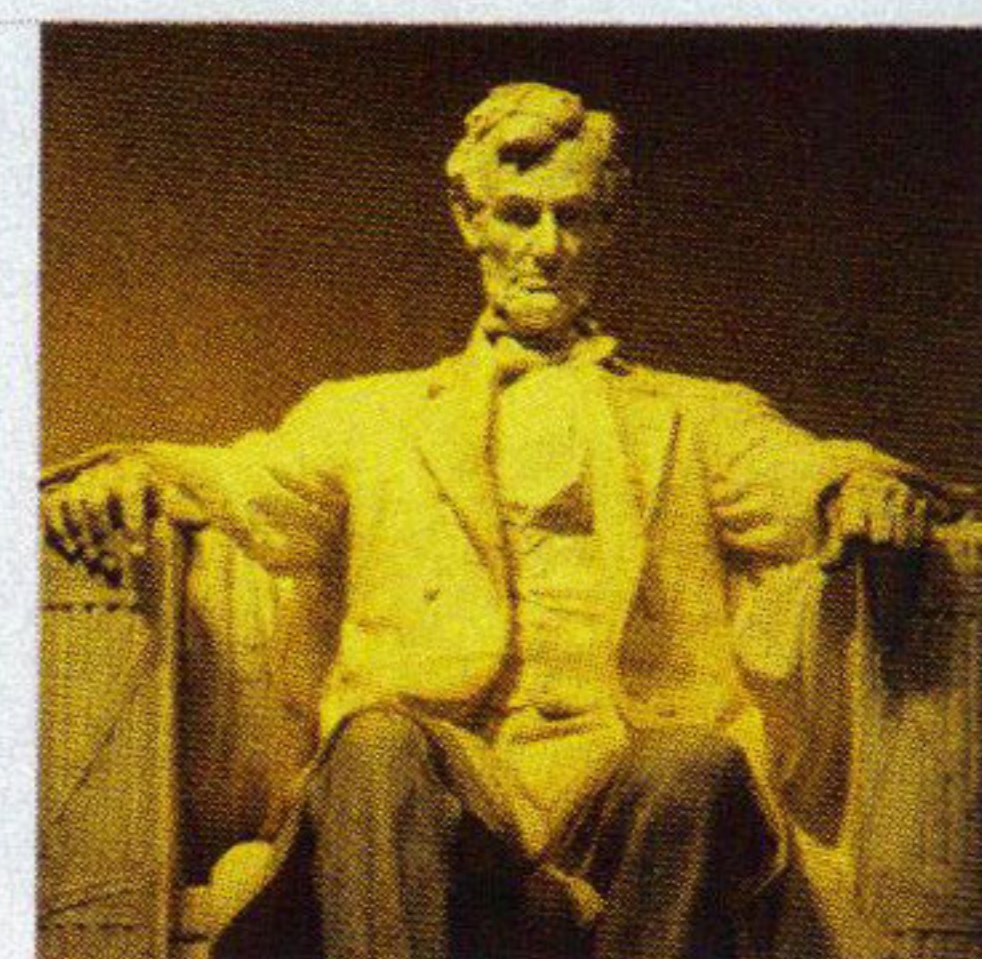


FOOTLOOSE

In Washington

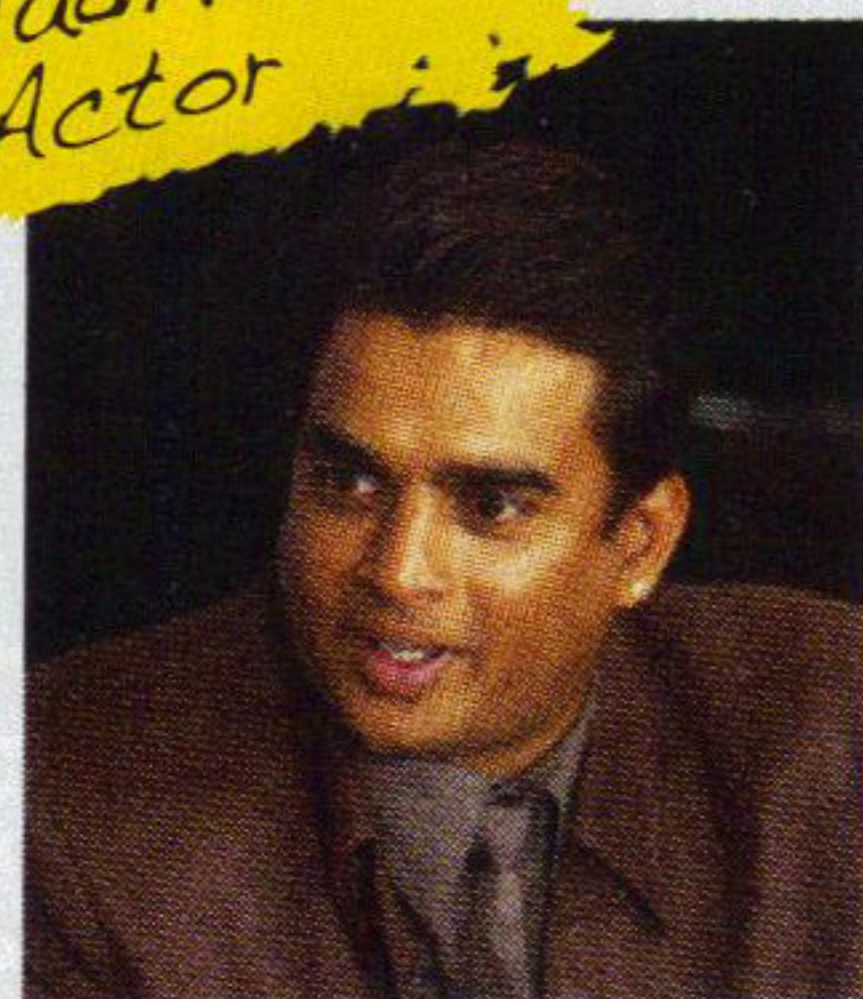


Since most of DC can be done on foot, arm yourself with our checklist of fun things to do and make sure you tick them all. **BY OLIVIA GREENWAY**

■ Near Dupont Circle is a delightful and unusual Asian-style teashop, **Teaism** with the best organic Earl Grey tea imaginable. Enjoy it with their signature salted oat cookie or ginger scone. There is seating upstairs, so if you are feeling peckish, try something from the main food menu as well. This could be a delicious sweet and sour seitan stir-fry with macadamia nuts and organic brown rice or a bento box with teriyaki salmon, cucumber and ginger salad, edamame and rice. Miso soup and melt-in-your-mouth tofu is also recommended. www.teaism.com

■ The Smithsonian National Air and Space museum is the most visited museum in the world and for good reason.

R Madhavan Actor



HK RAJASHEKAR

My American dream holiday was in Florida. I planned a two-month break with the entire family—my wife, parents and even in-laws. We didn't stay in any fancy hotel or resort. We chose to stay in a beautiful house on the beach. We ate, sang, danced, played golf, went white water rafting... It was like living a dream!

Under one roof, in 22 galleries, you can spend hours exploring the marvels of flight travel, from the original "Flight of St Louis" flown by Wright in 1903 to looking at the Apollo 11 command module and touching a real piece of lunar rock. The most exciting part is probably the 3D journey through space offered at the Lockheed Martin IMAX Theater. Tickets need to be purchased in advance but visiting the museum itself is free. www.nasm.si.edu

■ There is so much you miss when you visit somewhere on your own. This is where **DC by Foot** comes in. A walking tour guide service, they offer several choices; the trip to Arlington Cemetery is strongly recommended. No booking necessary. Set in 624 acres overlooking the Pentagon, some of the Kennedys are buried here along with tombs of the unknown soldiers. The tour leader tells you just enough to pique your interest, along with anecdotes you won't find in the guidebooks. For example, when the Pentagon was hit on 9/11, the guards were released from duty guarding the tombs, but refused to go. The changing of the guard ceremony, the 200-strong crowd remaining totally silent, is poignant and touching. No charge for the tour, just a tip appreciated at the end. www.dcbfoot.com

■ You can usually tell how good a place is by how difficult it is to get a table. And so it is with **Founding Farmers**, the hip restaurant using as much

local produce as possible and making the idea of being green or eco-friendly sexy and modern. A huge elliptical bar sits in the middle of the ground floor space, where people sit to watch the award-winning mixologists at work. Tables are scattered around the outside; with the wooden floor and furniture, the noise reaches a crescendo, but most are too busy enjoying their food to notice. Corn bread served in a skillet; fried green tomatoes; and southern pan-fried chicken with waffles and mac and cheese are a few of the many temptations. Drinks options include beer from several microbreweries, interesting soft drinks and the special cocktail *Classic Cobbler* is bound to pack a punch. www.wearefoundingfarmers.com

■ Politics, perhaps not, but everyone is interested in news and the gathering of it. At the **Newseum**, the only one of its kind in the world, there are six floors devoted to it. Areas covered run from newsprint to

early radio and television. Part of the Berlin Wall is here, newspaper archives and hands-on radio and TV activities for both children and adults. There is a moving 9/11 exhibition and a dedication wall to all journalists who have died in service. Along with the front pages of that day's newspapers, perhaps the most impressive is the world map clearly indicating freedom of the press and repression. www.newseum.org

■ The appropriately named the **Off the Record** bar, in the Hay-Adams hotel, within spitting distance of the White House, is perfect for people watching and cocktail sipping. With its rich polished mahogany floor and sumptuous red upholstered furniture, it gives the impression of understated luxury. Famous political caricatures grace the walls and sometimes sit at the tables in real life. Who knows, you may be lucky and hear something. www.hayadams.com

DON'T MISS

● **Georgetown**, just across the Potomac River and west of the city, is primarily a shopping area crammed with fascinating independent boutiques, restaurants and bars. A few notable chain stores put in an appearance such as Barnes and Noble bookshop, Zara and Banana Republic.

● **National Cherry Blossom Festival**, an annual festival held in end March each year. This is how the city likes to welcome spring and the centre of attraction are the 3,000 cherry trees Tokyo gifted to the US capital. Expect song and dance, sports events, food fests and street theatre.