

## National Park Service reveals peak dates for DC cherry blossom season

By [Saman Shafiq](#), March 5, 2026



The predictions are in for Washington D.C.'s 2026's [cherry blossom season](#), which means we've almost made it to the end of a [very brutal winter](#).

The [National Park Service \(NPS\) on Thursday, March 5 announced](#) peak bloom for the District of Columbia's Tidal Basin cherry blossoms is expected to fall between March 29 and April 1 this year, though the exact timing is dependent on weather conditions.

The peak bloom date is "defined as the period when 70% of the Yoshino Cherry blossoms are open," [according to the park service](#), and varies each year depending on weather conditions. About 3,800 cherry trees grow around the Tidal Basin and National Mall, and 250 new cherry trees, [a 2024 gift from Japan](#), will be planted over the coming months, a spokesperson for [Destination DC said](#).

The cherry trees were given "as a gift of friendship to the People of the United States from the People of Japan," the park service says. More than 3,000 cherry trees of various varieties [arrived in Washington](#) from Yokohama on March 26, 1912.

How long is peak bloom?

NPS noted the dates are predictions and can vary because peak bloom is dependent on weather conditions.

"Peak Bloom varies annually depending on weather conditions and usually occurs during the last week of March or the first week of April," NPS said. "Extraordinary warm or cool temperatures have resulted in Peak Bloom as early as March 15 (1990) and as late as April 18 (1958)."

The length of blooming period also depends on the weather, [according to the park service](#). Cool and calm weather can extend the length of blooming period, but a rainy, windy day can cause the ephemeral blossoms to end abruptly. A late frost can prevent the trees from blooming altogether.

"The Yoshino trees typically bloom for only several days, making a short-lived scene of splendor that is one of Washington, D.C.'s most anticipated events," NPS said in its announcement.

### Where are the best views of the cherry blossoms?

Though cherry blossoms are scattered throughout the capital, the highest concentration of the trees is in Potomac Park, around the Tidal Basin near the Jefferson Memorial, close to the National Mall, making it the most-visited spot for cherry blossom viewing. This year, the Tidal Basin will feature a more resilient infrastructure with wider walkways following [restoration efforts](#) to strengthen

the seawall. However, walkways between the Jefferson Memorial and Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial, marked the Tidal Basin restoration zone will remain closed throughout the bloom period to protect the newly restored areas and landscaping, NPS said.

Washington tourism department also [recommends off-the-radar spots](#) such as the National Arboretum, Anacostia Park, Dumbarton Oaks in Georgetown, Stanton Park and Oxon Run Park.

Those not in D.C. can catch the cherry blossoms on the [Trust for the National Mall's BloomCam](#), offered in partnership with the National Park Service and Earthcam. Positioned on the Salamander Washington DC rooftop, the BloomCam “offers 24/7, live, real-time view of the cherry trees lining the Tidal Basin,” according to its website.

### **When is the 2026 National Cherry Blossom Festival?**

The park service, in collaboration with the [National Cherry Blossom Festival](#), will be celebrating the bloom in the district from March 20 to April 16. The [opening ceremony](#), described as “an artistic celebration of the 1912 gift of trees from Tokyo to Washington, D.C.,” and an “annual tribute to the longstanding friendship between Japan and the U.S.” will take place at the DAR Constitution Hall on March 21 at 5 p.m.

“This unique, one-time-only performance will feature special performances from acclaimed artists with ties to both countries,” the festival’s website said.

Multiple events are scheduled for the festival, including a parade, concerts and fireworks, for locals and for visitors who descend upon the city during the season.

[Festival highlights](#) include:

- The [Blossom Kite Festival](#) around the Washington Monument on March 28 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- The [Cherry Blossom Festival Parade](#) on April 11 from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. 10 blocks along Constitution Avenue.
- The [Petalpalooza music and arts festival](#) from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Capital Riverfront on April 4, with fireworks at 8:30 p.m.

The dates for some events, such as the Jefferson Memorial Cherry Blossom Ranger Talk, ranger-led lantern walks, and the Pups N’ Petals Dog Walk have not yet [been announced by NPS](#).