

Local Guide to H Street NE

In the past five years, the H Street NE Corridor has rapidly evolved from the scary, forgotten neighborhood that was ignored by the District of Columbia government—after the commercial corridor was burned out in the 1968 race riots—to one of the leading hipster ‘hoods in the country. Long a haven for drugs and the violence that accompanies that underworld, H Street is now hip, happening, and home to many whom live on the residential streets radiating from the commercial strip, all of which is in the midst of gentrification. As a long-term resident I can tell you that H Street has gone from an area where no cab driver would drop you to a neighborhood teeming with restaurants, a few boutiques, and music venues that run the gamut from classical to hip hop. An easy cab or bus ride from the hotel will bring you to some of my favorite hangouts. All the restaurants have a great weekend brunch option and many boast an active live music scene.

—Gregg Most, National Gallery of Art

Travel suggestions: Cab or a 15 minute bus ride. From 11th and H Sts. NW, grab the X2 bus east. This tour starts at 4th St. NE. With any luck the DC streetcar will be up and running, giving you the option of hopping on and off along H St from Union Station to 15th St. NE.

[Ethiopic](#) (401 H St. NE)

Considered by the Washington Post food critic as one of the best Ethiopian restaurants in a city of great Ethiopian places, Ethiopic gets busy early—so reserve a table. Try the Doro Key Wot – my favorite.

[Boundary Road](#) (414 H St. NE)

This is one of my favorite places for a cocktail and a bite. It became instantly popular after President and Mrs. Obama had dinner here three weeks after it opened. The staff is friendly and whoever is behind the bar knows exactly how I like my Manhattan (Up, perfect, extra bitters). My favorite appetizer (which I often have as a main) is the quark and black pepper pierogis. It gets crowded later at night so book a table or hope for a seat at the bar. Good late night menu.

[Le Grenier](#) (502 H St. NE)

A charming slice of Montmartre in the District, Le Grenier serves a perfect duck confit most nights and has amazing crepes on the weekend brunch menu. An excellent selection of wine by the glass, mostly French.

[The Hunted House](#) (510 H Street NE)

A great stop for mid-century modern antiques. Who knew that hanging, puce fiberglass lamp of Aunt Betty’s was worth so much?

[The Liberty Tree](#) (1016 H St. NE)

This is my local hangout and has avoided most of the hipsters and their irony. With its varied menu of mostly seafood and pizza (with a New England edge), but also an admirable burger, I can always find something that satisfies (Lobster mac and cheese or my own special pizza!). Well-priced menu and friendly servers keep the place popular with locals. By May, the patio should be open—so getting a seat may be easier.

[Atlas Room](#) (1015 H St. NE)

This is for a more formal dining experience with plenty of vegetarian and vegan options. A little more pricy than other spots, the bar offers hand-crafted cocktails that are worth the wait.

[Little Miss Whiskey's Golden Dollar](#) (1104 H St. NE)

A funky bar with an extensive beer menu, dancing upstairs at night, and a Zen garden in the back.

[Cusbah](#) (1128 H St. NE)

Spicy Indian and Pakistani food with a late night music scene. Nice sidewalk space.

[The Queen Vic](#) (1206 H St. NE)

One of DC's first gastro-pubs, The Queen Vic (named after the pub in the British soap opera East Enders) is also the place to get your soccer, errr, football fix. The traditional Sunday roast dinner is not to be missed. Not the best spot for our vegan friends.

[Toki Underground](#) (1234 H St. NE)

Good luck getting a seat at DC's hottest ramen and dumpling bar that is *not* underground but on the second floor. Even Alice Waters from Chez Panisse stood in line. It is totally worth the wait. Put your name on the list and go try a local bar (Like Arcade or Church and State nearby).

[Rock and Roll Hotel](#) (1353 H St. NE)

Venue for indie rock bands and alternative music. Okay—this is not one of my hangouts, but I am occasionally coerced into attending a friend's show and have a good time. Check their website for performances.

[Connorsmith Contemporary Art](#) (1358 Florida Avenue NE)

One of DC's leading contemporary art venues featuring artists like Maria Friberg and Leo Villareal.