



The Long and Short of It

Running in D.C.

Robin and I had the opportunity to take a trip with my sister to Washington D.C. in September. We had never been there and we were of course very excited to see all the historic buildings and monuments. As with all of our vacations we were anxious about finding good places to run. When we discovered that the hotel my sister booked was well outside the city center, and when we had to pass through a pretty dicey part of town on the way, we briefly considered moving to another hotel. As luck would have it however, we just happened to be a stone's throw from the National Arboretum which is huge and covered with miles of criss-crossing roads and trails. Thankfully we found that we only had to run down one not so nice block then cut through a surprisingly pleasant little neighborhood to get to the gates of the arboretum. The arboretum turned out to be beautiful. There are different loops you can take that highlight various kinds of trees and bushes – azaleas, conifers, hardwoods, dogwoods etc. The terrain is rather hilly but not tremendously so. One interesting feature of the arboretum is the “National Columns”. In 1958 when the Capitol was expanded the original Columns were moved to the National Arboretum and set on a small knoll in an open area. When you view them at a distance they look exactly like a Greek or Roman ruin. All in all the National Arboretum was a real god-send. It made running every day convenient and fun in an otherwise dreary part of town.

On the third or fourth day of our trip after we had already visited the White House, the Capitol and done a biking tour of the National Mall (highly recommended), I decided to run from Union Station past the Capitol, Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial etc out to the Potomac and back. This was a lot of fun. There were always lots of runners almost everywhere we went in D.C. and it was nice to be out among them for what turned out to be a two-hour run. It would have been shorter but I stopped to take a few photos with my iPhone.

Besides our running we walked miles and miles the week we were in D.C. No need for a car. Public transportation is great and thankfully our hotel had a good shuttle back and forth to Union Station.

Running in NYC

The second half of our vacation was spent in New York City. We had been there in November of '09 when I ran the marathon and we pledged to go back when we had more time to see everything at a more leisurely pace. We took the train from Washington D.C. to Penn Station in Manhattan and it worked out great. We walked three blocks from Penn Station to our hotel on 29th St West in no time at all, got settled in and began planning our itinerary for the next day. We decided that a run in Central Park would be the first thing on the agenda. I was excited to run in the park again as my last time here I was in the latter stages of the race and I did not have much of an opportunity to actually enjoy it. Robin had warned me that there are few straight lines in the park and that it is easy to double-back on your route without realizing it. We made our way to *the bridle path* which is a nice dirt trail, very wide and perfect for running. If you have never been to Central Park or if it has been a very long time, be assured that it is quite beautiful and safe – at least during daylight hours. We had taken the subway to Columbus Circle and were now running in a northerly direction toward the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis Reservoir. There is a unidirectional running path – almost a track- that goes around the reservoir. People tend to pick it up when going around the reservoir and we were no exception. The park is over 840 acres in size so it takes quite a while to get from one end to the other. For comparison - Golden Gate Park is over 1,000 acres. We soon turned around and got in over an hour of running before we finished.

That week we did most of our running in Central Park but to break things up we ran one day along the Hudson in Riverside Park and on another day we ran directly from our hotel along the waterfront.

Besides our daily runs we walked many miles in the concrete canyons of NYC, going everywhere from China Town to the Upper West Side. We ate tons of good food; mostly in deli's and didn't spend much time resting. About the time we headed back to Penn Station to take us to the airport in Newark we were ready to come home to Santa Rosa and Annadel.

DM Peterson