

# Washington D.C. Trip

## The Food Allergy Survival Guide

*Hadley and Leena*

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## Introduction:

Lucky for you 8th graders, if you are reading this, you are most likely visiting Washington D.C. soon! From fascinating monuments and interesting museums to fun nights in the hotel room with your friends, the trip couldn't get any better. Below, we have prepared a D.C. trip survival guide with advice and guidelines that you should follow on this trip to stay safe and successfully manage your food allergy. Bon Voyage! - Hadley and Leena :)



# Preparation

**Money:** Bring at least \$150 in cash. This is a precaution and slightly more than the school's recommended amount due to the fact that you may need to seek out allergy friendly meals- you can't put a price on safety!

**Snacks:** Be sure to pack plenty of allergy-friendly snacks for yourself

- Keep snacks with you for on the go in case a dining place the group visits cannot safely provide you a meal or you do not feel comfortable eating there.

**Medications:** You must pack your emergency allergy medications on the trip and make sure the nurse and trip leaders

have access to them as well! This may include but is not limited to epinephrine (such as Epipen) and/or antihistamine (such as Benadryl) depending on your individual allergic needs

- Be sure that your medication forms for the D.C. trip are adequately filled out so that you can make sure your chaperones and trip leaders will know about your allergies and how to help in case of emergency

**Hand Sanitizer:** Bring this to keep with you on the trip (including the hotel room, on the bus, out in about in a pocket or purse) - you can use it consistently to keep your hands free of any possible contact allergens. This may seem like a trivial detail or not a necessity, but it can be truly helpful in the long run.

**Toothbrush/Toothpaste:** You should also pack your own toothbrush and toothpaste

for only you to use during your trip. Cross contamination can occur easily if toothpaste is shared, so take precaution and pack toothpaste to be used by you and only you.

Be sure that you **inform your roommates** of your allergies well in advance of the trip so that they can avoid bringing snacks that you are allergic to and be aware of how to keep you safe!



## Staying Safe on the Bus

**Snacks:** Take many different snacks with you to keep yourself safe on the bus. If offered snacks by your peers and teachers, do not accept unless you can **check** and **know for a fact** that the snack is free of your allergen(s).

**Rest Stops:** Long journeys are hard to get through without a rest stop. During both 6 hour trips, you and your bus, stop at a rest stop. You are expected to get two meals from the rest stop. Lunch on the way there and dinner on the way back. Both rest stops provide a variety of food choices including **Subway\***, Popeye's, Baja Fresh, Burger King, Carvel, Cinnabon, a deli, and more! There is a great chance that you will find something to eat, if not contact your chaperone for

more options.

\*Subway has a variety of sandwiches that are nut-free and they do not use shellfish on the premises. Subway is a great option for nut/shellfish allergies.

### **Raising Awareness for your Allergies:**

Make sure that at least one **adult** (chaperone or trip leader) on your bus is aware of your food allergies. This means that not only do they know the severity of your allergy, they also know **have your emergency medication(s) with them at all times and understand how and when to administer them.**

**Avoiding your Allergens:** Do *not* sit next to someone, who is eating food that contains your allergen. For example, if you are allergic to peanuts, do not sit next to a friend who is eating PB&J for lunch. ***Proactivity is key***

*when it comes to managing your food allergy during travel.*



## Staying Safe in the Hotel Room

**Snacks:** Don't eat shared group snacks food unless you are absolutely certain that

the snack does not contain anything you are allergic to. If one of your roommates has a snack you are allergic to, politely ask them not to eat it and explain why. If they absolutely have to, have them eat the snack on the other end of the room, making sure to keep the hotel environment safe.

**Avoiding Allergic Contact:** Make sure all of your roommates (especially the one you are sharing a bed with), after possibly having consumed a potential allergen, wash their hands thoroughly, take a shower, and brush their teeth well before going to sleep. This will greatly reduce the risks of having an allergic contact reaction.

**Medication(s):** Make sure to keep your emergency allergy medications with you in your hotel room (provided that you have permission from the school). Your chaperones will have them in their rooms

too, but this extra step ensures the safest hotel situation possible for yourself. Be sure that one of your friends knows how to administer the EpiPen or to get a chaperone in the unlikely occasion that you have a severe reaction.



## Out and About Around D.C.

**Carrying a Bag:** With tons of museums, monuments, memorials and other places to visit in a single week, you are always traveling through security. Chaperones don't

typically allow students to carry bags with



them  
off of  
the  
bus,  
but if  
you  
have

food allergies, you are an exception to this rule if you are authorized by your parents to carry your own medication (check with school nurse)

**Inside your Bag:** We recommend that if you carry a bag, it does not contain any food (gum is fine) due to security checks and various rules at museums and other historical sites. Bring all of your money for lunches and other necessities while on the go. On our trip, one of our peers at the Capitol had a large backpack full of snacks

and drinks that he tried to bring through security. He had to throw out numerous family-sized snacks and water bottles. Don't be that person!

***If you don't have a bag to carry or do not carry your own medications on you, we advise that you stay near your trip advisor or chaperone when visiting different sites because they will have immediate access to your medication(s).***

# Out and About- Eating on the Go

Washington D.C. has many groceries, deli's, and shops on every corner. If a restaurant fails to provide food for you, eat some of your packed snacks (=held by a teacher or on the bus) to hold you off. Then, you and a chaperone or trip leader can go to another store on the block to find safe food for you.

## **Hadley's Washington Experience:**

Hi, I'm Hadley, one of the author's of this booklet! I just recently went to Washington with severe allergies to peanuts, tree nuts, shellfish, and poppyseeds. I thought I would share my eating experience here in order to help future students be prepared and feel safe on the trip knowing where they will likely be eating, since eating locations don't generally vary greatly year to year.

Please note that our dining experiences in Washington D.C. 2017 may vary from those of future trips. Keep this in mind as you prepare for your travels.

### **Day 1:**

- *Bag Lunch from Home or at Rest Stop*
  - For Day 1 lunch, our bus stopped at the Delaware House Rest Stop, which has plenty of chain restaurants and a little food market. I had some food that I had packed for myself before I left and I also bought myself a fruit cup I knew would be safe.
- *Dinner: Kora Restaurant, Arlington Virginia (Bus 1 & 2) or Park Place Gourmet (Bus 3 & 4)*
  - I ate dinner at Kora Restaurant, which a mini buffet with assorted pasta and salad for our school group. When I called ahead, I was told to speak to a manager about my food allergies. This I did, and I was given a safe gluten free penne with marinara and broccoli, that came straight from the kitchen instead of the buffet.

## Day 2:

### - *Breakfast at Hotel*

- I found that for the most part, breakfast at the hotel was safe for me. Breakfasts stayed very consistent, with daily foods such as scrambled eggs, yogurts, cereals, potatoes, fruits, muffins, and more. Upon



asking the chef, I was told that everything at breakfast was nut and shellfish free. I was told that I would be able to eat everything, however, I never had the muffins they served as muffins that aren't made in house can usually be cross contaminated.

### - *Lunch on the Go*

- On day 2, after taking a tour of the capital, my bus ate lunch at the RayBurn House Office Building at one of the main Senate cafes. There was a variety of options



such as an Asian buffet, pre packed sandwiches and salads, and burger and salad ordering areas. I stayed away from the pre packed foods because they all had a label saying “May Contain peanuts, tree nuts, shellfish,” and more major 8 allergens. I ended up having a Greek Beet and Feta Salad made in front of me at the salad area after being told there were no nuts or shellfish used at the salad making area.

- *Dinner: The Pentagon City Mall FoodCourt*

- At the Pentagon City Mall Food Court, we were given food



vouchers with about 8-10 choices of places to go for dinner. I chose to go to Subway and get a sandwich there, as I generally find that this is the chain restaurant most free of my allergens.

**Day 3:**

- *Breakfast at Hotel*

- *Lunch at the Zoo*

- The Zoo's food area didn't have many great options. My friends and I split a cheese pizza.



Additionally, a few of them ordered French- fries for the group, but

when I asked the chef he told me not to eat the fries as he didn't know if they would be free of my allergens..

- *Dinner: Spirit Moonlight Cruise*

- For this dinner, we had a buffet and dance party on a boat cruise. The buffet consisted of foods such as salad, macaroni and cheese, green beans, chicken wings, and a taco bar. I asked one of the managers on the boat what would be safe for me, who then asked the chef and told me that I could eat all of the dinner options, except the taco shells, because they weren't made



in house and he didn't

know what kind of oils were used to make them. So, I stuck to salad, mac and cheese, and green beans, which worked out well for me. They also had dessert with fruit and cookies, which I stayed away from because desserts can be tricky for someone with a food allergy.

#### Day 4:

- *Breakfast at Hotel*
- *Lunch at the Christiana Mall in Delaware.*

- The group was scheduled to eat at the food area in George Washington's Mount Vernon, but we ended up eating at the Christiana Mall, where we ate at the fine dining establishment



known as the food court. There were options such as Chipotle, Auntie Anne's, Starbucks, Chick-Fil-A, Subway, Sbarro, and Ruby Thai Kitchen, in addition to many others. I ended up eating at

Subway once again.

- We ended up returning to Central Middle School earlier than we had planned (7:30 pm instead of a predicted 9 pm), so we didn't end up eating dinner on the road. For this reason, I recommend making sure you have plenty of snacks on the bus with you in your carry on.