

# Rite of Spring

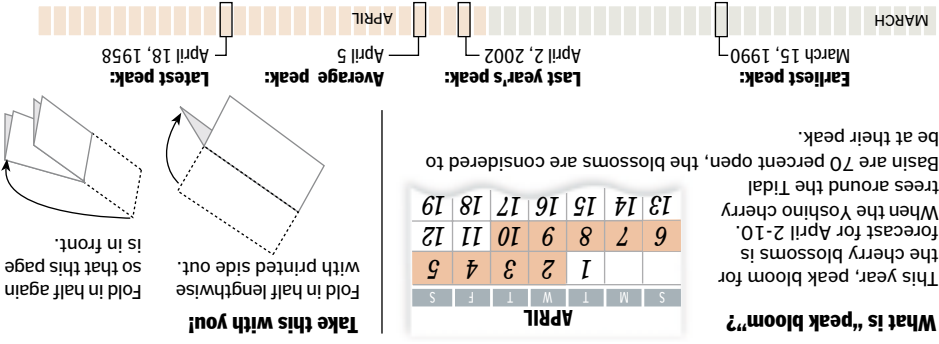
**GUIDE TO THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS** Go to [www.washingtonpost.com/cherryblossoms](http://www.washingtonpost.com/cherryblossoms) for more information

About one million people attend National Cherry Blossom Festival events and visit the Tidal Basin to see cherry trees in bloom. The tradition began in 1912, when 3,020 cherry trees of 12 varieties were given to the United States by Japan as a symbol of peace between the nations. What to look for when you go:

## What is "peak bloom"?

This year, peak bloom for the cherry blossoms is forecast for April 2-10. When the Yoshino cherry trees around the Tidal Basin are 70 percent open, the blossoms are considered to be at their peak.

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## IDENTIFYING THE BLOSSOMS

Japanese cherry trees are unlike other cherry trees because they bloom for a very short time and do not bear fruit. The Japanese have cultivated more than 400 varieties. There are now more than 3,700 cherry trees around the Tidal Basin in West Potomac Park, East Potomac Park, the Washington Monument grounds and connecting parks.

WEeping HIGAN	YOSHINO	AKEBONO	KWANZAN
Blossoms have either single layers of petals or double layers of petals and range from white to dark pink.	Almond-scented with single, white blossom clusters. Because the flowers bloom before the leaves appear, the blossoms create a white cloud effect around the Tidal Basin.	Single pale-pink blossoms that fade to white.	Produce deep pink double flowers up to 2.5 inches across that fade with age; grouped together in tight clusters with about 30 petals in each cluster.



## POINTS OF INTEREST

- The Tidal Basin** is a traditional favorite for cherry blossom viewing. A sidewalk runs around the basin. Below are some places of interest along the route.
- Stone Lantern** was given to the city by the governor of Toyko in 1954 as a symbol of Japanese-American friendship. This year's lighting celebration—at 2:30 p.m. on March 30—marks the 352nd anniversary of the first lighting of the lantern in 1651.
- The FDR Memorial**, dedicated in 1997, honors the 32nd president and documents his 12 years in office. Visitors move through a sequence of four outdoor rooms, each devoted to a term.
- Paddle boats** can be rented here from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily, offering unique view of the cherry blossoms.
- The Thomas Jefferson Memorial** was built in 1943 to honor Thomas Jefferson, third U.S. president. Lights installed in 2001 enhance nighttime viewing.
- Japanese pagoda**
- Holocaust Museum**
- Bureau of Engraving and Printing**

**GETTING TO THE TIDAL BASIN**

- An information booth is staffed by the Park Service 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. through April 7, 2025-547-1500.
- Parking is extremely limited near the Tidal Basin.** Visitors are strongly encouraged to take the Metro's Blue or Orange to the Smithsonian station.
- Walking or biking along the Potomac is another fun way to go.** Paved paths stretch up to Greek Park. Please don't take bikes onto grass.
- Three small parking lots between the bridges.
- Reporting by Breanna Maloney, Anne Enderbide, Maps by Laris Karulis. Design by Laura Stanton.