

# ROADTRIP | The Nature of Reston

**WHERE:** Reston.

**WHY:** Savor some Japanese sake, hear a hoot and visit several man-made lakes.

**HOW FAR:** About 20 miles from Washington.

As a native of Reston, people often ask me, "What's out there other than the Town Center?" Well, lots. Despite perceptions, Reston is hardly just a sleepy, little suburb bisected by the Dulles Toll Road.

One of the first planned communities in the nation, Reston was founded and designed in the 1960s by New York City-transplant Robert E. Simon Jr. He envisioned a bounty of affordable housing, jobs, culture, civic activities and recreation for everyone from CEOs to street cleaners. One of Simon's primary goals was to create an "open community" that embraced people of different races and ethnicities. To that end, in 1969, Reston shocked the Washington area by taking out full-page ads in several local newspapers that promoted living in a racially integrated community. Today, Reston remains multicultural, attracting professionals and families from around the world.

Reston is also a town obsessed with nature — it boasts four man-made lakes, several parks and more than 55 miles of trails and paths. (I'm the type who shies away from encounters in the wild, but even I am in awe of the community's natural beauty.) Reston is organized into clusters of homes, schools and businesses that surround public plazas, called "village centers." This tour includes three of the five village centers, which gives you ample opportunity to admire the landscape and much, much more.

At Hunters Woods Village Center, try the sake at Ariake, a traditional Japanese restaurant with an extensive sushi menu. Next, swing through the plaza to the Reston Community Center and catch a performance at the Center Stage. The venue offers dance, theater and musical performances as well as lectures by both local and world-renowned artists. (I even performed once as a young, bud-

ding dancer, but that's a whole different story.) Upcoming events include a talk by Pulitzer Prize-winning "Topdog/Underdog" playwright Suzan-Lori Parks on Feb. 4.

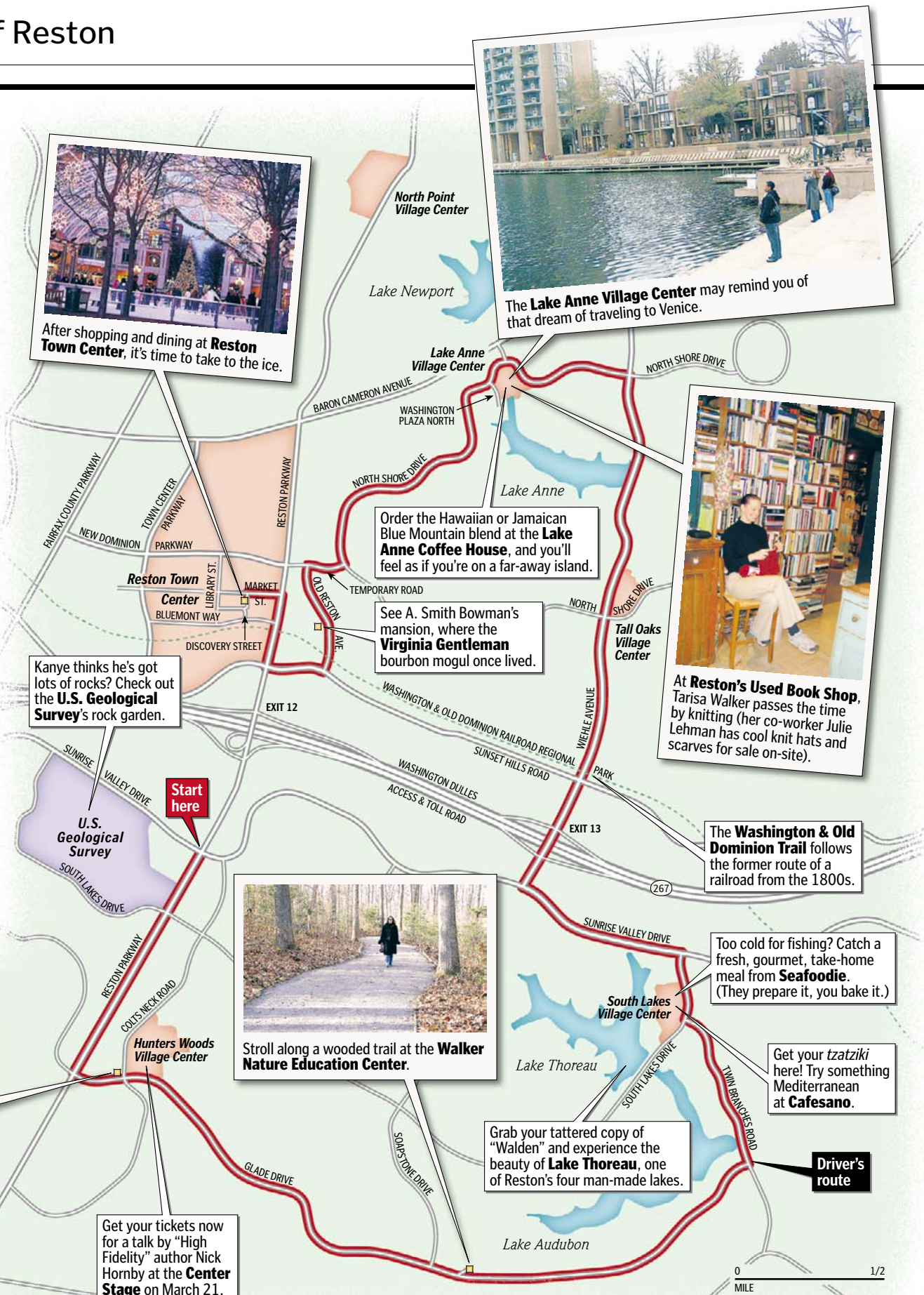
Down the road, stretch your legs along the trails at the Walker Nature Education Center. Situated on 72 acres of wooded land, the center has several short trails that intersect and form a loop. Call ahead to register for one of the upcoming nature programs, such as Friday's "Owl Prowl," which will have you listening for owl calls and trying to spot the predatory night bird. (Reserve by Tuesday.)

Another village center will fulfill your expatriate lifestyle fantasies. The open air plaza on Lake Anne was designed in the style of a European coastal village and has a delightful mix of businesses: international restaurants serving Moroccan, French and Salvadoran cuisines; quaint shops; an art gallery; and the Reston Storefront Museum of Suburban History, where you can learn more about Simon's planning vision. At Reston's Used Book Shop, snuggle into a reading chair with vintage books from around the world. The treasured landmark, which celebrated its 28th anniversary earlier this month, often promotes local authors. Call or check out the bulletin board for upcoming poetry readings and book signings.

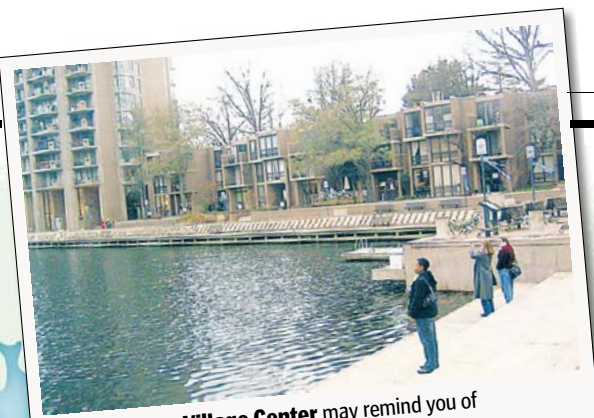
Finally: the Reston Town Center, with more than 60 shops, restaurants, art galleries and businesses. There are plenty of popular restaurants (Morton's Steakhouse) and stores (Banana Republic), but don't miss the art galleries and cool little artisan shops. Whether it's a landscape of those nearby lush woods or a piece a jewelry from a far corner of the globe, you can find it here.

— Willona Sloan

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After shopping and dining at **Reston Town Center**, it's time to take to the ice.



The **Lake Anne Village Center** may remind you of that dream of traveling to Venice.



At **Reston's Used Book Shop**, Tarisa Walker passes the time by knitting (her co-worker Julie Lehman has cool knit hats and scarves for sale on-site).



Stroll along a wooded trail at the **Walker Nature Education Center**.



Brighten your day with the "rainbow roll" sushi at **Ariake**.

Get your tickets now for a talk by "High Fidelity" author Nick Hornby at the **Center Stage** on March 21.

Order the Hawaiian or Jamaican Blue Mountain blend at the **Lake Anne Coffee House**, and you'll feel as if you're on a far-away island.

See A. Smith Bowman's mansion, where the **Virginia Gentleman** bourbon mogul once lived.

Kanye thinks he's got lots of rocks? Check out the **U.S. Geological Survey's** rock garden.

The **Washington & Old Dominion Trail** follows the former route of a railroad from the 1800s.

Too cold for fishing? Catch a fresh, gourmet, take-home meal from **Seafoodie**. (They prepare it, you bake it.)

Get your *tzatziki* here! Try something Mediterranean at **Cafesano**.

Grab your tattered copy of "Walden" and experience the beauty of **Lake Thoreau**, one of Reston's four man-made lakes.

**Driver's route**

