



Blossoms by the Numbers

0

Number of cherries produced by the trees—a flowering-only species

3

Number of different peak-bloom predictions by the National Park Service in 2017, due to volatile weather

59.9°

Average temperature at peak bloom over the past decade

4

Number of Tidal Basin cherry trees cut down by vandals after Pearl Harbor

3.15.90

Earliest peak bloom

4.4

Average peak-bloom date

4.18.58

Latest peak bloom

3750

Number of cherry trees across all DC National Park sites

45:15

Current finishing-time record in the Cherry Blossom 10 Miler, set by Allan Kiprono of Kenya in 2012

COUNTERPOINT

The Cherry Blossoms Are Overrated!

Before you hit “send” on the hate mail, hear me out

While I, too, have gasped with delight when I’ve managed to hit the Tidal Basin exactly at peak bloom, let’s be honest: The frenzy over these fickle trees is a tad insane.

Peak is a scant few days, which is what makes it a rare event, I know, but which also guarantees swarms of gawkers tripping over one another on the same three days. (Or worse, across one or two days if there’s a threat of wind or rain, because these diva-ish petals demand ideal conditions.)

Meanwhile, Washington bursts with colorful azaleas, lacy dogwoods, and bright tulips. No one is bumping into each other to see those. To which I say: Why not? On a pilgrimage to the Tidal Basin a few years ago, I watched as people mostly looked at the blossoms through cameras and cell phones. Is our embrace of the trees truly because they’re beautiful? Or is it fear of missing out, because it’s the thing to do each spring and, these days, a must-have for your Instagram feed?

—SHERRI DALPHONSE

Peak Bloom Has Reached Peak Marketing

A ranking, by ridiculousness, of all the ways Washington tries to cash in on a pink flower



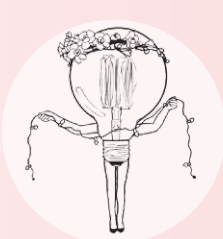
CAPITAL BIKESHARE

In 2013, Capital Bikeshare placed one pink bicycle in its fleet. It has since become a thing to score that unicorn ride—and then declare victory on social media. #bikeinbloom, bitches!



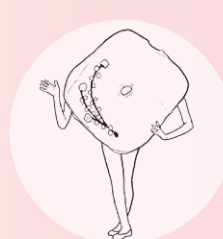
POP-UP BARS

Blossom mania sparked two-hour queues for a pop-up that took over two bars in Shaw last year. Yes, that’s a long wait to tipple, but the thickets of blossoms overhead and the absence of faux fruit in the drinks were worth it.



LIGHTS

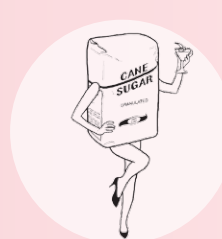
The Terrell Place building, at Seventh and F, Northwest, has transformed itself into an oversize garden of blossom delights, with swaying branches and a digital screen with motion-activated cherry-blossom branches. Mesmerizing.



DOUGHNUTS

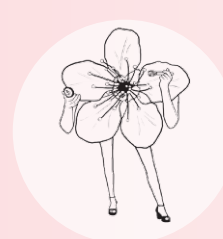
True, they’re over-Instagrammed, but Astro Doughnuts & Fried Chicken’s cherry-blossom doughnuts are more than a puffy pink gimmick. Cream-cheese glaze + real tart-cherry jam filling = objectively delicious.

PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANK HALLAM DAY



COCKTAILS

Most blossom-inspired elixirs fall short of their ethereal muse, devolving into a mixture of maraschino cherries and cloyingly sweet simple sugar. That’s not a blossom you’re tasting but the foul flavor of opportunism.



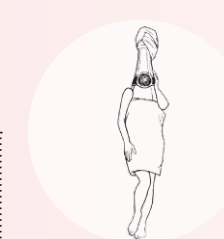
BEAUTY PRODUCTS

Baby-pink-colored lip balms . . . perfume bottles decorated with buds . . . “cherry blossom-scented” lotions—enough already! Pink packaging alone does not a good cherry-blossom product make.



JRINK

The cold-pressed-juice brand reached new heights of hipsterdom contrivance with its Blossom Me Up. It tasted like a watermelon Jolly Rancher and was made from strawberries, lemon, raw honey, and water—nary a cherry in sight.



SPA TREATMENTS

What do Champagne and salt scrubs have to do with flowering trees? Not a lot, but if throwing “cherry blossom” into the name helps sell a \$200 beauty service, you can count on a four-star hotel’s marketing team to try it.



FRAPPUCCINOS

Remember how badly Starbucks botched its cherry-blossom Frappuccino? It was topped with green matcha powder, white chocolate, and whipped cream, but worst of all, it was full-on strawberry-flavored. **W**