

DINING ROOM



THIS IS AS CLOSE TO DINING AT THE WHITE HOUSE AS YOU'RE LIKELY TO get, unless, of course, you're part of the administration. Here, in the oldest saloon in the nation's capital, you'll likely share the bar with news hounds, pundits, politicians, congressional interns, secret service agents, and other beltway insiders. They, along with hordes of tourists and hopeful singles, come for history, atmosphere, four comfortable bars, fantastic hamburgers, and the best raw bar in Washington.

This D.C. landmark was founded in 1856. Originally a boarding house presided over by William E. Ebbitt, its lodgers included then-congressman William McKinley. A host of other American presidents, including Ulysses S. Grant, Andrew Johnson, Grover Cleveland, Warren G. Harding, and Teddy Roosevelt—whose hunting trophies still hang on the wall—were patrons of the bar. The saloon has changed its address on several occasions, and settled into its current location just two blocks from the White House in 1983, bringing with it many of the artifacts of its storied past.

Today, it retains a Victorian charm and a days-gone-by atmosphere thanks to the decorative details: a marble staircase wrenched from an ancient neighboring building, oak and marble floors, beveled mirrors, English lace curtains, an heirloom clock above the revolving door, antique gaslight chandeliers, replicas of antique Victorian bentwood chairs from a New York Central Railroad dining car, and, especially, a reproduction of the magnificent mahogany bar from the saloon's past, too far gone for restoration.

The food and refreshments are equal to the atmosphere. Oyster lovers will be in heaven, particularly at happy hour, when these tasty morsels are discounted. The burgers alone are worth a visit, and the Trout Parmesan is nearly legendary. From typical road house food to elegant meals in the dining room, there's something to please every palate.

Old Ebbitt Grill, open daily for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and for brunch on Sunday, 675 15th Street NW (15th and G), Washington, DC, 20006, www.ebbitt.com. 🍷

