

Ode to Union Station

[Southern Living, Mar 2009](#) by [Latham, Tanner C](#)

If you think this D.C. landmark is just a train depot, you're badly mistaken. By Tanner C. Latham

My first time here, I stood stone still in the middle of the Main Hall, just soaking in everything. I tossed my head back and stared for a while at the octagonal coffering that dimples the magnificent barrelvaulted ceiling.

Suited travelers on cell phones lugging satchels and rolling bags scuttled past, rushing in to catch a train or out to queue up for a cab. For them, Union Station was a means. For me it was a marvel.

Next time you're in the Nation's Capital, budget time to see the station in a new way.

Union Station: 50 Massachusetts Avenue NE; www.unionstationdc.com or (202)289-1908.

Top Picks in Union Station

* Best Use of Collard Greens - Do not fear the Swamp Thang at B. Smith's Restaurant, which blends sautéed shrimp, scallops, crawfish, and collards in a rich Dijon cream sauce. East Hall; www.bsmith.com or (202) 289-6188.

* Best Shop To Put Your Hands On - Run your fingers over the lightweight silk and merino wool shawls at **Kashmir Imports**, or try on some handmade jewelry that's directly from India. Check out the hand-painted papier-mâché boxes. West Hall; www.kashmirimports.com or (202) 789-8880.

* Best People-Watching Perch - Request a table up top at Center Café, a two-level restaurant right in the middle of the Main Hall. The food was okay, best for light bites, but the view of Union Station can't be beat. Main Hall; www.arkrestaurants.com.

* Best Happy Hour Bar Scene - You'll need a group of friends to help finish the Margarita by the Yard, served in a 2-foot-tall glass during happy hour at Thunder Grill (330-730 p.m. Monday-Friday). Main Hall; www.arkrestaurants.com or (202) 898-0051.