

# Finding Your Spot

## Local Park Venues

Picking a venue is a lot of work. So many details go into choosing the right spot to tie the knot! And let's not forget that they can be expensive. Why not a park? With the recreation opportunities afforded by parks you can turn wedding celebration expectations on their heads. What if you and your guests hiked through lush woods to an intimate beach? Or played horseshoes and grilled some burgers for your reception?

Here is a list of gorgeous, and budget friendly, venues for you to consider.

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# Washington, DC

## DC War Memorial

The DC War Memorial is a hidden gem in the nation's capital. Erected in 1931, the Doric temple is a memorial to the citizens of the District of Columbia who died in WWI. The site is administered by the National Park Service and you will need to arrange for a permit from them (\$90, two hours). You can host up to 200 people and you can have a few simple structures, such as a chuppah or an arch. Keep in mind the same considerations that you would with any outdoor venue, and remember that this venue is near National Airport, so there could be some noise.



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# Anne Arundel County

## Ft Smallwood

Fort Smallwood has a fascinating history. It is located where the Patapsco River enters the Chesapeake Bay, with gorgeous waterfront vistas and an historic fort dating to the turn of the twentieth century. Built as one in a series of forts to protect Baltimore, the battery still stands. Rentals start at \$100 for weekdays and parking (park entrance fees) for guests can be paid in advance. This county park is alcohol free.



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# Calvert County

## Calvert Cliffs

Calvert Cliffs is positively my favorite park in Maryland. The park has picnic grounds, miles of hiking trails, and a fresh water beach on the Chesapeake. It's the beach that really makes this park special as it's pretty easy to find shark teeth and fossils that wash out of the adjacent cliff faces and onto the shore. What's more, park goers are allowed to keep what they find! Park rangers tell me it's permissible to make the hike to the beach and tie the knot without a special permit (making this free, but if you choose to rent a pavilion there's a fee for that) but ask that you contact park administrators in advance.



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# Howard County

## Patapsco Valley

How breathtaking would it be to say your I do's under the arches of 19th century stone bridge. That's possible in Patapsco Valley State Park. In addition to the stone bridges, you can take a lovely stroll before or after your ceremony on one of the park's many trails. You can rent a picnic shelter (Avalon area shelters are about \$100); those in the Avalon area are large and allow alcohol with an additional permit. You can bring in a caterer and there are restrooms near by.



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# Montgomery County

## Seneca Creek

Seneca Creek State Park is a lovely Park following 14 miles of Seneca Creek. The park boasts more than 50 miles of trails and several historic structures. Blue Jay pavilion is available for rental. It's nestled among trees and accommodates 200 people. Caterers can prepare food in a dedicated space, in addition to grills. Electricity is provided, but amplified music is not allowed. Use the nearby green space for games. Rental require a reservation and permit, costing \$200, plus \$35 for an alcohol permit. You can also get vouchers (additional cost) for your guests to enter the park without having to pay.



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# Prince George's County

## Dorsey Chapel

Dorsey Chapel, built in 1900 as a Methodist Church, is now in the care of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. The Chapel draws on both Gothic Revival and Queen Anne styles of architecture, is painted white, and nestled among trees. Usage is by permit only (beginning at \$70, two hours for local residents, and up).



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