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National Museum of African American History and Culture

Reaches Milestone: 1 Million Visitors

Sweet Home Café also Named Semifinalist in 2017 James Beard Foundation Awards

The [National Museum of African American History and Culture](https://nmaahc.si.edu) (NMAAHC) topped the 1 million mark in visitors last week, a milestone reached in just over four months since its Sept. 24, 2016 opening. And the museum's dwell time, the length of time a visitor stays in a museum, is unparalleled—averaging six hours or more on weekends, compared to 75 minutes to two hours for most museums.

“The opening of the National Museum of African American History and Culture was a 13-year journey to foster a broader understanding of the black experience in a national and international context,” said Lonnie Bunch, the museum's founding director. “It has truly become a place of healing, reconciliation, and celebration where people can embrace—not only African American history and culture, but—how that layered history has shaped America's identity.”

The museum's diverse features and [programming](#)—from its 11 inaugural exhibitions showcasing 3,000 objects illustrating African American history to its research and education programs, Contemplative Court, theater, store and café—have helped to draw visitors from across the country and throughout the world.

This month, along with high visitation numbers, the museum's restaurant, [Sweet Home Café](#), was named one of 20 semifinalists nominated for the 2017 James Beard Foundation Awards in the category of Best New Restaurant (Presented by True Refrigeration®). Sweet Home Café is one of few museum restaurants ever to receive this honor. The café boasts both refined and down-home cooking intricately linked to the geographic regions that inspired each dish, revealing stories about African American culture through food.

Often referred to as the “Oscars of Food,” the annual James Beard Foundation Awards honor the country's most respected chefs, restaurateurs, beverage professionals, and are among the most elite honors in the field of culinary arts.

For more information about the NMAAHC, visit nmaahc.si.edu.

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ABOUT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

The National Museum of African American History and Culture opened Sept. 24 on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Occupying a prominent location next to the Washington Monument, the nearly 400,000-square-foot museum is the nation's largest and most comprehensive cultural destination devoted exclusively to exploring, documenting and showcasing the African American story and its impact on American and world history. For more information about the museum, visit nmaahc.si.edu, follow @NMAAHC on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat—or call Smithsonian information at (202) 633-1000. <http://newsdesk.si.edu>.