

## National Park Service<sup>(1)</sup>

---

### THING TO DO

# Board the USS Constellation

---



*USS Constellation, 1890s.*

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress.*

The USS Constellation is a large warship that was commissioned in 1855. The 22-gun sloop was active for 100 years and served in several military conflicts. The vessel also played a central role in ending the foreign slave trade. Slavery was widely practiced well before the United States was founded in 1776. By 1807, the founding fathers outlawed the importation of slaves to the United States. Slaves could no longer be brought into the U.S. from Africa, but slavery was still legal. Some U.S. merchants ignored the law and continued to kidnap free Africans and sell them into slavery. The USS Constellation attempted to stop this by capturing

slave ships off the coast of Africa. Total, the crew captured three slave ships and freed 705 Africans, including 199 women and children.

The USS Constellation ended its tour off the coast of Africa to assist the Union in the Civil War (1861-1865). By the outbreak of the war, both the Confederate and Union armies relied on steam-powered ships to attack opposing forces. While not steam-powered, the USS Constellation still proved essential to the Union war effort. In addition to protecting American interests abroad, the ship assisted in the capture of the Confederate steam cruiser the CSS Sumter.

The USS Constellation was eventually decommissioned in 1955 after 100 years of service. Located in Baltimore's Inner Harbor, this vessel is the only surviving ship from the Civil War Era. It is now a National Historic Landmark.

Explore More!

- **Tour all four decks of the ship and talk with crew members.** ([http://www.historicships.org/plan\\_visit.html](http://www.historicships.org/plan_visit.html))
- After strolling the decks, visit the Museum Gallery located at Pier 1 to learn more about the history of the ship. View the personal belongings of the crew and other artifacts.

Return to the **Battles, Banners, and Boats Trip Idea** (<https://www.nps.gov/tripideas/battles-banners-and-boats.htm>) or discover more of **Baltimore's Stories**. (<http://nps.gov/subjects/travelbaltimore/index.htm>)

Sources:

[http://www.historicships.org/plan\\_visit.html](http://www.historicships.org/plan_visit.html) ([http://www.historicships.org/plan\\_visit.html](http://www.historicships.org/plan_visit.html))

[https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/NR\\_PDFs/NR-20.pdf](https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/NR_PDFs/NR-20.pdf) ([https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/NR\\_PDFs/NR-20.pdf](https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/NR_PDFs/NR-20.pdf))

*Today, the USS Constellation is located in Baltimore's Inner Harbor.*

*Photo taken by Jean-Pierre Louis. <https://flic.kr/p/7fALAT>*



 **Details**

**DURATION** 1-3 Hours

**PETS ALLOWED** No

**ACTIVITY FEE** Yes ▼

**RESERVATIONS** No ▼

Last updated: June 26, 2018



[www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

