

CAPITAL ONE FINANCIAL CORP
Form 424B7
May 17, 2012
Table of Contents

Filed pursuant to Rule 424(b)(7)

Registration No. 333-181047

CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE

Title of Each Class of Securities to be Registered	Amount to be Registered	Proposed Maximum Offering Price per Share (1)	Proposed Maximum Aggregate Offering Price (1)	Amount of Registration Fee (2)
Common Stock, par value \$0.01	54,028,086 Shares	\$51.15	\$2,763,536,598.90	\$316,701.29

(1) Based on the average of the high and low sales price on May 16, 2012 on the New York Stock Exchange pursuant to Rule 457(c) under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended.

(2) Calculated in accordance with Rule 457(r) under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended.

Table of Contents

PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT

(To prospectus dated April 30, 2012)

54,028,086 Shares

Capital One Financial Corporation

Common Stock

This prospectus supplement relates to the offer and sale of 54,028,086 shares of common stock of Capital One Financial Corporation by the selling stockholder listed under the heading **Selling Stockholder**. These shares were delivered to the selling stockholder on February 17, 2012 in connection with the ING Direct Acquisition as described herein under the heading **Summary of the Underlying Transaction**.

Our common stock is listed on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol **COF**. The last reported sales price on May 16, 2012 was \$50.30 per share.

We will not receive any proceeds from the sale by the selling stockholder of shares of our common stock.

The selling stockholder identified in this prospectus supplement, including its transferees, pledgees or donees or other successors-in-interest, may offer the shares from time to time through public or private transactions at market prices prevailing at the time of sale, at a fixed or fixed prices, at negotiated prices, at various prices determined at the time of sale or at prices related to prevailing market prices. The timing and amount of any sale is within the sole discretion of the selling stockholder, subject to certain restrictions. See **Plan of Distribution** on page S-12 of this prospectus supplement.

Investing in the shares involves a high degree of risk. See **Risk Factors on page S-5 of this prospectus supplement.**

These securities are not deposits or savings accounts or other obligations of a bank. These securities are not insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or any other governmental agency or instrumentality.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or determined if this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus is truthful or complete. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

Prospectus Supplement dated May 17, 2012

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Prospectus Supplement

<u>About This Prospectus Supplement</u>	S-1
<u>Forward-Looking Statements</u>	S-2
<u>Risk Factors</u>	S-5
<u>Summary of the Underlying Transaction</u>	S-8
<u>Use of Proceeds</u>	S-8
<u>Selling Stockholder</u>	S-9
<u>Price Range of Common Stock and Dividends</u>	S-11
<u>Plan of Distribution</u>	S-12
<u>Validity of the Common Stock</u>	S-14
<u>Experts</u>	S-14
<u>Where You Can Find More Information</u>	S-15

Prospectus

About This Prospectus	1
Forward-Looking Statements	1
Where You Can Find More Information	3
Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges and Ratio of Earnings to Combined Fixed Charges and Preferred Stock	
Dividends	5
Use of Proceeds	6
Description of Debt Securities	7
Description of Preferred Stock	18
Description of Depositary Shares	21
Description of Common Stock	22
Description of Purchase Contracts	26
Description of Warrants	27
Description of Units	29
Resale by Selling Securityholders	30
Book-Entry Procedures and Settlement	31
Certain Legal Matters	34
Experts	34

You should rely only on the information contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus. No one is authorized to provide you with different information. If anyone provides you with different or inconsistent information, you should not rely on it. The selling stockholder is not making an offer of the shares of common stock covered by this prospectus supplement in any jurisdiction where the offer is not permitted. You should assume that the information in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference herein and therein is accurate as of their respective dates. Our business, financial condition, results of operations and prospects may have changed since those dates.

Table of Contents

ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT

We provide information to you about the common stock in two separate documents: (1) this prospectus supplement, which describes the specific terms of this offering and also adds to and updates information contained in the accompanying prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference in that prospectus and (2) the accompanying prospectus, which provides general information about securities we may offer from time to time, including securities other than the common stock being offered by this prospectus supplement. If information in this prospectus supplement is inconsistent with the accompanying prospectus, you should rely on this prospectus supplement.

It is important for you to read and consider all of the information contained in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus in making your investment decision. You also should read and consider the information in the documents we have referred you to in *Where You Can Find More Information* on page S-15 of this prospectus supplement and page 3 of the accompanying prospectus.

We include cross-references in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus to captions in these materials where you can find additional related discussions. The table of contents in this prospectus supplement provides the pages on which these captions are located.

Unless the context requires otherwise, references to *Capital One*, *we*, *our*, or *us* in this prospectus supplement refer to Capital One Financial Corporation, a Delaware corporation.

S-1

Table of Contents

FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This prospectus supplement and the documents incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement contain forward-looking statements. Statements that are not historical facts, including statements about our beliefs and expectations, are forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the Securities Act), and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the Exchange Act). Forward-looking statements include, among other things, information relating to our strategies, goals, outlook or other non-historical matters; projections, revenues, income, expenses, capital measures, returns, accruals for claims in litigation and for other claims against us; earnings per share or other financial measures for us; future financial and operating results; our plans, objectives, expectations and intentions; the projected impact and benefits of the ING Direct Acquisition (as defined below) and our acquisition of substantially all of the U.S. credit card business of HSBC Finance Corporation, HSBC USA Inc. and HSBC Technology and Services (USA) Inc. (other than the HSBC Bank USA, National Association consumer credit card program and certain other retained assets and liabilities) (the HSBC Transaction and, with the ING Direct Acquisition, the Transactions); and the assumptions that underlie these matters. Forward-looking statements also include statements using words such as expect, anticipate, hope, intend, plan, believe, estimate, will or similar expressions. We have based forward-looking statements on our current plans, estimates and projections, and you should not unduly rely on them.

Numerous factors could cause our actual results to differ materially from those described in forward-looking statements, including, among other things:

general economic and business conditions in the U.S., the U.K., Canada and our local markets, including conditions affecting employment levels, interest rates, consumer income and confidence, spending and savings that may affect consumer bankruptcies, defaults, charge-offs and deposit activity;

an increase or decrease in credit losses (including increases due to a worsening of general economic conditions in the credit environment);

the possibility that we may not fully realize the projected cost savings and other projected benefits of the Transactions;

difficulties and delays in integrating the assets and businesses acquired in the Transactions;

business disruption following the Transactions;

diversion of management time on issues related to the Transactions, including integration of the assets and businesses acquired;

reputational risks and the reaction of customers and counterparties to the Transactions;

disruptions relating to the Transactions negatively impacting our ability to maintain relationships with customers, employees and suppliers;

changes in asset quality and credit risk as a result of the Transactions;

the accuracy of estimates and assumptions we use to determine the fair value of assets acquired and liabilities assumed in the Transactions, and the potential for our estimates or assumptions to change as additional information becomes available and we

Edgar Filing: CAPITAL ONE FINANCIAL CORP - Form 424B7

complete the accounting analysis of the Transactions;

financial, legal, regulatory, tax or accounting changes or actions, including the impact of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act and the regulations promulgated thereunder;

developments, changes or actions relating to any litigation matter involving us;

S-2

Table of Contents

the inability to sustain revenue and earnings growth;

increases or decreases in interest rates;

our ability to access the capital markets at attractive rates and terms to capitalize and fund our operations and future growth;

the success of our marketing efforts in attracting and retaining customers;

increases or decreases in our aggregate loan balances or the number of customers and the growth rate and composition thereof, including increases or decreases resulting from factors such as shifting product mix, amount of actual marketing expenses we incur and attrition of loan balances;

the level of future repurchase or indemnification requests we may receive, the actual future performance of mortgage loans relating to such requests, the success rates of claimants against us, any developments in litigation and the actual recoveries we may make on any collateral relating to claims against us;

the amount and rate of deposit growth;

changes in the reputation of or expectations regarding the financial services industry or us with respect to practices, products or financial condition;

any significant disruption in our operations or technology platform;

our ability to maintain a compliance infrastructure suitable for our size and complexity;

our ability to control costs;

the amount of, and rate of growth in, our expenses as our business develops or changes or as it expands into new market areas;

our ability to execute on our strategic and operational plans;

any significant disruption of, or loss of public confidence in, the United States Mail service affecting our response rates and consumer payments;

our ability to recruit and retain experienced personnel to assist in the management and operations of new products and services;

changes in the labor and employment markets;

fraud or misconduct by our customers, employees or business partners;

competition from providers of products and services that compete with our businesses; and

other risk factors listed from time to time in reports that we file with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the SEC). You should carefully consider the factors referred to above in evaluating these forward-looking statements.

When considering these forward-looking statements, you should keep in mind these risks, uncertainties and other cautionary statements made in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus and in the documents incorporated by reference. See the factors set forth under the caption Risk Factors beginning on page S-5 below

S-3

Table of Contents

and in any other documents incorporated or deemed to be incorporated by reference therein or herein, including our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2011, for additional information that you should consider carefully in evaluating these forward-looking statements.

Forward-looking statements are not guarantees of future performance. They involve risks, uncertainties and assumptions, including the risk factors referred to above. Our future performance and actual results may differ materially from those expressed in forward-looking statements. Many of the factors that will determine these results and values are beyond our ability to control or predict. Forward-looking statements speak only as of the date that they are made, and except as required by law we undertake no obligation to publicly update or revise any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise.

S-4

Table of Contents

RISK FACTORS

Investing in our common stock involves risks, including the risks described below that are specific to the shares of common stock and those that could affect us and our business. You should not purchase shares of our common stock unless you understand these investment risks. Please be aware that other risks may prove to be important in the future. New risks may emerge at any time, and we cannot predict such risks or estimate the extent to which they may affect our financial performance. Before purchasing any shares of our common stock, you should consider carefully the risks and other information in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus and carefully read the risks described in the documents incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, including the discussion under Item 1A Risk Factors in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2011, as such discussion may be amended or updated in other reports filed by us with the SEC.

The price of our common stock may fluctuate significantly, and this may make it difficult for you to resell shares of common stock owned by you at times or at prices you find attractive.

The trading price of our common stock may fluctuate widely as a result of a number of factors, many of which are outside our control. In addition, the stock market is subject to fluctuations in the share prices and trading volumes that affect the market prices of the shares of many companies. These broad market fluctuations have adversely affected and may continue to adversely affect the market price of our common stock. Among the factors that could affect our stock price are:

actual or anticipated quarterly fluctuations in our operating results and financial condition;

changes in revenue or earnings estimates or publication of research reports and recommendations by financial analysts or actions taken by rating agencies with respect to our securities or those of other financial institutions;

failure to meet analysts' revenue or earnings estimates;

speculation in the press or investment community generally or relating to our reputation or the financial services industry;

strategic actions by us or our competitors, such as acquisitions or restructurings;

failure to realize the anticipated benefits of the Transactions;

actions by institutional or other significant shareholders;

fluctuations in the stock price and operating results of our competitors;

future sales of our equity or equity-related securities or the perception that such sales could occur;

changes in the frequency or amount of dividends;

proposed or adopted regulatory changes or developments;

actual or anticipated changes in interest rates;

anticipated or pending investigations, proceedings, or litigation that involve or affect us;

domestic and international economic factors unrelated to our performance; or

S-5

Table of Contents

general market conditions and, in particular, developments related to market conditions for the financial services industry. A significant decline in our stock price could result in substantial losses for individual shareholders and could lead to costly and disruptive securities litigation.

There may be future sales or other dilution of our equity, which may adversely affect the market price of our common stock.

We are not restricted from issuing additional shares of common stock, including any securities that are convertible into or exchangeable for, or that represent the right to receive, common stock. The issuance of any additional shares of common or preferred stock or of convertible securities could be substantially dilutive to shareholders of our common stock. Moreover, to the extent that we issue restricted stock units, stock appreciation rights, options or warrants to purchase our common stock in the future and those stock appreciation rights, options or warrants are exercised or as the restricted stock units vest, our shareholders may experience further dilution. Holders of our shares of common stock have no preemptive rights that entitle holders to purchase their pro rata share of any offering of shares of any class or series and, therefore, such sales or offerings could result in increased dilution to our shareholders. The market price of our common stock could decline as a result of sales or resales of shares of our common stock made after this offering or the perception that such sales or resales could occur.

You may not receive dividends on the common stock.

Holders of our common stock are only entitled to receive such dividends as our board of directors may declare out of funds legally available for such payments. Although we have in the past declared cash dividends on our common stock, we are not required to do so and may reduce or eliminate our common stock dividend in the future. This could adversely affect the market price of our common stock.

Our ability to receive dividends from our subsidiaries could affect our liquidity and ability to pay dividends.

We are a separate and distinct legal entity from our subsidiaries. Dividends to us from our direct and indirect subsidiaries, including our bank subsidiaries, have represented a major source of funds for us to pay dividends on our common stock, make payments on corporate debt securities and meet other obligations. There are various federal law limitations on the extent to which our bank subsidiaries can finance or otherwise supply funds to us through dividends and loans. These limitations include minimum regulatory capital requirements, federal banking law requirements concerning the payment of dividends out of net profits or surplus, Sections 23A and 23B of the Federal Reserve Act and Regulation W governing transactions between an insured depository institution and its affiliates, as well as general federal regulatory oversight to prevent unsafe or unsound practices. If our subsidiaries' earnings are not sufficient to make dividend payments to us while maintaining adequate capital levels, our liquidity may be affected and we may not be able to make dividend payments to our common stockholders, to make payments on outstanding corporate debt securities or meet other obligations, each and any of which could have a material adverse impact on our results of operations, financial position or perception of financial health.

The common stock is equity and is subordinate to our existing and future indebtedness and preferred stock.

Shares of the common stock are equity interests in Capital One and do not constitute indebtedness. As such, shares of the common stock will rank junior to all indebtedness and other non-equity claims on Capital One with respect to assets available to satisfy claims on Capital One, including in a liquidation of Capital One. Additionally, holders of our common stock are subject to the prior dividend and liquidation rights of any holders of our preferred stock or depository shares representing such preferred stock then outstanding.

Dividends on the common stock are payable only if declared by our board of directors and are subject to restrictions on payments of dividends out of lawfully available funds. Also, as a consolidated supervisory entity, our ability to declare and pay dividends is dependent on certain federal regulatory considerations. Capital One has issued and outstanding debt securities under which we may defer interest payments from time to time, but in that case we

Table of Contents

would not be permitted to pay dividends on, or redeem, purchase, acquire or make a liquidation payment with respect to, any of our capital stock, including the common stock, during the deferral period. In addition, Capital One has issued and outstanding debt securities under which, if we are aware of any event that would be an event of default under the indenture governing those debt securities, we would not be permitted to pay dividends on, or redeem, purchase, acquire or make a liquidation payment with respect to, any of our capital stock, including the common stock.

Anti-takeover provisions could adversely affect our stockholders.

Provisions of Delaware law and of our certificate of incorporation and bylaws could make it more difficult for a third party to acquire control of us or have the effect of discouraging a third party from attempting to acquire control of us. For example, we are subject to Section 203 of the Delaware General Corporation Law, which would make it more difficult for another party to acquire us without the approval of our board of directors. Additionally, our certificate of incorporation authorizes our board of directors to issue preferred stock, which could be issued as a defensive measure in response to a takeover proposal. These provisions could make it more difficult for a third party to acquire us even if an acquisition might be in the best interest of our stockholders.

S-7

Table of Contents

SUMMARY OF THE UNDERLYING TRANSACTION

On February 17, 2012, we completed the acquisition (the **ING Direct Acquisition**) of substantially all of the ING Direct business in the United States from ING Groep N.V., ING Bank N.V., ING Direct N.V. and ING Direct Bancorp (collectively, the **Sellers**), pursuant to the Purchase and Sale Agreement, dated as of June 16, 2011, by and among each of the Sellers and us (the **Purchase Agreement**). The aggregate consideration paid by us in the ING Direct Acquisition was 54,028,086 shares of our common stock and approximately \$6.3 billion in cash.

We are registering the shares of common stock covered by this prospectus supplement in order to fulfill our obligation under the Shareholders Agreement, dated as of February 17, 2012, by and between ING Groep N.V. and us (the **Shareholders Agreement**), to file a prospectus supplement that shall be deemed to be part of an existing **shelf** registration statement covering resales of the shares of our common stock issued to the selling stockholder upon the closing of the ING Direct Acquisition.

USE OF PROCEEDS

All shares of common stock sold pursuant to this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus will be sold by the selling stockholder. We will not receive any of the proceeds from such sales.

S-8

Table of Contents**SELLING STOCKHOLDER**

The selling stockholder may from time to time offer and sell any or all of the shares of our common stock set forth below pursuant to this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus. We have agreed to pay all fees and expenses incident to the registration and listing of the shares of common stock owned by the selling stockholder.

When we refer to the selling stockholder in this prospectus supplement, we mean ING Bank N.V. and its subsidiaries, donees, pledgees, transferees and other successors-in-interest. ING Groep N.V., together with its subsidiaries (including ING Bank N.V.), is a global financial institution of Dutch origin, currently offering banking, investment, life insurance and retirement services to meet the needs of a broad customer base. The selling stockholder initially acquired the shares covered by this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus on February 17, 2012, at the closing of the Purchase Agreement as described above under Summary of the Underlying Transaction. The selling stockholder may at any time and from time to time offer and sell pursuant to this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus any or all of the 54,028,086 shares of our common stock in any type of transaction as more fully described under Plan of Distribution in this prospectus supplement.

The following table sets forth the aggregate number of shares of common stock beneficially owned by the selling stockholder as of May 16, 2012, and the maximum number of shares offered by the selling stockholder pursuant to this prospectus supplement and accompanying prospectus. Beneficial ownership is determined in accordance with the rules of the SEC, and includes voting or investment power with respect to shares of our common stock. The following table may be expanded or supplemented in additional prospectus supplements if and when necessary.

The information provided in the table below with respect to the selling stockholder has been obtained from the selling stockholder.

Name of Selling Stockholder	Shares Beneficially Owned Prior to the Offering		Number of Shares Being Offered Up to	Shares Beneficially Owned After the Offering	
	Number	Percent ⁽¹⁾		Number	Percent ⁽¹⁾
ING Bank N.V. ⁽²⁾	54,028,086	9.3%	54,028,086	0	0%

(1) Based on 580,342,796 shares outstanding as of April 30, 2012.

(2) The shares held by the selling stockholder may be deemed to be beneficially owned by ING Groep N.V., as described in the Schedule 13D filed by ING Groep N.V. on February 27, 2012. ING Groep N.V. may also be deemed to beneficially own 762,691 shares held by indirect subsidiaries of ING Groep N.V. in those subsidiaries role as a discretionary manager of client portfolios. Certain of those shares may be managed by third-party sub-managers over which ING Groep N.V. and its subsidiaries do not have the ability to direct the vote or the disposition of such shares. ING Groep N.V. disclaims beneficial ownership of such shares. Pursuant to the Shareholders Agreement, ING Groep N.V. has certain registration rights and the right to designate one nominee to serve on our board of directors. ING Groep N.V. has nominated, and on May 8, 2012, the Board appointed, C.P.A.J. Leenaars as a director for a term expiring at the 2013 annual meeting of stockholders. Pursuant to the Shareholders Agreement, Mr. Leenaars must promptly submit his resignation upon the earlier of (i) February 17, 2013 (the one-year anniversary of closing) or (ii) ING Groep N.V.'s sale of more than 33% of its shares of our common stock acquired in the transaction to third parties.

We do not know when or in what amounts the selling stockholder may offer shares for sale. It is possible that the selling stockholder will not sell any or all of the shares of common stock offered under this prospectus supplement. Because the selling stockholder may offer all or some of the shares of common stock pursuant to this prospectus supplement, and because there are currently no arrangements or understandings with respect to the sale of any such shares, we cannot estimate the number of shares that will be held by the selling stockholder after completion of the offering. However, for purposes of this table, we have assumed that, after completion of the offering, none of the shares of common stock covered by this prospectus supplement will be held by the selling stockholder.

Table of Contents

Other than the Purchase Agreement and Shareholders Agreement described above and other related agreements, and the appointment of Mr. Leenaars to our board of directors, there have been no material relationships between ING Groep N.V. and its affiliates, on the one hand, and us and our affiliates, on the other hand (except that there were material relationships between ING Groep N.V. and its affiliates and the ING Direct business, which is now affiliated with us). The ability of ING Groep N.V. and its subsidiaries to engage in commercial arrangements with us or our subsidiaries or affiliates is restricted by certain passivity commitments (the Passivity Commitments) that ING Groep N.V. entered into with the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System (the FRB) to support a determination by the FRB that ING Groep N.V. would not be deemed to control us for purposes of the Bank Holding Company Act of 1956, as amended. Under the Passivity Commitments, subject to certain exceptions, ING Groep N.V. may not, without the prior approval of the FRB or its staff, directly or indirectly engage in certain activities with respect to us and our securities.

S-10

Table of Contents**PRICE RANGE OF COMMON STOCK AND DIVIDENDS**

Our common stock is publicly traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol COF. The table below sets forth for the periods indicated the quarterly high and low closing sales prices for our common stock on the New York Stock Exchange and the amount of dividends per share declared on our common stock.

	High	Low	Dividends
2010			
First Quarter	43.02	34.63	0.05
Second Quarter	46.73	38.02	0.05
Third Quarter	45.00	37.12	0.05
Fourth Quarter	42.78	36.55	0.05
2011			
First Quarter	52.76	43.68	0.05
Second Quarter	56.21	47.87	0.05
Third Quarter	54.31	37.63	0.05
Fourth Quarter	47.07	37.75	0.05
2012			
First Quarter	57.15	43.75	0.05
Second Quarter (as of May 16, 2012)	56.36	50.30	0.05

Table of Contents

PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

The selling stockholder, which as used herein includes donees, pledgees, transferees or other successors-in-interest selling shares of our common stock received after the date of this prospectus supplement from the selling stockholder as a gift, pledge, partnership distribution or other transfer, may offer, sell, transfer or otherwise dispose of the shares of common stock covered by this prospectus supplement from time to time on any stock exchange or quotation service on which the shares are listed or quoted at the time of the sale, in the over-the-counter market, in privately negotiated transactions or otherwise. The selling stockholder may offer, sell, transfer or otherwise dispose of these shares at fixed prices that may be changed, at market prices prevailing at the time of sale, at prices related to prevailing market prices or at prices otherwise negotiated. The selling stockholder will act independently of us in making decisions with respect to the timing, manner and size of each sale, and we cannot assure you that the selling stockholder will sell all or any portion of the shares offered hereby by it. We will not receive any proceeds from the sales by the selling stockholder of shares of common stock covered by this prospectus supplement.

The selling stockholder may offer and sell the shares of common stock covered by this prospectus supplement by one or more of the following methods at various times:

block trades in which a broker or dealer will be engaged to attempt to sell the shares as agent, but may position and resell a portion of the block as principal to facilitate the transaction;

purchases by a broker or dealer as principal and resale by the broker or dealer for its own account pursuant to this prospectus supplement;

ordinary brokerage transactions and transactions in which the broker solicits purchases;

at the market transactions to or through market makers or into an existing market for our common stock;

privately negotiated transactions;

short sales;

options, swaps or other derivative transactions that may or may not be listed on an exchange;

distributions to its partners, members, managers, directors, employees, consultants or affiliates; or

any combination of the above methods or by any other legally available means.

The selling stockholder may engage brokers and dealers, and any brokers or dealers may arrange for other brokers or dealers to participate in effecting sales of the shares. These brokers or dealers may act as principals, or as agents of the selling stockholder. Broker-dealers may agree with the selling stockholder to sell a specified number of shares of common stock at a stipulated price per share. If a broker-dealer is unable to sell shares acting as agent for the selling stockholder, it may purchase as principal any unsold shares at the stipulated price. Broker-dealers who acquire shares of common stock as principals may thereafter resell the shares from time to time in transactions on any stock exchange on which the shares are then listed, at prices and on terms then prevailing at the time of sale, at prices related to the then-current market price or in negotiated transactions. Broker-dealers may use block transactions and sales to and through broker-dealers, including transactions of the nature described above.

Edgar Filing: CAPITAL ONE FINANCIAL CORP - Form 424B7

To the extent required under the Securities Act, the names of any agents, underwriters, brokers or dealers and any applicable commission with respect to a particular offering will be set forth in an additional prospectus supplement. Any underwriters, dealers, brokers or agents participating in the distribution of the shares may receive compensation in the form of discounts, concessions, commissions or fees from the selling stockholder and/or purchasers of the selling stockholder's shares, for which they may act, which compensation as to a particular broker-dealer might be in excess of customary commissions.

S-12

Table of Contents

Any brokers, dealers or agents that participate in the distribution of shares of common stock may be deemed to be underwriters within the meaning of the Securities Act, and any discounts, concessions, commissions or fees received by them and any profit on the resale of shares sold by them may be deemed to be underwriting discounts and commissions.

We will make copies of this prospectus supplement available to the selling stockholder and any of its successors in interest for purposes of satisfying the prospectus delivery requirements of the Securities Act, if applicable.

The selling stockholder may enter into hedging transactions with broker-dealers and the broker-dealers may engage in short sales of shares of common stock in the course of hedging the positions they assume with the selling stockholder, including, without limitation, in connection with distributions of shares by those broker-dealers. The selling stockholder may enter into option or other transactions with broker-dealers that involve the delivery of shares of common stock offered hereby to the broker-dealers, who may then resell or otherwise transfer those securities.

The selling stockholder and other persons participating in the sale or distribution of shares of common stock will be subject to applicable provisions of the Exchange Act, and the rules and regulations thereunder, including Regulation M; and we have advised the selling stockholder that Regulation M may apply. This regulation may limit the timing of purchases and sales of any shares of common stock by the selling stockholder and any other person. The anti-manipulation rules under the Exchange Act may apply to sales of shares of common stock in the market and to the activities of the selling stockholder and its affiliates. Furthermore, Regulation M may restrict the ability of any person engaged in the distribution of shares of common stock to engage in market-making activities with respect to the particular shares being distributed for a period of up to five business days before the distribution. These restrictions may affect the marketability of the common stock and the ability of any person or entity to engage in market-making activities with respect to the securities.

The selling stockholder also may sell shares of common stock in accordance with Rule 144 under the Securities Act, rather than pursuant to this prospectus supplement, regardless of whether the shares are covered by this prospectus supplement.

Pursuant to the Shareholders Agreement, ING Groep N.V. and ING Bank N.V. have agreed to indemnify, defend and hold harmless us, our directors and each person, if any, who controls us against certain liabilities, including certain liabilities that may arise under the Securities Act and Exchange Act. Pursuant to the Shareholders Agreement, we have agreed to indemnify, defend and hold harmless ING Groep N.V., ING Bank N.V., their affiliates, directors, officers and shareholders and each person who controls ING Groep N.V. or ING Bank N.V. against certain liabilities, including certain liabilities that may arise under the Securities Act and the Exchange Act.

Table of Contents

VALIDITY OF THE COMMON STOCK

The validity of the common stock will be passed upon for us by Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP, New York, New York.

EXPERTS

Ernst & Young LLP, an independent registered public accounting firm, has audited our consolidated financial statements included in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2011, and the effectiveness of our internal control over financial reporting as of December 31, 2011, as set forth in their reports, which are incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and elsewhere in the registration statement. Our financial statements are incorporated by reference in reliance on Ernst & Young LLP's report, given on their authority as experts in accounting and auditing.

Ernst & Young LLP, an independent registered public accounting firm, has audited the consolidated financial statements of ING Bank, fsb included in our Current Report on Form 8-K filed with the SEC on March 14, 2012, as set forth in their report, which is incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and elsewhere in the registration statement. The ING Bank, fsb financial statements are incorporated by reference in reliance on Ernst & Young LLP's report, given on their authority as experts in accounting and auditing.

KPMG LLP, an independent registered public accounting firm, has audited the financial statements of HSBC Card and Retail Services, included in our Current Report on Form 8-K filed with the SEC on March 14, 2012, as set forth in their report, which is incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and elsewhere in the registration statement. The HSBC Card and Retail Services financial statements are incorporated by reference in reliance on KPMG LLP's report, given on their authority as experts in accounting and auditing.

Table of Contents

WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

This prospectus supplement is part of a registration statement (File No. 333-181047) we have filed with the SEC under the Securities Act. The registration statement, including the attached exhibits and schedules, contains additional relevant information about us and the securities described in this prospectus supplement. The SEC's rules and regulations allow us to omit certain information included in the registration statement from this prospectus supplement. The registration statement may be inspected by anyone without charge at the SEC's principal office at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549.

In addition, we file annual, quarterly and special reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC under the Exchange Act. You may read and copy this information at the following SEC location:

Public Reference Room

100 F Street, N.E.

Washington, D.C. 20549

You may also obtain copies of this information by mail from the SEC's Public Reference Room, 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549, at rates determined by the SEC. You may obtain information on the operation of the Public Reference Room by calling the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330. You may also inspect reports, proxy statements and other information that we have filed electronically with the SEC at the SEC's website at <http://www.sec.gov>. These documents can also be inspected at the offices of the New York Stock Exchange, 20 Broad Street, New York, New York 10005.

The SEC's rules allow us to incorporate by reference information into this prospectus supplement. This means that we can disclose important information to you by referring you to another document filed separately with the SEC. The information incorporated by reference is considered to be a part of this prospectus supplement. Any information incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement that we file with the SEC after the date of this prospectus supplement will automatically update and supersede information contained in this prospectus supplement. Our SEC file number is 001-13300.

We are incorporating by reference in this prospectus supplement the documents listed below and any future filings that we make with the SEC under Section 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act prior to the termination of this offering, provided, however, that we are not incorporating by reference any information furnished (but not filed) under Item 2.02 or Item 7.01 of any Current Report on Form 8-K, except as specified below:

our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2011, filed on February 29, 2012 (including the portions of our proxy statement for our 2012 annual meeting of stockholders incorporated by reference therein);

our Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarterly period ended March 31, 2012, filed on May 8, 2012; and

our Current Reports on Form 8-K filed on January 19, 2012 (Item 8.01 information only), February 2, 2012, February 17, 2012 (Item 2.01, Item 3.02 and Item 8.01 information only), March 14, 2012 (with respect to the financial statements of ING Bank, fsb and HSBC Card and Retail Services), March 19, 2012 (Item 1.01 and related information furnished under Item 9.01), March 20, 2012, March 23, 2012, April 19, 2012 (Item 8.01 information only), May 1, 2012 and May 8, 2012, and our amended Current Reports on Form 8-K/A filed on March 15, 2012 (including all information furnished under Item 9.01) and April 27, 2012; and

the description of our common stock on Amendment No. 1 to Form 8-A, dated October 17, 1994.

You can obtain copies of documents incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement, without charge, by requesting them in writing or by telephone from us at Capital One Financial Corporation, Investor

Table of Contents

Relations Department, 1680 Capital One Drive, McLean, Virginia 22102, telephone (703) 720-2455. You should rely only on the information incorporated by reference or provided in this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus. We have not authorized anyone else to provide you with different information. We are not making an offer of these securities in any state where the offer is not permitted. You should not assume that the information in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus or any document incorporated by reference is accurate as of any date other than the date of the applicable document.

Our principal executive office is located at 1680 Capital One Drive, McLean, Virginia 22102 (telephone number (703) 720-1000). We maintain a website at www.capitalone.com. The information on our website is not part of this prospectus supplement nor is it incorporated by reference. Documents available on our website include our (i) Code of Business Conduct and Ethics; (ii) Corporate Governance Principles; and (iii) charters for the Audit and Risk, Compensation, Finance and Trust Oversight, and Governance and Nominating Committees.

S-16

Table of Contents

PROSPECTUS

Capital One Financial Corporation

Senior Debt Securities

Subordinated Debt Securities

Preferred Stock

Depositary Shares

Common Stock

Purchase Contracts

Warrants

Units

Capital One Financial Corporation from time to time may issue and offer to sell, and selling securityholders may offer to resell, the senior or subordinated debt securities, preferred stock, either separately or represented by depositary shares, common stock, purchase contracts, warrants or units described in this prospectus, which we refer to collectively as our securities.

We will provide specific terms of these securities in supplements to this prospectus. You should read this prospectus and the accompanying prospectus supplement carefully before you make your investment decision.

Our common stock is listed on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol COF.

Investing in our securities involves a high degree of risk. See the Risk Factors section of our filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission and the applicable prospectus supplement.

This prospectus may not be used to sell any of the securities unless it is accompanied by a prospectus supplement.

These securities are not deposits or savings accounts or other obligations of a bank. These securities are not insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or any other governmental agency or instrumentality.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or determined if this prospectus is truthful or complete. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

The date of this prospectus is April 30, 2012.

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>About This Prospectus</u>	1
<u>Forward-Looking Statements</u>	1
<u>Where You Can Find More Information</u>	3
<u>Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges and Ratio of Earnings to Combined Fixed Charges and Preferred Stock Dividends</u>	5
<u>Use of Proceeds</u>	6
<u>Description of Debt Securities</u>	7
<u>Description of Preferred Stock</u>	18
<u>Description of Depositary Shares</u>	21
<u>Description of Common Stock</u>	22
<u>Description of Purchase Contracts</u>	26
<u>Description of Warrants</u>	27
<u>Description of Units</u>	29
<u>Resale by Selling Securityholders</u>	30
<u>Book-Entry Procedures and Settlement</u>	31
<u>Certain Legal Matters</u>	34
<u>Experts</u>	34

Table of Contents

ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS

In this prospectus, we, our, us, or the Corporation, each refer to Capital One Financial Corporation.

This prospectus is part of a registration statement (No. 333-181047) that we have filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, or the SEC, utilizing a shelf registration process. This prospectus provides you with a general description of the securities that we may issue and sell, and that selling securityholders may resell, from time to time. Each time we issue and sell securities, we will provide a prospectus supplement that will contain specific information about the terms of that offering. The prospectus supplement may add, update or change information in this prospectus. If there is any inconsistency between the information in this prospectus and the prospectus supplement, you should rely on the information in the prospectus supplement. You should read both this prospectus and the prospectus supplement applicable to any offering, together with the additional information described under the heading **Where You Can Find More Information** below.

FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference in this prospectus contain forward-looking statements. Statements that are not historical facts, including statements about our beliefs and expectations, are forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the Securities Act), and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the Exchange Act). Forward-looking statements include, among other things, information relating to our strategies, goals, outlook or other non-historical matters; projections, revenues, income, expenses, capital measures, returns, accruals for claims in litigation and for other claims against us; earnings per share or other financial measures for us; future financial and operating results; our plans, objectives, expectations and intentions; the projected impact and benefits of our acquisition of substantially all of the U.S. ING Direct business of ING Groep N.V., ING Bank N.V., ING Direct N.V., and ING Direct Bancorp (the ING Direct Transaction) and our pending acquisition of substantially all of the U.S. credit card business of HSBC Finance Corporation, HSBC USA Inc. and HSBC Technology and Services (USA) Inc. (other than the HSBC Bank USA, National Association consumer credit card program and certain other retained assets and liabilities) (the HSBC Transaction and, with the ING Direct Transaction, the Transactions); and the assumptions that underlie these matters. Forward-looking statements also include statements using words such as expect, anticipate, hope, intend, plan, believe, estimate, will or similar expressions. We have based these forward-looking statements on our current plans, estimates and projections, and you should not unduly rely on them.

Numerous factors could cause our actual results to differ materially from those described in forward-looking statements, including, among other things:

general economic and business conditions in the U.S., the U.K., Canada and our local markets, including conditions affecting employment levels, interest rates, consumer income and confidence, spending and savings that may affect consumer bankruptcies, defaults, charge-offs and deposit activity;

an increase or decrease in credit losses (including increases due to a worsening of general economic conditions in the credit environment);

the possibility that we will not receive third-party consents necessary to fully realize the anticipated benefits of the HSBC Transaction;

the possibility that we may not fully realize the projected cost savings and other projected benefits of the Transactions;

changes in the anticipated timing for closing the HSBC Transaction;

difficulties and delays in integrating the assets and businesses acquired in the Transactions;

business disruption during the pendency of or following the Transactions;

Table of Contents

diversion of management time on issues related to the Transactions, including integration of the assets and businesses acquired;

reputational risks and the reaction of customers and counterparties to the Transactions;

disruptions relating to the Transactions negatively impacting our ability to maintain relationships with customers, employees and suppliers;

changes in asset quality and credit risk as a result of the Transactions;

the accuracy of estimates and assumptions we use to determine the fair value of assets acquired and liabilities assumed in the Transactions, and the potential for our estimates or assumptions to change as additional information becomes available and we complete the accounting analysis of the Transactions;

financial, legal, regulatory, tax or accounting changes or actions, including the impact of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act and the regulations promulgated thereunder;

developments, changes or actions relating to any litigation matter involving us;

the inability to sustain revenue and earnings growth;

increases or decreases in interest rates;

our ability to access the capital markets at attractive rates and terms to capitalize and fund our operations and future growth;

the success of our marketing efforts in attracting and retaining customers;

increases or decreases in our aggregate loan balances or the number of customers and the growth rate and composition thereof, including increases or decreases resulting from factors such as shifting product mix, amount of actual marketing expenses we incur and attrition of loan balances;

the level of future repurchase or indemnification requests we may receive, the actual future performance of mortgage loans relating to such requests, the success rates of claimants against us, any developments in litigation and the actual recoveries we may make on any collateral relating to claims against us;

the amount and rate of deposit growth;

changes in the reputation of or expectations regarding the financial services industry or us with respect to practices, products or financial condition;

any significant disruption in our operations or technology platform;

our ability to maintain a compliance infrastructure suitable for our size and complexity;

our ability to control costs;

the amount of, and rate of growth in, our expenses as our business develops or changes or as it expands into new market areas;

our ability to execute on our strategic and operational plans;

any significant disruption of, or loss of public confidence in, the United States Mail service affecting our response rates and consumer payments;

our ability to recruit and retain experienced personnel to assist in the management and operations of new products and services;

changes in the labor and employment markets;

fraud or misconduct by our customers, employees or business partners;

competition from providers of products and services that compete with our businesses; and

other risk factors listed from time to time in reports that we file with the SEC.

Table of Contents

You should carefully consider the factors referred to above in evaluating these forward-looking statements.

When considering these forward-looking statements, you should keep in mind these risks, uncertainties and other cautionary statements made in this prospectus, any accompanying prospectus supplement and in the documents incorporated by reference. See the factors set forth under the caption "Risk Factors" in any prospectus supplement and in any other documents incorporated or deemed to be incorporated by reference therein or herein, including our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2011, for additional information that you should consider carefully in evaluating these forward-looking statements.

Forward-looking statements are not guarantees of future performance. They involve risks, uncertainties and assumptions, including the risk factors referred to above. Our future performance and actual results may differ materially from those expressed in forward-looking statements. Many of the factors that will determine these results and values are beyond our ability to control or predict. Forward-looking statements speak only as of the date that they are made, and except as required by law we undertake no obligation to publicly update or revise any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

This prospectus is part of a registration statement we have filed with the SEC under the Securities Act. The registration statement, including the attached exhibits and schedules, contains additional relevant information about us and the securities described in this prospectus. The SEC's rules and regulations allow us to omit certain information included in the registration statement from this prospectus. The registration statement may be inspected by anyone without charge at the SEC's principal office at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549.

In addition, we file annual, quarterly and special reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC under the Exchange Act. You may read and copy this information at the following SEC location:

Public Reference Room

100 F Street, N.E.

Washington, D.C. 20549

You may also obtain copies of this information by mail from the SEC's Public Reference Room, 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549, at rates determined by the SEC. You may obtain information on the operation of the Public Reference Room by calling the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330. You may also inspect reports, proxy statements and other information that we have filed electronically with the SEC at the SEC's web site at <http://www.sec.gov/>.

The SEC's rules allow us to incorporate by reference information into this prospectus and any prospectus supplement. This means that we can disclose important information to you by referring you to another document filed separately with the SEC. The information incorporated by reference is considered to be a part of this prospectus and any prospectus supplement. Any information incorporated by reference in this prospectus that we file with the SEC after the date of this prospectus and any information incorporated by reference in any prospectus supplement will automatically update and supersede information contained in this prospectus and any prospectus supplement. Our SEC file number is 001-13300.

Table of Contents

We are incorporating by reference in this prospectus the documents listed below and any future filings that we make with the SEC under Section 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act prior to the termination of this offering, provided, however, that we are not incorporating by reference any information furnished (but not filed) under Item 2.02 or Item 7.01 of any Current Report on Form 8-K:

our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2011, filed on February 29, 2012 (including the portions of our proxy statement for our 2012 annual meeting of stockholders incorporated by reference therein);

our Current Reports on Form 8-K filed on January 19, 2012 (Item 8.01 information only), February 2, 2012, February 17, 2012 (Item 2.01, Item 3.02 and Item 8.01 information only), March 14, 2012 (with respect to the financial statements of ING Bank, fsb and HSBC Card and Retail Services), March 19, 2012 (Item 1.01 and related information furnished under Item 9.01), March 20, 2012, March 23, 2012 and April 19, 2012 (Item 8.01 information only), and our amended Current Reports on Form 8-K/A filed on March 15, 2012 (including all information furnished under Item 9.01) and April 27, 2012; and

the description of our common stock on Amendment No. 1 to Form 8-A, dated October 17, 1994.

You can obtain copies of documents incorporated by reference in this prospectus, without charge, by requesting them in writing or by telephone from us at Capital One Financial Corporation, Investor Relations Department, 1680 Capital One Drive, McLean, Virginia 22102, telephone (703) 720-2455.

You should rely only on the information incorporated by reference or provided in this prospectus or any prospectus supplement. We have not authorized anyone else to provide you with different information. We are not making an offer of these securities in any state where the offer is not permitted. You should not assume that the information in this prospectus, any prospectus supplement or any document incorporated by reference is accurate as of any date other than the date of the applicable document.

Our principal executive office is located at 1680 Capital One Drive, McLean, Virginia 22102 (telephone number (703) 720-1000). We maintain a website at <http://www.capitalone.com>. The information on our website is not part of this prospectus nor is it incorporated by reference. Documents available on our website include our (i) Code of Business Conduct and Ethics, (ii) Corporate Governance Principles; and (iii) charters for each of the Audit and Risk, Compensation, Finance and Trust Oversight, and Governance and Nominating Committees.

Table of Contents

**RATIO OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES AND RATIO OF EARNINGS TO COMBINED FIXED
CHARGES AND PREFERRED STOCK DIVIDENDS**

The following table sets forth our ratios of (1) earnings to fixed charges and (2) earnings to combined fixed charges and preferred stock dividends for each of the periods indicated. We do not currently have any preferred stock outstanding.

Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges:	Years Ended December 31,				
	2011	2010	2009⁽¹⁾	2008	2007
Including Interest on Deposits	3.09	2.51	1.47	1.16	1.85
Excluding Interest on Deposits	5.42	4.05	2.58	1.43	3.33

Ratio of Earnings to Combined Fixed Charges and Preferred Stock Dividends:	Years Ended December 31,				
	2011	2010	2009⁽¹⁾	2008	2007
Including Interest on Deposits ⁽²⁾	3.09	2.51	1.38	1.16	1.85
Excluding Interest on Deposits ⁽²⁾	5.42	4.05	2.13	1.42	3.33

(1) On February 27, 2009, we acquired Chevy Chase Bank, fsb. The transaction was accounted for as a purchase, and the related results of operations are included in our consolidated results from the date of the transaction.

(2) Preferred stock dividends in 2009 and 2008 were attributable to preferred stock issued in connection with our participation in the U.S. Department of Treasury's Troubled Asset Relief Program. Such preferred stock was issued to the United States Department of the Treasury on November 14, 2008 and was subsequently repurchased in full on June 17, 2009.

We compute the ratio of earnings to fixed charges by dividing earnings by the sum of fixed charges. The term "fixed charges" includes the sum of the following: (a) interest expense on debts (including or excluding deposits, as applicable) and (b) interest factor in rent expense. The term "earnings" is the amount resulting from adding (a) income from continuing operations before income taxes, (b) fixed charges, and (c) equity in undistributed loss of unconsolidated subsidiaries.

We compute the ratio of earnings to combined fixed charges and preferred stock dividends by dividing earnings by the sum of fixed charges and preferred stock dividends.

Table of Contents

USE OF PROCEEDS

Except as otherwise described in the applicable prospectus supplement, we intend to use the net proceeds from the sale of our securities for general corporate purposes in the ordinary course of our business, including but not limited to the reduction of short-term debt, acquisitions, investments in, or extensions of credit to, our subsidiaries and investments in securities.

We may temporarily invest any funds not required immediately for purposes described above in short-term marketable securities.

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF DEBT SECURITIES

We may from time to time issue debt securities which will be our direct unsecured general obligations. These debt securities are described below and will be senior debt securities or subordinated debt securities and any senior or subordinated debt securities that may be part of a unit, all of which are called debt securities. The senior debt securities will be issued under an indenture between us and The Bank of New York Mellon Trust Company, N.A., formerly known as The Bank of New York Trust Company, N.A. (as successor to Harris Trust and Savings Bank), as trustee, dated as of November 1, 1996, and the subordinated debt securities will be issued under an indenture dated as of August 29, 2006 between us and The Bank of New York Mellon Trust Company, N.A., as trustee, subject in each case to such amendments or supplemental indentures as may be adopted from time to time. Together, the senior indenture and the subordinated indenture are called the indentures, and the senior indenture trustee and the subordinated indenture trustee are called the indenture trustees.

We have summarized selected provisions of the indentures below. The summary is not complete and does not describe every aspect of the indentures. A copy of each of the senior indenture and the subordinated indenture has been filed as an exhibit to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part and has been qualified as an indenture under the Trust Indenture Act of 1939, as amended, or the Trust Indenture Act. You should read the more detailed provisions of the applicable indenture, including the defined terms, for provisions that may be important to you. You should also consider applicable provisions of the Trust Indenture Act. In the summary below, we have included references to section numbers so that you can easily locate these provisions. The particular terms of any debt securities we offer will be described in the related prospectus supplement, along with any applicable modifications of or additions to the general terms of the debt securities described below and in the indentures. For a description of the terms of any series of debt securities, you should also review both the prospectus supplement relating to that series and the description of the debt securities set forth in this prospectus before making an investment decision. Capitalized terms used in the summary have the meanings specified in the applicable indenture.

As of March 31, 2012, we had \$11.1 billion in senior and subordinated notes outstanding that mature in varying amounts from 2012 to 2021, of which \$7.7 billion in aggregate principal amount was senior debt securities and \$3.45 billion in aggregate principal was subordinated debt securities. A portion of both our senior and subordinated debt securities were issued by predecessor entities pursuant to indentures not described herein, and \$2.27 billion in senior and subordinated debt securities were issued by our consolidated subsidiary, Capital One Bank (USA), National Association (COBNA).

General

The debt securities will be our direct unsecured obligations. The indentures do not significantly limit our operations. In particular, they do not:

limit the amount of debt securities that we can issue under the indentures;

limit the number of series of debt securities that we can issue from time to time;

limit or otherwise restrict the total amount of debt that we or our subsidiaries may incur or the amount of other securities that we may issue;

require us or an acquiror to repurchase debt securities in the event of a change in control; or

contain any covenant or other provision that is specifically intended to afford any holder of the debt securities any protection in the event of highly leveraged transactions or similar transactions involving us or our subsidiaries.

The senior debt securities will rank equally with all of our other unsecured unsubordinated indebtedness. The subordinated debt securities will have a position junior to all of our senior indebtedness.

Table of Contents

Because we are a holding company, dividends and fees from our subsidiaries are our principal source of revenues from which to repay the debt securities. Our subsidiaries engaged in the banking or credit card business can only pay dividends if they are in compliance with applicable United States federal and state regulatory requirements. Our right to participate in any asset distribution of any of our subsidiaries, including COBNA, Capital One, National Association (CONA) and ING Bank, fsb, on liquidation, reorganization or otherwise, will rank junior to the rights of all creditors of that subsidiary (except to the extent that we may ourselves be an unsubordinated creditor of that subsidiary). As a result, the rights of holders of debt securities to benefit from those distributions will also be junior to the rights of all creditors of our subsidiaries. Consequently, the debt securities will be effectively subordinated to all liabilities of our subsidiaries. COBNA, CONA and ING Bank, fsb are subject to claims by creditors for long-term and short-term debt obligations, including deposit liabilities, obligations for federal funds purchased and securities sold under repurchase agreements. There are also various legal limitations on the extent to which COBNA, CONA and ING Bank, fsb may pay dividends or otherwise supply funds to us or our other affiliates.

Terms

A prospectus supplement relating to the offering of any series of debt securities will include specific terms relating to the offering. These terms will include some or all of the following (unless specified otherwise or in context, section references are to sections of both the senior indenture and subordinated indenture):

the title, series, form and type of the offered debt securities;

whether the offered debt securities will be senior or subordinated debt;

the indenture under which the offered debt securities are being issued;

whether the offered debt securities are to be issued in registered form, bearer form or both;

the aggregate principal amount of the offered debt securities and any limit upon the aggregate principal amount of the debt securities of such title or series;

the date or dates (including the maturity date) or method, if any, for determining such dates, on which the principal of the offered debt securities will be payable (and any provisions relating to extending or shortening the date on which the principal of the offered debt securities is payable);

the interest rate, or method, if any, for determining the interest rate, the date or dates from which interest will accrue, or method, if any, for determining such dates, the interest payment dates, if any, on which interest will be payable, and whether and under what circumstances additional amounts on the offered debt securities will be payable; the manner in which payments with respect to the offered debt securities will be made; and the place or places where principal of, premium, if any, interest on and additional amount, if any, will be payable;

whether the offered debt securities are redeemable at our option, and if so, the periods, prices, and other terms regarding such optional redemption;

whether we are obligated to redeem or repurchase the offered debt securities pursuant to any sinking fund or at the option of any holder thereof and, if so, the periods, prices, and other terms regarding such repurchase or redemption;

Edgar Filing: CAPITAL ONE FINANCIAL CORP - Form 424B7

the denominations in which the offered debt securities will be issuable;

if other than the principal amount, the portion of the principal amount of the offered debt securities payable upon the acceleration of the maturity date or the method by which such portion is to be determined;

the currency for payment of principal, premium, interest and any additional amount with respect to the offered debt securities, whether the principal of, premium, if any, interest on or additional amount, if any, with respect to the offered debt securities are to be payable, at our election or any holder's

Table of Contents

election, in a currency other than that in which the offered debt securities are denominated, the period in which that election may be made and the time and manner of determining the applicable exchange rate;

the percentage of the principal amount or price at which the offered debt securities will be issued;

whether the amount of payments of principal of, premium, if any, interest on, or additional amount, if any, with respect to the offered debt securities may be determined by reference to an index, formula or other method, and if so, the terms and conditions and the manner in which such amounts will be determined and paid or payable;

any changes to the covenants or additional events of default or covenants;

whether and upon what terms the offered debt securities may be defeased (which means that we would be discharged from our obligations by depositing sufficient cash or government securities to pay the principal of, premium, if any, interest on, or additional amount, if any, due to the stated maturity date or a redemption date of the offered debt securities);

whether the offered debt securities will be convertible into our common stock and, if so, the initial conversion price, the periods and terms of the conversion or exchange; and

any other terms not inconsistent with the provisions of the indentures. (Section 301)

Form of the Debt Securities

The indentures provide that we may issue senior and subordinated debt securities in registered form, in bearer form or in both registered and bearer form. Unless we indicate otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, each series of senior and subordinated debt securities will be issued in registered form, without coupons. Holders of registered form securities will be listed on the applicable indenture trustee's register for the applicable debt securities. (Sections 201 and 305)

Unless we indicate otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, we will issue senior and subordinated debt securities in registered form, without coupons, in denominations of \$1,000 or any integral multiple of \$1,000. Unless we indicate otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, we will issue senior and subordinated debt securities in bearer form in denominations of \$5,000 or any integral multiple of \$5,000. There will be no service charge for any registration of transfer, exchange, redemption, or conversion of senior and subordinated debt securities, but we or the applicable indenture trustee may require the holder to pay any tax or other governmental charge that may be imposed in connection with any registration of a transfer or exchange of the senior or subordinated debt securities, other than certain exchanges not involving any transfer. (Sections 302 and 305)

If we issue the debt securities in bearer form, the debt securities will have interest coupons attached. Bearer form securities are payable to whomever physically holds them from time to time. Debt securities in bearer form will not be offered, sold, resold or delivered in connection with their original issuance in the United States or to any United States person other than through offices of certain United States financial institutions located outside the United States. Purchasers of debt securities in bearer form will be subject to certification procedures and may be affected by United States tax law limitations. These procedures and limitations will be described in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Registration, Transfer, Payment and Paying Agent

Unless we indicate otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, payments on the debt securities will be made at our office or agency maintained for that purpose. We have appointed an agency in New York, New York to make payments on the debt securities; however, we may change our agent from time to time. Any transfer of the debt securities will be registerable at the same place. In addition, we may choose to pay interest by

Table of Contents

check mailed to the address in the security register of the person in whose name the debt security is registered at the close of business on the applicable record date. (Sections 1002 and 307) Unless we indicate otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, any interest and any additional amounts with respect to any debt securities which is payable, but not punctually paid or duly provided for, may be paid to the holders as of a special record date fixed by the trustee or in any other lawful manner. (Section 307)

Unless we indicate otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, payments of principal of, premium, if any, and interest on debt securities in bearer form will be made at the office outside the United States specified in the applicable prospectus supplement and as we may designate from time to time. Payment can also be made by check or by transfer to an account maintained by the payee with a bank located outside the United States. Unless we indicate otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, payment on debt securities in bearer form will be made only if the holder surrenders the coupon relating to the interest payment date. We will not make any payments on any debt security in bearer form at any office or agency in the United States, by check mailed to any address in the United States or by transfer to any account maintained with a bank located in the United States. (Sections 1001 and 1002)

Global Debt Securities

Unless we indicate otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement for a series of debt securities, each series of debt securities will be issued in global form, which means that we will deposit with the depository identified in the applicable prospectus supplement (or its custodian) one or more certificates representing the entire series, as described below under **Book-Entry Procedures and Settlement**. Global debt securities may be issued in either temporary or permanent form. (Sections 201 and 203)

The applicable prospectus supplement will describe any limitations and restrictions relating to a series of global senior or subordinated debt securities.

Covenants

Under the senior indenture, we agree to the following:

Except as permitted as described in this prospectus under **Description of Debt Securities Consolidation, Merger and Sale of Assets**, we will preserve and keep in full force and effect our corporate existence and the corporate existence of each of our significant subsidiaries (as defined below) and our rights (charter and statutory) and franchises and those of each of our significant subsidiaries. However, neither we nor any of our significant subsidiaries will be required to preserve any of these rights or franchises if we or the significant subsidiary, as the case may be, determine that the preservation of these rights or franchises is no longer desirable in the conduct of our or its business, as applicable, and that the loss of these rights or franchises is not disadvantageous in any material respect to the holders of the senior debt securities. (Section 1007)

The senior indenture contains a covenant by us limiting our ability to dispose of the voting stock of a significant subsidiary. A significant subsidiary is any of our majority-owned subsidiaries the consolidated assets of which (as reflected on our consolidated balance sheet) constitute 20% or more of our consolidated assets. This covenant generally provides that, except as permitted as described in this prospectus under **Description of Debt Securities Consolidation, Merger and Sale of Assets**, as long as any of the senior debt securities are outstanding:

neither we nor any of our significant subsidiaries will sell, assign, transfer or otherwise dispose of the voting stock of a significant subsidiary or securities convertible into or options, warrants or rights to subscribe for or purchase such voting stock, and we will not permit a significant subsidiary to issue voting stock, or securities convertible into or options, warrants or rights to subscribe for or purchase such voting stock, in each case if, after giving effect to such transaction

Table of Contents

and to the issuance of the maximum number of shares of voting stock of the significant subsidiary issuable upon the exercise of all such convertibles securities, options, warrants or rights, such significant subsidiary would cease to be a controlled subsidiary (as defined below); and

we will not permit a significant subsidiary to merge or consolidate with or into any corporation unless the survivor is us or is, or upon consummation of the merger or consolidation will become, a controlled subsidiary, or to lease, sell or transfer all or substantially all of its properties and assets except to us or a controlled subsidiary or a person that upon such lease, sale or transfer will become a controlled subsidiary. (Section 1005)

A controlled subsidiary is a significant subsidiary at least 80% of the voting stock of which is owned by us and/or one or more of our controlled subsidiaries.

The limitations described above do not apply to certain transactions required by law, rule, regulation or governmental order (including as a condition to an acquisition of another entity by us) or to any sale or transfer of assets in a securitization transaction.

Under the subordinated indenture, we agree to the following:

Except as permitted as described in this prospectus under Description of Debt Securities Consolidation, Merger and Sale of Assets, we will preserve and keep in full force and effect our corporate existence and our rights (charter and statutory) and franchises. However, we will not be required to preserve any of these rights or franchises if we determine that the preservation of these rights or franchises is no longer desirable in the conduct of our business and that the loss of these rights or franchises is not disadvantageous in any material respect to the holders of the subordinated debt securities. (Section 1007)

In addition, the senior indenture contains a covenant by us limiting our ability to create liens on the voting stock of a significant subsidiary. This covenant generally provides that, as long as any of the senior debt securities are outstanding, neither we nor any of our subsidiaries will create, assume or incur any pledge, encumbrance or lien upon a significant subsidiary's voting stock, or upon securities convertible into or options, warrants or rights to subscribe for or purchase, a significant subsidiary's voting stock, directly or indirectly, to secure indebtedness for borrowed money, if, treating such pledge, encumbrance or lien as a transfer of the significant subsidiary's voting stock or securities convertible into or options, warrants or rights to subscribe for or purchase the significant subsidiary's voting stock to the secured party (in each case after giving effect to such transaction and to the issuance of the maximum number of shares of voting stock of the significant subsidiary issuable upon the exercise of all such convertible securities, options, warrants or rights), the significant subsidiary would not continue to be a controlled subsidiary, unless the senior debt securities are equally and ratably secured with any and all such indebtedness by this pledge, encumbrance or lien. (Section 1006)

Subordination of Subordinated Debt Securities

Unless we indicate otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, the following provisions will apply to subordinated debt securities. Section references are to sections of the subordinated indenture.

Subordinated debt securities will be subordinated in right of payment to all senior indebtedness, as defined below. Payments on subordinated debt securities also will be effectively subordinated if:

we are involved in insolvency, bankruptcy or similar proceedings;

the maturity of any series of our subordinated debt securities is accelerated because of certain events of bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization of us or a major depository institution subsidiary; or

Table of Contents

we fail to pay the principal of, premium, if any, or interest on any senior indebtedness when due, or an event of default occurs and is continuing with respect to any senior indebtedness permitting the holders of such senior indebtedness to declare the senior indebtedness due and payable prior to the date on which it would otherwise have become due and payable. (Section 1601)

Because of this subordination, some of our creditors may receive more, ratably, than holders of subordinated debt securities if we are insolvent.

After all payments have been made to the holders of senior indebtedness, any holders of subordinated debt securities will be subrogated to the rights of holders of senior indebtedness to receive payments or distributions of cash, property or securities from us applicable to such senior indebtedness until all amounts owing on the subordinated debt securities have been paid in full. (Section 1602)

Senior indebtedness includes: (1) the principal of, premium, if any, and interest on, whether outstanding now or incurred later, (a) all indebtedness for money borrowed by us, including indebtedness of others that we guarantee, other than the subordinated debt securities and the junior subordinated debt securities and other indebtedness that is expressly stated as not senior, and (b) any amendments, renewals, extensions, modifications and refundings of any indebtedness, unless in either case the instrument evidencing the indebtedness provides that it is not senior in right of payment to the subordinated debt securities; (2) all our capital lease obligations and any synthetic lease or tax retention operating lease; (3) all our obligations issued or assumed as the deferred purchase price of property, and all conditional sale or title retention agreements, but excluding trade accounts payable in the ordinary course of business; (4) all our obligations, contingent or otherwise, in respect of any letters of credit, bankers acceptances, security purchase facilities and similar credit transactions; (5) all our obligations in respect of interest rate swap, cap or similar agreements, interest rate future or options contracts, currency swap agreements, currency future or option contracts, commodity contracts and other similar agreements; (6) all obligations of the type referred to in clauses (1) through (5) of other persons for the payment of which we are responsible or liable as obligor, guarantor or otherwise; and (7) all obligations of the type referred to in clauses (1) through (6) of other persons secured by any lien on any of our property or assets whether or not such obligation is assumed by us.

Senior indebtedness does not include: (1) subordinated debt securities; (2) any indebtedness that by its terms is subordinated to, or ranks on an equal basis with, subordinated debt securities; and (3) any indebtedness between or among us and our affiliates, including (a) any junior subordinated debt securities, (b) trust preferred securities guarantees and (c) all other debt securities and guarantees in respect of those debt securities, issued to any trust, or a trustee of such trust, partnership or other entity affiliated with us which is our financing vehicle in connection with the issuance by such financing vehicle of trust preferred securities or other securities guaranteed by us pursuant to an instrument that ranks on an equal basis with, or junior to, the trust preferred securities guarantees.

Consolidation, Merger and Sale of Assets

Each indenture generally permits a consolidation or merger between us and another corporation and the conveyance, transfer or lease by us of all or substantially all of our property or assets, in each case without the consent of the holders of any outstanding debt securities. However, each indenture requires that:

the successor or purchaser is a corporation organized under the laws of the United States of America, any state thereof or the District of Columbia and expressly assumes our obligations on the debt securities under the applicable indenture;

immediately after giving effect to the transaction, no event which, after notice or lapse of time, would become an event of default, will have occurred and be continuing pursuant to the applicable indenture; and

Table of Contents

either we or the successor person has delivered to the applicable indenture trustee an officer's certificate and an opinion of counsel stating the consolidation, merger, transfer or lease, as applicable, complied with these provisions and all conditions precedent of the applicable indenture. (Section 801)

The successor shall be substituted for us as if it had been an original party to the indentures and the debt securities. Thereafter, the successor may exercise our rights and powers under the indentures and the debt securities and, except in the case of a lease, we will be released from all of our obligations and covenants under those documents. (Section 802)

Exchange of Debt Securities

Registered debt securities may be exchanged for an equal aggregate principal amount of registered debt securities of the same series containing identical terms and provisions in authorized denominations requested by the holders upon surrender of the registered debt securities at an office or agency that we maintain for that purpose and upon fulfillment of all other requirements set forth in the indentures. (Section 305)

Conversion and Exchangeability

The holders of debt securities that are convertible into our common stock or exchangeable into other securities will be entitled to convert or exchange the debt securities under some circumstances. The terms of any conversion or exchange will be described in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Events of Default

Unless we indicate otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement for any series of debt securities, events of default with respect to any series of debt securities are:

failure to pay the interest or any additional amount payable on any debt security of such series when due and continuance of that default for 30 days;

failure to pay the principal of or any premium on any debt security of such series when due and payable;

failure to deposit any sinking fund payment when and as due by the terms of any debt security of such series;

failure to perform or the breach of any covenant or warranty in the applicable indenture or the debt securities (other than a covenant or warranty included solely for the benefit of a series of debt securities other than such series) that continues for 60 days after we are given written notice by the trustee or we and the trustee are given written notice by the holders of at least 25% of the outstanding debt securities of such series;

in the case of the senior debt securities, any event of default under any mortgage, indenture or other instrument securing or evidencing any indebtedness of us or any significant subsidiary for money borrowed, resulting in such indebtedness in principal amount exceeding \$10,000,000 becoming or being declared due and payable prior to the date on which it would otherwise become due and payable, if the acceleration is not rescinded or annulled within 30 days after written notice;

in the case of the senior debt securities, certain events of bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization of us or any of our significant subsidiaries and in the case of the subordinated debt securities, certain events of bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization of us or a major depository institution subsidiary; or

any other event of default included in any indenture or supplemental indenture. (Section 501)

Edgar Filing: CAPITAL ONE FINANCIAL CORP - Form 424B7

If a default occurs with respect to any series of senior or subordinated debt securities, the applicable indenture trustee will give the holders of those debt securities notice of the default as and to the extent provided by the Trust Indenture Act. (Section 501)

Table of Contents

If an event of default with respect to any series of senior debt securities occurs and continues, either the senior indenture trustee or the holders of not less than 25% of the aggregate principal amount of the outstanding senior debt securities of that series may declare the principal amount (or such lesser amount as may be provided for the senior debt securities of such series) of all the senior debt securities of that series to be due and payable immediately. Payment of the principal of subordinated debt securities may be accelerated only in the case of certain events of bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization of us or one of our major depository institution subsidiaries. Subordinated debt securities cannot be accelerated if we default in our performance of any other covenant, including payment of principal or interest. (Section 502)

Any time after a declaration of acceleration has been made and before a judgment or decree for payment of the money due has been obtained the majority holders may, under certain circumstances, void the declaration. Majority holders are the holders of a majority of the aggregate principal amount of outstanding senior or subordinated debt securities of that series. (Section 502)

The majority holders may direct the time, method and place of conducting any proceeding for any remedy available to the applicable indenture trustee, or exercising any trust or power conferred on the applicable indenture trustee, for the senior or subordinated debt securities of that series. (Section 512). The applicable indenture trustee generally is not obligated to exercise any of its rights or powers under any senior or subordinated indenture at the request or direction of any of the holders, unless those holders offer the applicable indenture trustee reasonable indemnity. (Section 601)

A holder does not have the right to institute a proceeding with respect to the indenture, for the appointment of a receiver or a trustee, or for any other remedy, unless:

the holder has previously given written notice to the applicable indenture trustee of a continuing event of default;

the holders of not less than 25% of the aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of the applicable series have made a written request to the applicable indenture trustee to institute proceedings in respect of such event of default in its own name as trustee under the applicable indenture, and such holders have offered to the applicable indenture trustee reasonable indemnity against the costs, expenses and liabilities to be incurred in compliance with such request;

the applicable indenture trustee has failed to institute a proceeding within 60 days after receipt of such notice, request and offer of indemnity; and

the applicable indenture trustee has not received an inconsistent direction from the majority holders within such 60-day period. (Section 507)

However, these limitations do not apply to a suit for the enforcement of payment or conversion rights instituted on or after the respective due dates of the senior and subordinated debt securities of the applicable series. (Section 508)

Waivers of Certain Covenants and Past Defaults

The holders of not less than a majority of the aggregate principal amount of the outstanding senior and subordinated debt securities of each series may, on behalf of all holders of that series, waive our compliance with certain restrictive provisions of the applicable indenture. They also may waive any past default with respect to that series under the applicable indenture, except (1) a default in the payment of principal of, premium, if any, interest on or any additional amount, or (2) a default in the performance of certain covenants which cannot be modified without the consent of all of the holders of the applicable series. (Sections 513 and 1008)

Table of Contents

Amendments to the Indentures

Supplemental Indentures with Consent of Holders

Unless we indicate otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, we and the applicable trustee may modify or amend an indenture, with the consent of the holders of at least 66-2/3% in principal amount of each series of the senior or subordinated debt securities affected by the modification or amendment. However, no modification or amendment may, without the consent of each holder affected by the modification or amendment:

change the due date of the principal of, or any premium or installment of interest on, or any additional amounts with respect to any debt security;

reduce the principal amount of, or the rate of interest on, or any additional amounts or premium, if any, payable with respect to any debt security, or, except as otherwise permitted, change an obligation to pay additional amounts with respect to any debt security, or adversely affect the right of repayment at the option of any holder, if any;

change the place of payment, the currency in which the principal of, any premium, if any, or interest on, or any additional amounts with respect to any debt security is payable or impair the right to institute suit for the enforcement of any such payment on or after the due date thereof (or, in the case of redemption, on or after the redemption date or, in the case of repayment at the option of the holder, on or after the date for repayment);

reduce the percentage in principal amount of outstanding debt securities of any series the consent of whose holders is required for any supplemental indenture, or the consent of whose holders is required for any waiver (of compliance with certain provisions of the applicable indenture or certain defaults thereunder and their consequences) under the applicable indenture or reduce requirements for quorum or voting;

modify any of the provisions in the applicable indenture provisions described above under *Waivers of Certain Covenants and Past Defaults* and in this section *Amendments to the Indentures Supplemental Indentures with Consent of Holders*, except to increase any percentage in principal amount of outstanding debt securities of any series the consent of whose holders is required for a supplemental indenture or waiver, or to provide that certain other provisions of the applicable indenture cannot be modified or waived without the consent of the holders of each outstanding debt security affected thereby;

adversely affect the right of any holder to convert any convertible debt securities; or

in the case of the subordinated indenture, modify the subordination provisions in a manner adverse to the holders of the subordinated debt securities. (Section 902)

Supplemental Indentures without Consent of Holders

Except as otherwise provided in the applicable prospectus supplement, we and the applicable indenture trustee may modify and amend an indenture without the consent of any holder for any of the following purposes:

to evidence the succession of another person to us, and the assumption by the successor of our covenants in the applicable indenture and in the debt securities;

Edgar Filing: CAPITAL ONE FINANCIAL CORP - Form 424B7

to add to our covenants for the benefit of the holders of all or any series of debt securities or to surrender any right or power conferred upon us in the applicable indenture;

to add or change any provisions of the applicable indenture to provide that bearer debt securities may be registrable as to principal, to change or eliminate restrictions on payments with respect to debt securities, to permit registered securities to be exchanged for bearer securities, to permit bearer securities to be exchanged for bearer securities of other authorized denominations or to permit or facilitate the issuance of securities in uncertificated form, provided any such action does not adversely affect the interests of the holders of any debt securities or related coupons in any material respect;

Table of Contents

to establish the form or terms of debt securities of any series and any related coupons;

to evidence and provide for the acceptance of appointment by a successor trustee and to add to or change any provisions of the applicable indenture as necessary to provide for or facilitate the administration of the trusts under the applicable indenture by more than one trustee;

to cure any ambiguity or to correct or supplement any provision in the applicable indenture that may be defective or inconsistent with any other provision of the applicable indenture, or to make any other provisions with respect to matters or questions arising under the applicable indenture which do not adversely affect the interests of the holders of any debt securities or related coupons in any material respect;

to modify the conditions, limitations and restrictions on the authorized amount, terms or purposes of issue, authentication and delivery of debt securities;

to add additional events of default with respect to all or any series of debt securities;

to supplement any of the provisions of the applicable indenture to the extent necessary to permit or facilitate the defeasance and discharge of any series of debt securities, provided the action does not adversely affect the interests of the holders of any debt securities of that series or related coupons or any other debt securities or related coupons in any material respect;

to secure the debt securities;

to amend or supplement any provision of the applicable indenture or any supplemental indenture, provided that the amendment or supplement does not materially adversely affect the interests of the holders of outstanding debt securities; and

to make certain provisions with respect to conversion rights. (Section 901)

Legal Defeasance and Covenant Defeasance

If the applicable prospectus supplement provides for defeasance, we may at any time elect to defease and will be deemed to have paid and discharged our obligations on the applicable debt securities if:

no event of default has occurred and is continuing, or would occur upon the giving of notice or lapse of time, at the time of the satisfaction and discharge;

either (1) we have irrevocably deposited with the applicable indenture trustee sufficient cash or government securities to pay when due all the principal of, premium, if any, interest on and additional amounts, if any, with respect to the applicable debt securities, through the stated maturity or redemption date of the applicable debt securities (or, in the case of debt securities which have become due and payable, through the date of such deposit), or (2) we have properly fulfilled such other means of satisfaction and discharge as is provided in or pursuant to the applicable indenture for the applicable debt securities;

Edgar Filing: CAPITAL ONE FINANCIAL CORP - Form 424B7

we have paid all other sums payable under the applicable indenture with respect to the applicable debt securities and any related coupons;

we have delivered to the applicable trustee a certificate of our independent public accountants certifying as to the sufficiency of the amounts deposited by us, and an officers' certificate and opinion of counsel as required by the applicable indenture; and

we have delivered to the applicable trustee an opinion of counsel to the effect that the holders will have no federal income tax consequences as a result of the deposit or termination and if the applicable debt securities are listed on the New York Stock Exchange, an opinion of counsel that the applicable debt securities will not be delisted.

Table of Contents

In the case of a defeasance, the holders of the applicable debt securities of the series will not be entitled to the benefits of the applicable indenture, except for the registration of transfer or exchange and the replacement of stolen, lost or mutilated applicable debt securities and the requirements regarding the maintenance of an office or agency where the applicable debt securities can be surrendered for payment or registration of transfer or exchange and the right of the holders of the applicable debt securities to receive from the deposited funds payment of the principal of, premium, if any, interest on, and any additional amounts, if any, with respect to the applicable debt securities when due. (Section 402)

Determining the Outstanding Debt Securities

Unless otherwise provided in or pursuant to the applicable indenture, we will consider the following factors in determining whether the holders of the requisite principal amount of outstanding debt securities have given any request, demand, authorization, direction, notice, consent or waiver under the applicable indenture or are present at a meeting of holders of debt securities for quorum purposes:

in the case of any debt security that by its terms provides for declaration of a principal amount less than the principal face amount of the debt security to be due and payable upon acceleration, the principal amount that will be deemed to be outstanding will be the principal amount that would be declared to be due and payable upon a declaration of acceleration thereof at the time of such determination;

in the case of any indexed security, the principal amount that will be deemed to be outstanding will be the principal face amount of the indexed security at original issuance;

in the case of any debt security denominated in one or more foreign currency units, the principal amount that will be deemed to be outstanding will be the U.S. dollar equivalent based on the applicable exchange rate or rates at the time of sale; and

any debt securities owned by us or any other obligor upon the debt securities or any of our or such other obligor's affiliates, will be disregarded and deemed not to be outstanding. (Section 101)

Governing Law

The indentures will be governed by, and construed in accordance with, the laws of the State of New York.

Regarding the Indenture Trustees

In the normal course of business, we and our subsidiaries conduct banking transactions with the indenture trustees, and the indenture trustees conduct banking transactions with us and our subsidiaries.

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED STOCK

Our Restated Certificate of Incorporation authorizes our Board of Directors, or the Board, to create and provide for the issuance of one or more series of preferred stock, par value \$.01 per share, without the approval of our stockholders. The Board can also determine the terms, including the designations, powers, preferences and rights (including conversion, voting and other rights) and the qualifications, limitations or restrictions, of any preferred stock. Currently, 50,000,000 shares of our capital stock are classified as preferred stock under our Restated Certificate of Incorporation. As of March 31, 2012, no shares of preferred stock were issued or outstanding.

General

The following description summarizes the general terms and provisions of our authorized preferred stock. The particular terms of any series of preferred stock we offer will be described in the related prospectus supplement. You should read the particular terms of any series of preferred stock we offer described in the related prospectus supplement, together with the more detailed provisions of our Restated Certificate of Incorporation and the certificate of designation relating to the particular series of preferred stock, for provisions that may be important to you. Our Restated Certificate of Incorporation has been filed as an exhibit to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part. The certificate of designation relating to the particular series of preferred stock will be filed as an exhibit to a document incorporated by reference in the registration statement. The prospectus supplement will also state whether any of the terms summarized below do not apply to the series of preferred stock being offered. Terms which could be included in a prospectus supplement include:

the designation of the preferred stock and the number of shares offered;

the amount of liquidation preference per share;

the price at which the preferred stock will be issued;

the dividend rate, or its method of calculation, and the dates on which dividends will be payable;

whether the dividends will be cumulative or noncumulative, and, if cumulative, the dates from which dividends will commence to cumulate;

any redemption or sinking fund provisions of the preferred stock;

whether we have elected to offer depositary shares, as described below;

the terms and conditions, if any, upon which the preferred stock will be convertible into or exchangeable for common stock or other securities; and

any additional voting, dividend, liquidation, redemption, sinking fund and other rights, preferences, privileges, limitations and restrictions of the preferred stock.

The preferred stock will, when issued, be fully paid and nonassessable and have no preemptive rights. Preferred stock will have the dividend, liquidation, and voting rights described below, unless we indicate otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement relating to a particular series of preferred stock. You should read the prospectus supplement relating to any series of preferred stock for the series specific terms.

Dividend Rights

Holders of preferred stock will receive, when, as and if declared by the Board, dividends at rates and on the dates described in the applicable prospectus supplement. Each dividend will be payable to the holders of record as they appear on our stock record books of the Corporation or, if applicable, the records of the depositary referred to under Description of Depositary Shares, on the record dates fixed by the Board or its committee. Dividends on any series of preferred stock may be cumulative or noncumulative. The Corporation's ability to pay dividends on the preferred stock depends on the ability of COBNA, CONA and ING Bank, fsb to pay dividends

Table of Contents

to the Corporation. The ability of the Corporation, COBNA, CONA and ING Bank, fsb to pay dividends in the future is subject to bank regulatory requirements and capital guidelines and policies established by the Federal Reserve Board.

We will not declare or pay or set apart funds for the payment of dividends on any securities which rank equally with the preferred stock unless we have paid or set apart funds for the payment of dividends on the preferred stock. If full dividends are not paid, the preferred stock will share dividends pro rata with any equally ranked securities.

Voting Rights

Unless we indicate otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement relating to a particular series of preferred stock or expressly required by law, the holders of the preferred stock will not have any voting rights.

Rights upon Liquidation

If we liquidate, dissolve or wind up our affairs, either voluntarily or involuntarily, the holders of each series of preferred stock will be entitled to receive liquidation distributions. These will be in the amounts set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement, plus accrued and unpaid dividends and, if the series of the preferred stock is cumulative, accrued and unpaid dividends for all prior dividend periods. If we do not pay in full all amounts payable on any series of preferred stock, the holders of the preferred stock will share proportionately with any equally ranked securities in any distribution of our assets. After the holders of any series of preferred stock are paid in full, they will not have any further claim to any of our remaining assets.

Because the Corporation is a holding company, the rights of its stockholders to participate in the assets of any subsidiary, including COBNA, CONA and ING Bank, fsb, upon the subsidiary's liquidation or recapitalization may be subject to the prior claims of the subsidiary's creditors, except to the extent that the Corporation may itself be a creditor with recognized claims against the subsidiary.

Redemption

A series of preferred stock may be redeemable, in whole or in part, at our option or at the option of the holder of the stock, and may be subject to mandatory redemption pursuant to a sinking fund, under the terms described in any applicable prospectus supplement.

In the event of partial redemptions of preferred stock, the Board or its committee will determine the method for selecting the shares to be redeemed, which may be by lot or pro rata or by any other method the Board or its committee determines to be equitable.

On and after a redemption date, unless we default in the payment of the redemption price, dividends will cease to accrue on shares of preferred stock which were called for redemption. In addition, all rights of holders of the preferred shares will terminate except for the right to receive the redemption price.

Conversion and Exchange

The applicable prospectus supplement for any series of preferred stock will state the terms and conditions, if any, on which shares of that series are convertible into or exchangeable for our common stock or other securities, including:

the number of shares of common stock or other securities into which the shares of preferred stock are convertible or for which the shares of preferred stock may be exchanged;

the conversion price or exchange price or manner of calculation;

the conversion period or exchange period;

Table of Contents

provisions as to whether conversion or exchange will be at the option of the holders of the preferred stock or at our option, if applicable;

any events requiring an adjustment of the conversion price or exchange price; and

provisions affecting conversion or exchange in the event of the redemption of the series of preferred stock.

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF DEPOSITARY SHARES

The following description summarizes the general terms and provisions of depositary shares and depositary receipts. The particular terms of any depositary shares and any depositary receipts we offer will be described in the related prospectus supplement. You should read the particular terms of any depositary shares and depositary receipts we offer described in the related prospectus supplement, together with any deposit agreement relating to a particular series of preferred stock for provisions that may be important to you. The prospectus supplement will also state whether any of the generalized provisions summarized below do not apply to the depositary shares or depositary receipts being offered.

General

We may, at our option, elect to offer fractional shares of preferred stock, rather than full shares of preferred stock. In that event, we will issue receipts for depositary shares, each of which will represent a fraction of a share of a particular series of preferred stock as described in the applicable prospectus supplement. The terms of any depositary shares will be set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement and the provisions of the deposit agreement, which we will file with the SEC.

The shares of any series of preferred stock represented by depositary shares will be deposited under a deposit agreement between us and the depositary named in the applicable prospectus supplement. Subject to the terms of the deposit agreement, each owner of a depositary share will be entitled to all the rights and preferences of the preferred stock, including dividend, voting, redemption, conversion and liquidation rights, in proportion to the applicable fraction of a share of preferred stock represented by such depositary share.

The depositary shares will be evidenced by depositary receipts issued pursuant to the applicable deposit agreement. Depositary receipts will be distributed to those persons purchasing the fractional shares of preferred stock as described in the applicable prospectus supplements.

Dividends and Other Distributions

The depositary will distribute all cash dividends or other cash distributions received in respect of the deposited preferred stock to the record holders of depositary shares relating to such preferred stock in proportion to the number of such depositary shares owned by such holders.

The depositary will distribute any property received by it other than cash to the record holders of depositary shares entitled thereto. If the depositary determines that it is not feasible to make such distribution, it may, with our approval, sell such property and distribute the net proceeds from such sale to such holders.

Redemption of Preferred Stock

If a series of preferred stock represented by depositary shares is to be redeemed, the depositary shares will be redeemed from the proceeds received by the depositary resulting from the redemption, in whole or in part, of such series of preferred stock. The depositary shares will be redeemed by the depositary at a price per depositary share equal to the applicable fraction of the redemption price per share payable in respect of the shares of preferred stock so redeemed.

Whenever we redeem shares of preferred stock held by the depositary, the depositary will redeem as of the same date the number of depositary shares representing the shares of preferred stock so redeemed. If fewer than all the depositary shares are to be redeemed, the depositary shares to be redeemed will be selected by the depositary by lot or ratably or by any other equitable method as we may decide.

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF COMMON STOCK

The Corporation is authorized to issue 1,000,000,000 shares of common stock, par value \$.01 per share. As of March 31, 2012, 580,226,318 shares of common stock were issued. The common stock is traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol COF. All outstanding shares of common stock are and will be fully paid and nonassessable.

The following summary is not complete, and you should refer to the applicable provisions of the Delaware General Corporation Law and our Restated Certificate of Incorporation and Amended and Restated Bylaws for additional information. See [Where You Can Find More Information](#).

Voting and Other Rights

Each share of common stock is entitled to one vote on all matters submitted to a vote of stockholders. Except as otherwise provided by law, the Restated Certificate of Incorporation or the Amended and Restated Bylaws, a majority of the votes cast is required for all actions to be taken by stockholders. Directors in uncontested elections shall be elected by a majority of votes cast; however, in contested elections, a plurality standard shall apply. Stockholders do not have cumulative voting rights in the election of directors, which means that the holders of more than 50% of the shares voting in an election of directors can elect all of the directors. Shares of common stock also do not have any preemptive, subscription, redemption, sinking fund or conversion rights.

The foregoing rights may be subject to voting and other rights that we may grant from time to time to the holders of other classes of our securities.

In addition, in connection with the ING Transaction, the Corporation and ING Groep N.V. entered into a Shareholders Agreement, dated February 17, 2012, that gave ING Groep N.V. the right to designate one representative to serve on our Board until the earlier of (i) February 17, 2013 (the one-year anniversary of the closing of the ING Transaction) and (ii) the day on which ING Bank N.V. has sold more than 33% of its shares of our common stock acquired in the ING Transaction to third parties. For more information, see Item 1.01 and Exhibit 2.1 of our Current Report on Form 8-K filed on June 22, 2011, which we incorporate into this prospectus by reference.

For a more detailed description of the terms of these and similar rights granted to the holders of other classes of our securities, please refer to the applicable prospectus supplement for any offering of our common stock pursuant to this registration statement and to the documents and other information that we incorporate by reference elsewhere in this prospectus. See [Where You Can Find More Information](#).

Distribution

Common stock dividends are subject to preferences, if any, on any outstanding shares of preferred stock. Dividends must be declared by the Board out of legally available funds. If we liquidate, dissolve or wind up our affairs, common stockholders are entitled to share proportionately in the assets available for distribution to common stockholders.

Anti-Takeover Provisions of the Restated Certificate of Incorporation and Amended and Restated Bylaws

Certain provisions in our Restated Certificate of Incorporation and Amended and Restated Bylaws could make more difficult or discourage a tender offer, proxy contest or other takeover attempt that is opposed by the Board but which might be favored by the stockholders. The Restated Certificate of Incorporation and Amended and Restated Bylaws are filed as exhibits to the registration statement, and certain provisions are summarized below.

Classified Board of Directors. At the 2011 annual meeting of stockholders, our stockholders approved an amendment to our Restated Certificate of Incorporation, to phase out over a three-year period the classification of

Table of Contents

the Board and provide instead for the annual election of directors. Previously, other than directors elected by any series of preferred stock, the Board was divided into three classes of directors, with each class of directors elected for a three-year term. Following our stockholders' approval of the amendment to our Restated Certificate of Incorporation, the Board approved certain related amendments to our Amended and Restated Bylaws. For more information regarding the foregoing amendments, see Item 5.03 of our Current Report on Form 8-K, filed on May 17, 2011, which we incorporate into this prospectus by reference.

As a result of the foregoing amendments, our Restated Certificate of Incorporation and Amended and Restated Bylaws provide that, other than directors elected by any series of preferred stock, beginning with the 2012 annual meeting of stockholders, directors will be elected annually to one-year terms in office. Directors elected at the 2009, 2010, and 2011 annual meetings of stockholders will continue to serve the remainder of their three-year terms in office. At the 2014 annual meeting of stockholders, the declassification of the Board will be complete.

Until the 2014 annual meeting of stockholders, our Board will consequently have more than one class of directors, which may have the effect of deterring or delaying any attempt by any group to obtain control of the Corporation. Specifically, these provisions could prevent a stockholder or a group of stockholders having majority voting power from obtaining control of the Board until the 2013 annual meeting of stockholders, at which time they could elect a majority of the directors appointed to the Board.

Number of Directors; Removal; Filling Vacancies. Generally, our Board must consist of between three and seventeen directors, and vacancies will be filled only by the affirmative vote of a majority of the remaining directors, even if less than a quorum remains in office. Therefore, unless the Amended and Restated Bylaws are further amended, the Board could prevent any stockholder from enlarging the Board of Directors and filling the new directorships with the stockholder's own nominees.

Under Delaware law, unless otherwise provided in the certificate of incorporation, directors serving on a classified board may only be removed by the stockholders for cause. Our Restated Certificate of Incorporation provides that directors may be removed without cause, except that directors serving the remainder of a three-year term in office may be removed only for cause. It also provides that directors may only be removed, whether for or without cause, upon the affirmative vote of holders of at least 80% of the voting power of all of the then-outstanding shares of stock entitled to vote generally in the election of directors.

No Stockholder Action by Written Consent; Special Meetings. Stockholder action can be taken only at an annual or special meeting of stockholders and cannot be taken by written consent. Under circumstances described in the Amended and Restated Bylaws, special meetings of stockholders can be called by the Chairman of the Board or by the Board. Stockholders are not permitted to call a special meeting or to require that the Board call a special meeting. Moreover, any special meeting of stockholders is limited to the business in the notice of the special meeting sent to the stockholders before the meeting.

The provisions prohibiting stockholder action by written consent and prohibiting stockholders from calling a special meeting could delay consideration of a stockholder proposal until our next annual meeting. This would prevent the holders of our stock from unilaterally using the written consent procedure to take stockholder action. Moreover, a stockholder cannot force stockholder consideration of a proposal over the opposition of the Chairman and the Board by calling a special meeting of stockholders.

Advance Notice Provisions for Stockholder Nominations and Stockholder Proposals. Only people who are nominated by, or at the direction of, the Board, or by a stockholder who has given proper written notice prior to a meeting at which directors are to be elected, will be eligible for election as directors. Business conducted at an annual meeting is limited to the business brought before the meeting by, or at the direction of, the Chairman, the Board or a stockholder who has given proper notice. A stockholder's notice to us proposing to nominate a person

Table of Contents

for election as a director must also contain certain information described in the Amended and Restated Bylaws. You should refer to our Amended and Restated Bylaws for more information, including the process and timing requirements for a stockholder notice.

Some of the effects of the provisions described above and in the Amended and Restated Bylaws include:

the Board will have a longer period to consider the qualifications of the proposed nominees and, if deemed necessary or desirable, to inform stockholders about the qualifications;

there will be an orderly procedure for conducting annual meetings of stockholders and informing stockholders, prior to the meetings, of any business proposed to be conducted at the meetings, including any Board recommendations; and

contests for the election of directors or the consideration of stockholder proposals will be precluded if the procedures are not followed. Third parties may therefore be discouraged from conducting a solicitation of proxies to elect their own slate of directors or to approve their own proposal.

Business Combinations. Certain mergers, share exchanges or sales of our assets with or to interested stockholders, as defined below, must be approved by the affirmative vote of the holders of at least 75% of our voting stock, voting together as a single class, including 75% of our voting stock not owned directly or indirectly by any interested stockholder or any affiliate of any interested stockholder. Our Restated Certificate of Incorporation requires this affirmative vote even if no vote is required, or a lesser percentage is specified, by law or any national securities exchange or otherwise. This affirmative vote is not required in two situations. First, it is not required if the business combination has been approved by a majority of uninterested, continuing directors. Second, it is not required if certain price and procedure requirements designed to ensure that our stockholders receive a fair price for their common stock are satisfied. Our Restated Certificate of Incorporation defines an interested stockholder as any person, other than us or any of our subsidiaries, who or which:

itself or along with its affiliates beneficially owns, directly or indirectly, more than 5% of the then outstanding voting stock;

is an affiliate of us and at any time within the two-year period immediately prior to the date in question itself or along with its affiliates beneficially owned, directly or indirectly, 5% or more of the then-outstanding voting stock; or

owns any shares of voting stock which were at any time within the two-year period immediately prior to the date in question beneficially owned by any interested stockholder, if the transfer of ownership occurred in the course of a non-public transaction or series of non-public transactions.

Liability of Directors; Indemnification. A director generally will not be personally liable for monetary damages to us or our stockholders for breach of fiduciary duty as a director. A director may be held liable, however, for the following:

any breach of the director's duty of loyalty to us or our stockholders;

acts or omissions not in good faith or which involve intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of law;

paying a dividend or approving a stock repurchase in violation of Delaware law; or

Edgar Filing: CAPITAL ONE FINANCIAL CORP - Form 424B7

any transaction from which the director derived an improper personal benefit.

We indemnify our officers and directors against lawsuits by third parties to the fullest extent of the law. We may agree with any person to provide an indemnification greater than or different from the indemnification provided by the Restated Certificate of Incorporation.

Amendments. The Restated Certificate of Incorporation generally may be amended with a majority vote of the stockholders, but some provisions, including some of the provisions discussed above, can only be amended with an affirmative vote of the holders at least 80% of the then-outstanding voting stock. The Amended and

Table of Contents

Restated Bylaws generally may be amended by the Board or by the stockholders; provided that in the case of amendments by the stockholders the affirmative vote of at least 80% of the then outstanding voting stock is required. These 80% vote requirements prevent a stockholder with only a majority of the common stock from circumventing the requirements of the Amended and Restated Bylaws or certain provisions of the Restated Certificate of Incorporation by simply amending or repealing them.

Anti-Takeover Legislation

We are a Delaware corporation and are governed by Section 203 of the Delaware General Corporation Law. This provision generally states that, subject to some exceptions, a corporation cannot engage in any business combination with any interested stockholder for three years after the time that the stockholder became an interested stockholder unless the business combination is approved by the board of directors and authorized by the affirmative vote of at least 66-2/3% of the outstanding voting stock of the corporation which is not owned by the interested stockholder. Delaware law defines an interested stockholder to include any person, and its affiliates and associates, that owns 15% or more of the outstanding voting stock of the corporation, or that is an affiliate or associate of the corporation and was the owner of 15% or more of the outstanding voting stock of the corporation at any time within three years immediately prior to the relevant date.

Although stockholders may elect to exclude a corporation from Section 203's restrictions, our Restated Certificate of Incorporation and Amended and Restated Bylaws do not exclude us from Section 203's restrictions. The provisions of Section 203 may encourage companies interested in acquiring us to negotiate in advance with the Board, since Section 203 does not require stockholder approval for a corporation to engage in any business combination with any interested stockholder, if the board of directors prior to the time that such stockholder became an interested stockholder approved either the business combination or the transaction in which the stockholder became an interested stockholder. Business combinations are discussed more fully above.

Dividend Reinvestment Plan

Our dividend reinvestment and stock purchase plan (as amended and supplemented, the DRIP Program) provides stockholders with the opportunity to purchase additional shares of our common stock by reinvesting all or a portion of their dividends on shares of common stock. It also provides existing stockholders with the option to make cash investments monthly, subject to a minimum monthly limit of \$50 and a maximum monthly limit of \$10,000. Optional cash investments in excess of \$10,000 may be made only with our express permission, and, in our sole discretion, we may grant a discount for such optional cash investments (from 0% to 5%). We use proceeds from the DRIP Program for general corporate purposes.

Transfer Agent

The transfer agent and registrar for the common stock is Computershare Trust Company, N.A.

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF PURCHASE CONTRACTS

We may from time to time issue purchase contracts, including purchase contracts obligating holders to purchase from or sell to us, and us to sell to or purchase from holders, at a future date a number of:

our debt securities, preferred stock, depositary shares or common stock;

securities of an third party not affiliated with us, a basket of those securities, an index or indices of those securities or any combination of the above;

currencies; or

commodities.

The price of the items specified above may be fixed at the time the purchase contracts are issued or may be determined by reference to a specific formula contained in such purchase contracts. The purchase contracts may be issued separately or as parts of units, including units consisting of a combination of a purchase contract obligating the holder to purchase debt obligations or other securities of third parties not affiliated with us, including U.S. Treasury securities, which may secure the holders' obligations to purchase the common stock or preferred stock under the purchase contracts. We may issue purchase contracts in such amounts and in as many distinct series as we may require.

The applicable prospectus supplement will describe the terms of the purchase contracts offered pursuant to it, including one or more of the following:

whether the purchase contracts obligate the holder to purchase or sell, or both purchase and sell, the items specified above, and the nature and amount of each of those items or method of determining those amounts;

the amounts payable under the purchase contract or the formula by which such amount will be determined;

whether the purchase contracts are to be prepaid or not;

whether the purchase contracts are to be settled by delivery, or by reference or linkage to the value, performance or level of our securities, the securities of an third party not affiliated with us (or a basket of such securities, an index or indices of such securities or any combination of the above), the currencies or the commodities that are subject to such purchase contracts;

any acceleration, cancellation, termination or other provisions relating to the settlement of the purchase contracts;

United States federal income tax considerations relevant to the purchase contracts; and

whether the purchase contracts will be issued in fully registered or global form.

The preceding description and any description of purchase contracts in the applicable prospectus supplement does not purport to be complete and is subject to and is qualified in its entirety by reference to each purchase contract agreement and, if applicable, collateral arrangements

Edgar Filing: CAPITAL ONE FINANCIAL CORP - Form 424B7

relating to such purchase contracts. An investment in purchase contracts may involve special risks, including risks associated with indexed securities or currency related risks if the purchase contract or the related security is linked to an index or is payable in or linked to a non-U.S.-dollar currency.

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF WARRANTS

We may from time to time issue warrants to purchase our debt securities, preferred stock, depositary shares or common stock. We may offer warrants separately or together with one or more additional warrants, debt securities, preferred stock, depositary shares or common stock, or any combination of those securities in the form of units, as described in the applicable prospectus supplement. If we issue warrants as part of a unit, the accompanying prospectus supplement will specify whether those warrants may be separated from the other securities in the unit prior to the warrants' expiration date.

Below is a description of certain general terms and provisions of the warrants that we may offer. Further terms of the warrants will be described in the applicable prospectus supplement. You should read the particular terms of any warrants we offer described in the related prospectus supplement, together with any warrant agreement relating to the particular warrant, for provisions that may be important to you.

The applicable prospectus supplement will contain, where applicable, the following terms of and other information relating to the warrants:

the specific designation and aggregate number of, and the price at which we will issue, the warrants;

the currency or currency units in which the offering price, if any, and the exercise price are payable;

the date on which the right to exercise the warrants will begin and the date on which that right will expire or, if you may not continuously exercise the warrants throughout that period, the specific date or dates on which you may exercise the warrants;

whether the warrants will be issued in fully registered form or bearer form, in definitive or global form or in any combination of these forms, although, in any case, the form of a warrant included in a unit will correspond to the form of the unit and of any security included in that unit;

any applicable material United States federal income tax consequences;

the identity of the warrant agent for the warrants and of any other depositaries, execution or paying agents, transfer agents, registrars or other agents;

the proposed listing, if any, of the warrants or any securities purchasable upon exercise of the warrants on any securities exchange;

the designation, aggregate principal amount, currency and terms of the debt securities purchasable upon exercise of the warrants, and the price at which such principal amount may be purchased;

the number of shares of preferred stock, the number of depositary shares or the number of shares of common stock purchasable upon exercise of a warrant and the price at which those shares may be purchased;

the designation and terms of the preferred stock or common stock, or of the preferred stock underlying any depositary shares, purchasable upon exercise of the warrants;

Edgar Filing: CAPITAL ONE FINANCIAL CORP - Form 424B7

if applicable, the designation and terms of the debt securities, preferred stock, depositary shares or common stock with which the warrants are issued and the number of warrants issued with each security;

if applicable, the date from and after which the warrants and the related debt securities, preferred stock, depositary shares or common stock will be separately transferable;

if applicable, the minimum or maximum amount of the warrants that may be exercised at any one time;

information with respect to book-entry procedures, if any;

the antidilution provisions of the warrants, if any;

Table of Contents

any redemption or call provisions;

whether the warrants are to be sold separately or with other securities as parts of units; and

any additional terms of the warrants, including terms, procedures and limitations relating to the exchange and exercise of the warrants.

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF UNITS

We may issue units comprised of one or more of the other securities described in this prospectus in any combination. Each unit may also include debt obligations or other securities of third parties not affiliated with us, such as U.S. Treasury securities. Each unit will be issued so that the holder of the unit is also the holder of each security included in the unit. Thus, the holder of a unit will have the rights and obligations of a holder of each included security. The applicable unit agreement under which a unit is issued may provide that the securities included in the unit may not be held or transferred separately, at any time or any time before a specified date.

The applicable prospectus supplement will describe the terms of the units offered pursuant to it, including one or more of the following:

the designation and terms of the units and of the securities comprising the units, including whether and under what circumstances those securities may be held or transferred separately;

any provisions for the issuance, payment, settlement, transfer or exchange of the units or of the securities comprising the units;

the terms of any agreements governing the units;

U.S. federal income tax considerations relevant to the units; and

whether the units will be issued in fully registered or global form.

The preceding description and any description of units in the applicable prospectus supplement does not purport to be complete and is subject to and is qualified in its entirety by reference to each unit agreement and, if applicable, collateral arrangements relating to such units.

Table of Contents

RESALE BY SELLING SECURITYHOLDERS

Selling securityholders may use this prospectus in connection with offering our securities for resale. The applicable prospectus supplement will identify the selling securityholders and the terms of the securities offered for resale. Selling securityholders may be deemed to be underwriters in connection with the securities they resell and any profits on the resales may be deemed to be underwriting discounts and commissions under the Securities Act. The selling securityholders will receive all the proceeds from the resale of our securities. We will not receive any proceeds from resales by selling securityholders.

Table of Contents

BOOK-ENTRY PROCEDURES AND SETTLEMENT

Unless we indicate otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, the debt securities, common stock, preferred stock or other securities described herein, which we refer to collectively as the securities, will be book-entry securities. All book-entry securities of the same issue initially will be represented by one or more fully registered global securities. Each global security will be deposited upon issuance with, or on behalf of, The Depository Trust Company, as depository (DTC), and will be registered in the name of DTC or a nominee of DTC, in each case for credit to an account of a direct or indirect participant in DTC as described below. DTC will thus be the only registered holder of the securities and will be considered the sole owner of the securities for purposes of any indenture, warrant agreement, unit agreement, purchase contract, or similar agreement governing the terms of such securities, as applicable, which we refer to as a governing agreement.

Global securities may be transferred, in whole and not in part, only to another nominee of DTC or to a successor of DTC or its nominee. Beneficial interests in the global securities may be held through the Euroclear System, or Euroclear, and Clearstream Banking, S.A., or Clearstream, each as indirect participants in DTC. Transfers of beneficial interests in the global securities will be subject to the applicable rules and procedures of DTC and its direct and indirect participants, including, if applicable, those of Euroclear and Clearstream, which may change from time to time. DTC has advised us as follows: it is a limited-purpose trust company organized under the New York Banking Law, a banking organization within the meaning of the New York Banking Law, a member of the Federal Reserve System, a clearing corporation within the meaning of the New York Uniform Commercial Code, and a clearing agency registered pursuant to the provisions of Section 17A of the Exchange Act. DTC holds and provides asset servicing for securities that its participants deposit with it. DTC also facilitates the post-trade settlement among participants of sales and other securities transactions in deposited securities through electronic computerized book entry transfers and pledges between participants accounts, thereby eliminating the need for physical movement of securities certificates.

Direct participants in DTC s system include both U.S. and non-U.S. securities brokers and dealers, banks, trust companies, clearing corporations, and certain other organizations. Access to DTC s system also is available to others such as both U.S. and non-U.S. securities brokers and dealers, banks, trust companies and clearing corporations that clear through or maintain a custodial relationship with a direct participant, either directly or indirectly, which we collectively call indirect participants. Persons that are not participants may beneficially own securities held by or on behalf of DTC only through the participants or the indirect participants. The ownership interests in, and transfers of ownership interests in, each security held by or on behalf of DTC are recorded on the records of the participants and the indirect participants. The rules applicable to DTC and its participants are on file with the Securities and Exchange Commission. More information about DTC can be found at <http://www.dtcc.com/> and <http://www.dtc.org/>.

DTC has also advised us that, upon the issuance of a global security evidencing any securities, it will credit, on its book-entry registration and transfer system, the respective principal or face amounts of the securities evidenced thereby to the designated accounts of participants. Ownership of beneficial interests in the global securities will be limited to participants or persons that may hold interests through participants. Ownership of beneficial interests in the global securities will be shown on, and the transfer of those ownership interests may be effected only through, records maintained by DTC or its nominee (with respect to participants) and the records of participants and indirect participants (with respect to other owners of beneficial interests in the global securities).

Investors in the global securities that are participants may hold their interests therein directly through DTC. Investors in the global securities that are not participants may hold their interests therein indirectly through organizations (including Euroclear and Clearstream) that are participants in such system. Euroclear and Clearstream will hold interests in the global securities on behalf of their participants through customers securities accounts in their respective names on the books of their respective depositories. All interests in a global security, including those held through Euroclear or Clearstream, may be subject to the procedures and requirements of DTC. Those interests held through Euroclear or Clearstream may also be subject to the procedures and requirements of such systems.

Table of Contents

The laws of some states require that certain purchasers of securities take physical delivery of those securities in definitive form. These laws may impair the ability of holders to transfer beneficial interests in global securities to certain purchasers. Because DTC can act only on behalf of the participants, which in turn act on behalf of the indirect participants, the ability of a person having beneficial interests in a global security to pledge such interests to persons that do not participate in the DTC system, or otherwise take actions in respect of such interests, may be affected by the lack of a physical certificate evidencing such interests.

So long as DTC or any successor depository for a global security, or any nominee, is the registered holder of such global security, DTC or such successor depository or nominee will be considered the sole owner or holder of the securities represented by such global security for all purposes under the governing agreement applicable to that global security. Except as set forth below, owners of beneficial interests in a global security will not be entitled to have the securities represented by such global security registered in their names, will not receive or be entitled to receive physical delivery of such securities in definitive form, and will not be considered the owners or holders thereof for any purpose under the governing agreement applicable to that global security. Accordingly, each person owning a beneficial interest in a global security must rely on the procedures of DTC and, if such person is not a participant, on the procedures of the participant through which such person owns its interest, to exercise any rights of a holder of securities under the governing agreement applicable to that global security. We understand that, under existing industry practices, in the event that we request any action of holders or that an owner of a beneficial interest in a global security desires to give any consent or take any action under the governing agreement applicable to that global security, DTC or any successor depository would authorize the participants holding the relevant beneficial interests to give or take such action or consent, and such participants would authorize beneficial owners owning through such participants to give or take such action or consent or would otherwise act upon the instructions of beneficial owners owning through them.

Unless we indicate otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, any payments due with respect to any securities (including payments of principal and interest with respect to debt securities and dividends with respect to equity securities) that are registered in the name of or held by DTC or any successor depository or nominee will be payable to DTC or such successor depository or nominee, as the case may be, in its capacity as registered holder of the global securities representing the securities. Neither we, nor any trustee, registrar, paying agent or other agent in respect of the securities, nor any other agent of us or any such person will have any responsibility or liability for any aspect of the records relating to, or payments made on account of, beneficial ownership interests in the global securities, for maintaining, supervising or reviewing any records relating to such beneficial ownership interests, or for any other matter relating to the actions and practices of DTC or any of its participants or indirect participants.

We have been advised by DTC that its current practice, upon receipt of any payment in respect of a global security, is to credit participants accounts with payments on the payment date, unless DTC has reason to believe it will not receive payments on such payment date. Each relevant participant is credited with an amount proportionate to its beneficial ownership of an interest in the principal or face amount of the relevant security as shown on the records of DTC. Payments by participants and indirect participants to owners of beneficial interests in a global security held through such participants and indirect participants will be governed by standing instructions and customary practices, as is now the case with securities held for the accounts of customers in bearer form or registered in street name, and will be the responsibility of such participants or indirect participants, and will not be the responsibility of us, any trustee, registrar, paying agent or other agent in respect of the securities, nor any agent of us or of any such person. Neither we nor any such person or agent will be liable for any delay by DTC or by any participant or indirect participant in identifying the beneficial owners of the securities, and we and any such person or agent may conclusively rely on and will be protected in relying on instructions from DTC or its nominee for all purposes.

Crossmarket transfers between the participants in DTC, on the one hand, and Euroclear or Clearstream participants, on the other hand, will be effected through DTC in accordance with DTC's rules on behalf of Euroclear or Clearstream, as the case may be, by its depository; however, such cross-market transactions will

Table of Contents

require delivery of instructions to Euroclear or Clearstream, as the case may be, by the counterparty in such system in accordance with the rules and procedures and within the established deadlines (Brussels time) of such system. Euroclear or Clearstream, as the case may be, will, if the transaction meets its settlement requirements, deliver instructions to its respective depository to take action to effect final settlement on its behalf by delivering or receiving interests in the relevant global security in DTC, and making or receiving payment in accordance with normal procedures for same-day funds settlement applicable to DTC. Euroclear participants and Clearstream participants may not deliver instructions directly to the depositories for Euroclear or Clearstream. DTC has advised us that it will take any action permitted to be taken by a holder of securities only at the direction of one or more participants to whose account DTC has credited the interests in the applicable global security and only in respect of such portion of the aggregate principal or face amount of the securities as to which such participant or participants has or have given such direction.

Except as provided in the applicable prospectus supplement, owners of beneficial interests in a global security will not be entitled to receive physical delivery of the related securities in certificated form and will not be considered the holders of the related securities for any purpose under the governing agreement applicable to that global security, and no global security will be exchangeable, except for another global security of the same denomination and tenor to be registered in the name of DTC or a successor depository or nominee. Accordingly, each beneficial owner must rely on the procedures of DTC and, if the beneficial owner is not a participant, on the procedures of the participant or indirect participant through which the beneficial owner owns its interest to exercise any rights of a holder under the applicable governing agreement. However, if there is an event of default under any applicable governing agreement, DTC reserves the right to exchange the relevant global securities for securities in certificated form, and to distribute such securities to the participants.

Although DTC, Euroclear and Clearstream have agreed to the foregoing procedures to facilitate transfers of interests in the global securities among participants in DTC, Euroclear and Clearstream, they are under no obligation to perform or to continue to perform such procedures, and may discontinue such procedures at any time. Neither we, nor any indenture trustee, nor any agent of us or of any such person will have any responsibility for the performance by DTC, Euroclear or Clearstream or their respective participants or indirect participants of their respective obligations under the rules and procedures governing their operations.

The information in this section, including any description of the operations and procedures of DTC, Euroclear and Clearstream, has been provided solely as a matter of convenience. We do not take any responsibility for the accuracy of this information, and this information is not intended to serve as a representation, warranty or contract modification of any kind. The operations and procedures of DTC, Euroclear and Clearstream are solely within the control of such settlement systems and are subject to changes by them. We urge investors to contact such systems or their participants directly to discuss these matters.

Table of Contents

CERTAIN LEGAL MATTERS

Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP will pass upon certain legal matters in connection with the securities. Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP has from time to time acted as counsel for us and our subsidiaries and affiliates and may do so in the future. Morrison & Foerster LLP will pass upon certain legal matters for the underwriters.

EXPERTS

Ernst & Young LLP, an independent registered public accounting firm, has audited our consolidated financial statements included in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2011 as set forth in their report, which is incorporated by reference in this prospectus and elsewhere in the registration statement. Our financial statements are incorporated by reference in reliance on Ernst & Young LLP's report, given on their authority as experts in accounting and auditing.

Ernst & Young LLP, an independent registered public accounting firm, has audited the consolidated financial statements of ING Bank, fsb included in our Current Reports on Form 8-K filed with the SEC on March 14, 2012, as set forth in their report, which is incorporated by reference in this prospectus and elsewhere in the registration statement. The ING Bank, fsb financial statements are incorporated by reference in reliance on Ernst & Young LLP's report, given on their authority as experts in accounting and auditing.

KPMG LLP, an independent registered public accounting firm, has audited the financial statements of HSBC Card and Retail Services, included in our Current Report on Form 8-K filed with the SEC on March 14, 2012, as set forth in their report, which is incorporated by reference in this prospectus and elsewhere in the registration statement. The HSBC Card and Retail Services financial statements are incorporated by reference in reliance on KPMG LLP's report, given on their authority as experts in accounting and auditing.