

# PHILADELPHIA

## GOOD WEBSITES FOR PLANNING YOUR TRIP

[HTTPS://WWW.VISITPHILLY.COM/](https://www.visitphilly.com/)

[HTTPS://WWW.DISCOVERPHL.COM/](https://www.discoverphl.com/)

## GETTING TO PHILADELPHIA

TRAIN: PHILADELPHIA CAN BE REACHED BY TRAIN FROM BOTH NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON DC.

Prices can be quite high if booking ahead of time. I recommend booking far in advance

<https://www.amtrak.com/>

BUS: COACH BUSES ARE AN AFFORDABLE WAY TO TRAVEL TO OTHER CLOSE MAJOR CITIES.

There are many different carries but the website Wanderu is a great resource for consolidating many of the options available. <https://www.wanderu.com/en-us/>

## TRANSPORTATION IN PHILADELPHIA

Philadelphia is a very walkable city! When site seeing you can generally walk to most major attractions. To get further distances the SEPTA system has public buses, a metro and trolleys. You can use Google Maps to find the best public transportation and all transit will routes and times will come up on it. Buses are generally the best way to travel. You can pay on board with cash or buy a SEPTA card at any metro station and use it on any public ride.

<https://www5.septa.org/>

## TOURS

Philly is America's oldest city! To understand the history I recommend taking a tour. There is endless tour options, but my favorite is always doing a free walking tour. Additionally a convenient option for those who prefer not to plan ahead is the hop-on-hop off bus.

MASTER GUIDE FOR PHILADELPHIA TOURS:

[HTTPS://WWW.VISITPHILLY.COM/TOURS-IN-PHILADELPHIA/](https://www.visitphilly.com/tours-in-philadelphia/)

FREE WALKING TOURS:

[HTTPS://FREETOURSBYFOOT.COM/PHILADELPHIA-TOURS/](https://freetourbyfoot.com/philadelphia-tours/)

CITY MURALS- PHILADELPHIA IS KNOWN FOR THEIR MANY MURALS:

[HTTPS://WWW.DISCOVERPHL.COM/BLOG/CITY-OF-MURALS/](https://www.discoverphl.com/blog/city-of-murals/)

## SITES BY NEIGHBORHOOD/STREET

### INDEPENDENCE MALL

National Park Area with the Liberty Bell & Historic Buildings where the constitution was signed. Both places are free to visit, but you must reserve a time to go see them at the Independence Hall Visitors Center. The Visitors Center has interactive exhibits and a few children's activities which is also free. I highly recommend stopping in the visitors center to get free resources for your trip to Philly. There is also a second floor viewing balcony that is free to visit.

- Liberty Bell
- Independence Hall
  - <https://www.nps.gov/inde/planyourvisit/independencehall.htm>
- Constitution Center
- Bourse Food Hall- Historic building with many food options
- Washington Square park- See The Dream Garden: Maxfield Parish huge mosaic located in the Curtis Center, Free to see, Can Walk further into the building and there is a waterfall & seating area, good place to warm up on cold winter days; toilets in building
- Rose Garden – There are several small gardens and walkways in this area that are beautiful to stroll through, especially on a warm day
- Independence Beer Garden
  - Fun outdoor venue with yard games, firepits, live music, food and alcohol
    - <https://www.phlbeergarden.com/>

Quick Food: WAWA is Philly's biggest convenience store chain. It is a good quick stop for drinks, bathrooms, made to order sandwiches and other quick food items. There is a WAWA located on Chestnut street right off of Independence Mall.

## OLD CITY

This neighborhood houses the Independence Mall. It is the most historic part of Philadelphia and a good place to explore on the day you are visiting the Independence Mall. Here is a good article with images that summarizes activities to do in the area: <https://www.visitphilly.com/articles/philadelphia/free-things-to-do-in-historic-philadelphia/#science-history-institute>

Must see places (in my opinion are)

- Elfreth's Alley
  - 32 Historic Houses on a charming cobblestone street
    - This is where I had my maternity photos taken & is a great spot for a photo shoot
- Benjamin Franklin Bridge
  - Pedestrian Walkway leading to New Jersey for one of the best views of Philadelphia & the Delaware River
- Franklin Square
  - Cute Park with a Merry Go Round, fountain and occasional events

## PENS LANDING

There are two rivers that Philadelphia's downtown is sandwiched in between. Pens Landing in the waterfront area that is close to Old City and home to Pens Landing! There is a boardwalk here with hammocks, swan boats, a historic ship & submarine. It is a lovely place to stroll on a warm day.

- Dave & Busters: Large Indoor Arcade which could be fun on a cold day
- Seafont Festivals: Home of WinterFest with ice skating rinks & winter village/ Summerfest- some small amusement rides
- Cherry Street Pier- Art Galleries & Beer Hall
- Moshulu- Great Happy Hour on a Historic Longship
  - <http://www.moshulu.com/>
- Liberty Point: Largest Bar in Philly on the riverfront, but may not be open in winter
- Riverlink Ferry: You can take the 15 minute Riverlink ferry in warm months across the river for good views and to visit the Battleship New Jersey & aquarium
  - <https://www.delawareriverwaterfront.com/places/riverlink-ferry>

## FASHION DISTRICT

This area runs along Market Street and houses a lot of the best shopping in Philadelphia. Most of the stores are great places to go find reasonable priced named brand items. In the area is also Philadelphia's China Town which is fun for site seeing and has many wonderful restaurants. Speaking of eating you cannot miss a visit to Reading Terminal Market. It is a Food Hall & Market with endless food options. Here you can also see Pennsylvania's Amish selling baked goods and other farm fresh items.

- Indoor Malls:
  - Liberty Place- Has a viewing deck on the top of the building for City Views (fee to enter)
  - Market Place
- Name Brand Discount Department Style Stores on Market Street
  - TJ Maxx
  - Burlington
  - Ross Dress For Less
  - Nordstrom Rack
- Outlet Stores on Market Street
  - Express
  - Kate Spade
  - Banana Republic
- Lunch
  - Reading Terminal Market- A Must Visit
  - Philadelphia China Town- <https://www.phillymag.com/fooboos/chinese-restaurant-philadelphia-chinatown/>

## CITY CENTER/CITY HALL

The largest municipal building in the United States. Beautiful place to visit. You can walk through the interior courtyard. There are tours available

- Exit South to Broad Street and continue South
  - Union Club
  - Kimmel Music Center
    - Great place to see Broadway shows/symphony at a fraction of the price of NYC with similar quality [www.kimmelculturalcampus.org](http://www.kimmelculturalcampus.org)
- Victory Brewery
  - Centrally located with a balcony overlooking the Art Museum & City Hall
    - <https://taprooms.victorybeer.com/victory-brewing-company-philadelphia-d1474f3f7a0c>
    - Good Beer/ Decent Food
- Masonic Temple
  - <https://pamasonictemple.org/>
- Philadelphia LOVE statue/ Love Park
  - <https://www.visitphilly.com/things-to-do/attractions/love-statue/>
- Seasonal Events
  - Every Wednesday of the Summer- Center City SIPS
    - Live Music & Happy Hour
    - <https://centercityphila.org/explore-center-city/ccd-sips>
  - Winter- Christmas Village

- <https://www.philachristmas.com/index.html>
- Comcast Center – Free Universal Sphere
  - <https://comcastcentercampus.com/universal-sphere/>
  - Also has a food court in basement
- Sansom Street
  - A pedestrian street that houses many restaurants and bars. A great place for happy hour, night life and live music.
- Rittenhouse Square
  - A beautiful Park in one of the most upscale zipcodes of Philadelphia
    - Year round Saturday Farmers Market
    - Good Upscale Restaurants Including: Parc, LOVE, Friday-Saturday-Sunday, & The Dandelion
- Anthropology Flagship store
  - Beautifully decorated inside and out
    - Worth a visit even if not shopping
- JG Skyline
  - 1 N 19<sup>th</sup> St, a pricey bar with the best views of the city. Even if you are not dining or going to the bar, it is worth taking (sneaking into) the glass elevator to the restaurant to see the views.

***Note: On an ambitious day of site seeing all of the above neighborhoods could be visited!***

## SCHUYLKILL RIVER TRAIL

On the West side of Center City lies the Schuylkill River. Along the bank of the river is the Schuylkill river trail. It is a trail that spans over 100 miles and is a beautiful place to enjoy some of the most famous sites of Philadelphia. You can enter the trail by South Street for a great view of the city! A great activity on a beautiful day is to rent bikes and cycle along the river trail. You can also go on a kayak tour along the river. A very manageable walk is from the South Street Bridge to boat house Row. This walk will allow you to see many major sites of the city. It is beautiful both day and night, as in the night time the bridges, skyline and boathouse row are lite up. Along the trail you will also find:

- South Street Bridge
  - Beautiful View of Philadelphia
- Cira Green
  - On the West Bank of the Schuylkill river, a “Park in the Sky” that is open to the general public. There is a wonderful view of the city of Philadelphia, Lawn games, A project that displays movies and sporting events, and a concession stand with food and drinks.
  - Downstairs there are also several bars and cafes and a deli. You can bring food to the park for a picnic <https://ciragreen.com/>
- Water Works
  - A national historic landmark, turned event space, with breathtaking views of boat house row, the Philadelphia Art Museum and the skyline. When you reach Water Works, walk out to the Dam where you can get a great 360 view.
- Parks on Taps

- Throughout the spring and summer Parks on Tap is hosted by the Philadelphia Rec Department. Music and drinks come to parks throughout Philadelphia. The Schuylkill river bank is home to many of these events. <https://www.parksontap.com/locations>
- Boat House Row
  - Between Kelly Drive and Fairmont Park houses Lloyd hall and several other rowing clubs. These clubs make for a picturesque view.

## SOUTH STREET

One of Philadelphia's most famous streets where you will find great restaurants, entertainment, small businesses and vintage/thrift shopping. <https://southstreet.com/>

- The Magic Garden
  - A large outdoor labyrinth of mosaic tiles. You can see the art both from the museum and on many spaces in and along South Street. This is one of my favorite sites in Philadelphia!
- PHS Pop Up Garden
  - A beautiful outdoor garden restaurant with lush plants serving food and drinks.
  - <https://phsonline.org/>
- Philly AIDS thrift
  - A funky thrift store <https://www.phillyaidsthift.com/>
  - There are many additional thrift stores in the surrounding area

## ITALIAN MARKET/ PASSYUNK AVE

The Italian Market houses a daily farmers market along 9<sup>th</sup> street where you can buy fresh produce. It is home to several great Italian Markets, bakeries and restaurants. In the general area there is also Passyunk Avenue, which is a lively street with great restaurants, live music, and dining. In this area you will also find a large amount of Asian and Mexican restaurants. This is the area to come for yummy food!

<https://www.italianmarketphilly.org/merchants.html>

Italian Market

<https://www.phillymag.com/foobooz/italian-market-9th-street-bella-vista-restaurant-philadelphia/>

- Angelo's- For Philly's 'best' Cheesesteak
  - Arguably one of the best cheesesteaks in Philadelphia. It is cash only order out service. Pick up a cheesesteak and eat at DiBruno Bro's park down the street. You will also find Pat's & Geno's in this general area. These are both famous Philly Cheesesteak icons, but natives feel are a decent cheesesteak, but perhaps not the best.
- John's Water Ice
  - Another Philly must try stable. A refreshing Ice treat only open from Spring to Fall. Homemade with fresh fruits. They also have amazing ice cream. I recommend getting a Gelati- a combination of water ice and ice cream. Cash Only
- Claudio's and Di' Bruno Bro's
  - Imported products from Italy. A great market with delicious cheese and meats.
- Isgro
  - Amazing Italian American Bakery

- South Philly Barbacoa
  - Open on Weekends from morning until they run out. Award winning Mexican lamb meat restaurant.
- The Victor Café
  - Restaurant where all the waiters are opera singers and sing while you eat; Italian Food
- Italian Market Festival
  - Held every May, a very Italian American event with the main entertainment being men climbing a greased pole

#### East Passyunk Avenue

- Korshak Bagel
  - Said to be the best bagel in Philadelphia. Limited hours and on a first come first serve basis. The owner is known to give long speeches to those cueing in line. It is an experience.
- Dining of all kinds
  - There are many great restaurants along this area:  
<https://www.theinfatuation.com/philadelphia/guides/east-passyunk-restaurants>
- Miracle on 9th Street
  - Area of 9<sup>th</sup> street light up with an amazing light display during Christmas time

## SHOWS & EVENTS

- Walnut Street Theatre: Historic Theater <https://walnutstreettheatre.org/season/mainstage.php>
- Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts
  - Free Events/ Tour, Broadway Shows, Philadelphia Orchestra
- Academy of Music, The Wilma Theater <https://wilmatheater.org/>
- Sports Teams-
  - Philly has some great sports teams and it's stadiums are located in South Philadelphia, accessible by public transportation. It is a great thing to do when visiting Philly!
  - <https://www.visitphilly.com/sports/>

## MUSEUMS

- Eastern State Penitentiary
  - Historic Prison run with the Quaker philosophy and home to many famous convicts  
<https://www.easternstate.org/>
  - During Halloween they do a nighttime haunted prison
- Barnes Foundation
  - One of my favorite Art Museums in the world, amazing collect with the feel of viewing from a home. Worth reading about the Barnes Philosophy before you go or attending one of their free talks while there <https://www.barnesfoundation.org/>
  - Free every 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday
- The Mutter Museum

- Medical History Museum , people really love it. I found it quite small and creepy  
<https://muttermuseum.org/>
- Philadelphia Museum of Art
  - Beautiful Art Museum. You can easily spend a full day here. There are regular scheduled events and children activities
  - Home of the famous Rocky Steps & Rocky Statue
  - Visit the nearby Historic Water Works Visitors Center when you visit
- Battleship New Jersey
  - Historic Battle Ship you can tour just over the Delaware river in New Jersey
  - A fun way to get to the Battle Ship is taking the River link Ferry  
<https://www.delawareriverwaterfront.com/places/riverlink-ferry>
- Longwood Gardens
  - Beautiful botanical gardens located on the main line, a short train ride away from Philly  
<https://longwoodgardens.org/>

## NOTES ON FOOD

Philly's food scene is a bit of a hidden gem with some restaurants rivaling their counterpart in New York, but at a fraction of the price. Although we find dining quite expensive everywhere in America, when adding on tax (10% in Philadelphia) and tip (sit down dining 15-20%), Philadelphia is much cheaper than neighboring East Coast cities. Something that makes dining out even more affordable is the cities BYOB culture. At many restaurants you will find they will allow you to bring your own alcohol. They also almost never require a corking fee. Make sure to look out for this and pack your favorite alcoholic beverage!

- Philadelphia Foods
  - Cheesesteaks- When in Philly a Cheesesteak is a MUST try! Locals are in competition as to what is the best place but two of our favorites are Angelo's and Cleavers. Try it with Wiz- the liquid cheese that is dribbled over the top. We also love adding Long Hots-spicy long peppers.
  - Hoagies- Philly is not only know for cheesesteaks when it comes to sandwiches, but the Hoagie is also a must try. These submarine sandwiches are packed to the brim with meat. For a quick lunch you can order them at grocery stores like Giant or convenient stores like Wawa but for the best check out this guide: <https://www.visitphilly.com/articles/philadelphia/where-to-find-the-best-hoagies-in-philadelphia/>
  - Soft Pretzel- The Pretzel was first brought to America by Germans in Philly. Soft Pretzels are a staple and cheap snack. They even have their own Philly Shape. Center City Pretzel Co and Philly Pretzel Factory are two establishments throughout the city.
  - Water Ice- Shaved Ice with creamy flavors is a must try Philly dessert. Johns Water Ice is the best in my opinion! They are located in the Italian Market but also have several food trucks that go around the city. You can find the truck schedules on their Instagram page.
  - Federal Donut- A Philadelphia original franchise and donut store that serves both donuts and chicken sandwiches, frying up the donuts in the fried chicken grease. Delicious and so American
  - Breweries- There are breweries throughout Philadelphia. <https://guidetophilly.com/best-breweries-in-philadelphia/>
  - South East Asia Market- A huge market of South East Asian Food every Saturday & Sunday in FDR park when the weather is good <https://www.fdrseamarket.com/>



## DAY TRIPS

- New Hope
  - Charming Historic Town located on a large river between NYC and Philadelphia
    - Antique Stores, Trail Walks, New Hope Railroad, Bucks County Children's Museum <https://www.visitbuckscounty.com/towns-main-streets/new-hope-lambertville/>
- Amish Country (Lancaster)
  - Amish Religious Group with visits and glimpse into their lives
  - Beautiful countryside & farm towns <https://www.discoverlancaster.com/amish/>
- Cape May
  - Absolutely Gorgeous Beach town with historic houses, quaint shops and restaurants <https://www.capemay.com/>
- Poconos
  - Mountains of Pennsylvania with cute towns, waterfalls and hiking.
    - Jim Thorpe is a charming town with historic railroad
    - Mediocre skiing & snowtubing in the winter
    - Indoor water parks

## KIDS ACTIVITIES

- Please Touch Museum
  - 2 story museum with interactive exhibits
- Adventure Aquarium
  - Large Indoor Aquarium, good for a cold day
- Fireman Hall Museum
  - Free Small Museum with a lot of interactive activities. Centrally located
- The Franklin Institute
  - Science Museum/ Full City Block with kids Exhibits- Good Indoor Activity
- Franklin Square
  - Outdoor Area Carousel, Mini-Golf, & family activities/ May not be good in the winter time, but ok on a warm day, festival for Christmas & decorated with lights
- Craft Hall
  - Beer Garden with a kids indoor play area, games and giant pirate ship (kids welcome till 9pm) <https://www.crafthallphilly.com/playground>
- Museum of the American Revolution
  - Free for kids under 5, Lots of hands on activities, Very American

## CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES

### Philly's Christmas Village

- Located around City Hall in the heart of Philly
- Santa Clause, Ice Skating Rink ,Laser Show at night, Christmas Market & Shops

<https://uncoveringpa.com/christmas-markets-in-philadelphia>

### The Wanamaker Building (Macy's)

- Not far from the Christmas Village
  - Free entrance, Dickens Village 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Christmas Light show

### Miracle on South 13<sup>th</sup> Street

- 1600 Block of South 13<sup>th</sup> Street Neighborhood with thousands of Christmas lights

### Luminature at Philly Zoo

- Christmas light show at the zoo

### WinterFest- Blue Cross River rink

- River Front Ice Skating Rink and Ferris Wheel with a Christmas Village, Open Fire Places and events