



Destination Guide: Philadelphia



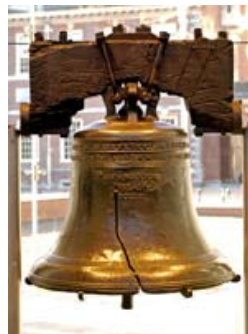
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AAA Destination Guide: Official AAA maps, travel information and top picks

AAA Destination Guide: Philadelphia includes trip-planning information covering AAA recommended attractions and restaurants, exclusive member discounts, maps and more.

Early to bed, early to rise as Benjamin Franklin advised? Not in Philadelphia. Native son W.C. Fields once joked, “Last week, I went to Philadelphia, but it was closed.” Now Philly boasts more than a place in American history. It’s hip. It’s open all hours. Stroll along myriad streets and discover upscale galleries and fine boutiques, elegant haute-cuisine restaurants and gritty fast-food joints—Philly cheesesteak, anyone? In warm weather, dance in open-air clubs to river lights and a view of the Ben Franklin Bridge. This Colonial enclave has transformed itself into a city so happening that even old Ben would stay up past his bedtime.

But don’t forget history. Philadelphia is the “Cradle of the American Revolution,” after all. No dry civics lesson here—this is where Independence Hall stands, where the Liberty Bell rang out (and cracked), where the Declaration of Independence was signed and our war for freedom began. Walk down Market Street, and you’re following in the steps of the founding fathers.



The neighborhoods in the City of Brotherly Love are exciting, too. In South Philly’s Italian Market, Main Line socialites bicker over the price of basil, while commuters and families wait in line to order famous hoagies. On South Street, musicians play on the sidewalks and hipsters buy the

latest fashions in trendy stores. All over town, bleary-eyed students sip lattes after late-night clubbing on Delaware Avenue. There’s so much to do in Philly, both Ben and W.C. would be amused—early in the morning or late at night.

Essentials

Jog to the top of the steps at the [Philadelphia Museum of Art](#) and—like Rocky Balboa in the movie—pump your arms in the air! Once you catch your breath, enter the museum to enjoy one of the world’s premier art collections.

Stroll down South Street between Front and 9th, the “hippest street in town.” After checking out the funky boutiques and tattoo parlors, pull up a chair at one of the outdoor cafés or bars. In the City of Brotherly Love, this is where you go for people watching, and you’ll see it all—preppies, punk rockers, old hippies, pierced skateboarders and lawyers in business suits.

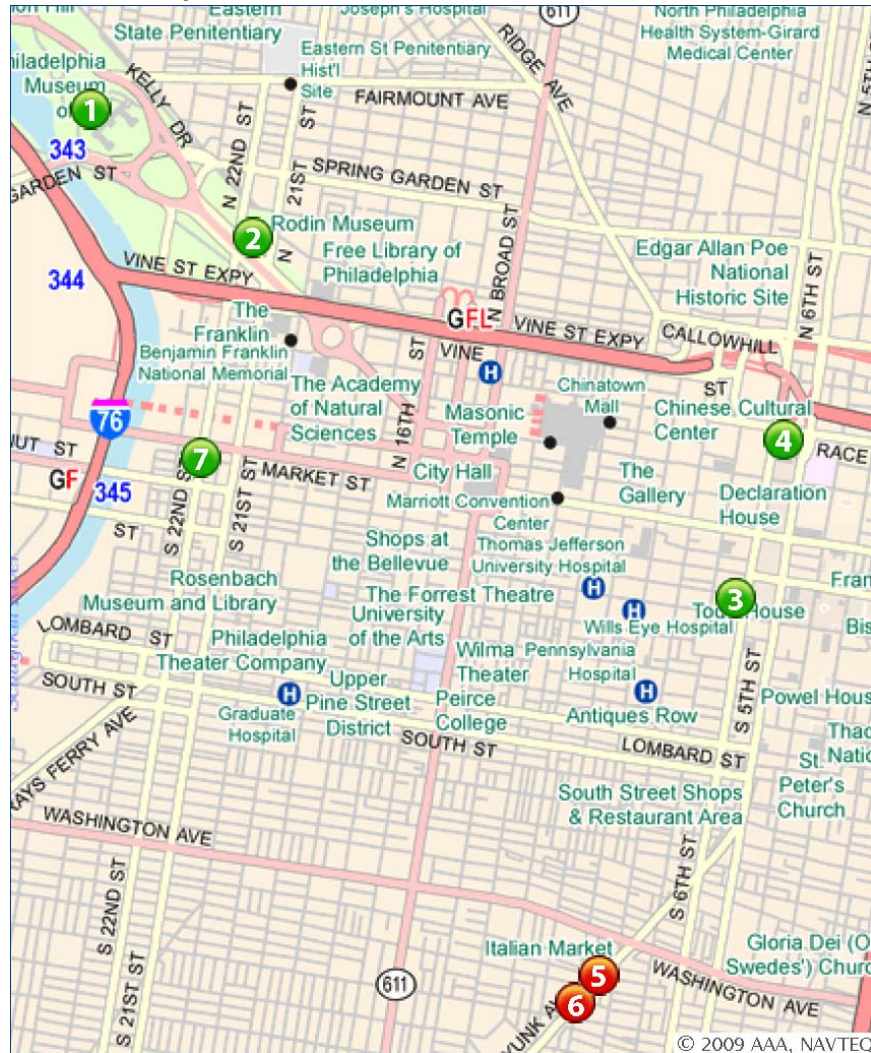
For romance, hail a horse-drawn cab at Head House Square. As the horse trots down Society Hill’s 18th-century cobblestone streets, enjoy the sights: Colonial and Federal architecture, row houses and intimate courtyards.

Think about it—or go to the [Rodin Museum](#) and leave the pondering to Auguste Rodin’s best-known sculpture, “The Thinker.” While you’re here, tour the museum and discover other sculptures to consider, contemplate and regard.

Cheer for one of Philly’s teams. If there’s a nip in the air, you can head to Lincoln Financial Field and take your chances on tickets for an Eagles

game. And if football's not your thing, applaud at Wachovia Center as a Sixer dunks the ball or a Flyer hooks the puck. In spring and summer, go to a Phillies game at Citizen's Bank Park and catch a foul ball on the third base line. Warning: Philadelphia sports fans are very loyal to their teams.

Essentials Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com

Essentials Details - Get additional information on AAA.com



- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*



- Exclusive AAA member discounts available

FYI - Provided as an information only service; has not yet been evaluated

1. Philadelphia Museum of Art

2600 Benjamin Franklin Pkwy
Philadelphia, PA 19130
Phone: (215) 763-8100



4. Independence National Historical Park

145 S 3rd St
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Phone: (800) 537-7676



2. Rodin Museum

Benjamin Franklin Pkwy & 22nd St
Philadelphia, PA 19101
Phone: (215) 763-8100

5. Pat's King of Steaks (FYI)

1237 E Passyunk Ave
Philadelphia, PA 19147
Phone: (215) 468-1546

3. Lights of Liberty Show

150 S Independence Mall
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Phone: (877) 462-1776



6. Geno's Steaks (FYI)

9th St and Passyunk Ave
Philadelphia, PA 19147
Phone: (215) 389-0659

7. Mütter Museum

19 S 22nd St
Philadelphia, PA 19103
Phone: (215) 563-3737

Spend some Benjamins in the Center City district known as Antique Row. From Jacobean armchairs to rare Victorian jewelry to Jetson-style patio sets, you'll find anything and everything here—from kitsch to high quality.

Enjoy music the old-fashioned way at Macy's daily Wanamaker Organ recital. Campy, yes, but a great time. One of the largest musical instruments in the world, this grand organ fills the store atrium with classical and contemporary tunes from seven floors above the cosmetic counters, downtown at 13th and Market streets.

Experience history from the inside. The Lights of Liberty Show, a multi-media walking tour, is the best way to see and hear the drama of the American Revolution. Wearing a digital headset, you're wired for sound,

music and thrilling narration on a moonlit walk through [Independence National Historical Park](#).

Chow down on a Philly cheesesteak, the famous hoagie made with thinly sliced rib eye, melted cheese and grilled onions. Most South Philly sandwich shops are open 24-7-365 (and most claim *they* cooked up the original idea). Two of the best are [Pat's King of Steaks](#) and [Geno's Steaks](#).

Gawk at the [Mütter Museum's](#) strange, spine-tingling exhibits. Exhibits at this College of Physicians of Philadelphia museum include the Soap Lady, celebrity body parts and casts of patients who suffered from gigantism, eye diseases and other deformities. And that's just the beginning of the bizarre sights. Not for weak stomachs!

Philadelphia in 3 Days

Three days is barely enough time to get to know any major destination. But AAA travel editors suggest these activities to make the most of your time in Philadelphia.

Day 1: Morning

Begin your first day in the City of Brotherly Love at [Independence Visitor Center](#) in [Independence National Historical Park](#) located at the corner of 6th and Market streets in Center City. If you arrive early, you'll be ahead of the crowds. Get free tickets and sign up for a National Park Service walking tour.

Head to [Independence Hall](#) then to [Liberty Bell Center](#). Continue touring Independence National Historical Park and see the [National Constitution Center](#), [Congress Hall](#) and the [Second Bank of the United States Portrait Gallery](#).

Afternoon

Walk north on 5th Street. Stop at Christ Church's modest burial ground, where Benjamin Franklin and other signers of the Declaration of Independence are interred.

For lunch, dine in an Old City restaurant—take your pick of places, from casual diners and sandwich joints. Try Fork and Fork: etc. (Fork: etc. is the casual restaurant of the duet of eateries and is on Market) or Sonny's at 2nd and Market. Fancier establishments include Fork (Fork etc.'s big brother next door) or [Amada](#) at 2nd and Chestnut. If you're in the mood for a Philly Cheesesteak, why not visit the most popular place in the neighborhood? Hoof it to Jim's Steaks at 4th and South streets. You'll also discover lunch trucks serving the famous sandwich on just about every corner.

After grabbing lunch, walk (or bus it) back to [Christ Church](#). This time go inside to see where the American Episcopal Church got its start and where some of the Founding Fathers worshipped. After a church visit, head over to the [Betsy Ross House](#) at 239 Arch Street. And then make your way to [Elfreth's Alley](#), the oldest continually inhabited street in America. The visitor center is free and is at number 124.

In the late afternoon, walk southeast to Head House Square (Lombard and S. 3rd streets). How about resting your feet? Take a romantic horse-drawn carriage ride. Meander through Society Hill's 18th-century cobblestone streets. The architecture, row houses and intimate courtyards cast fabulous shadows as twilight beckons.

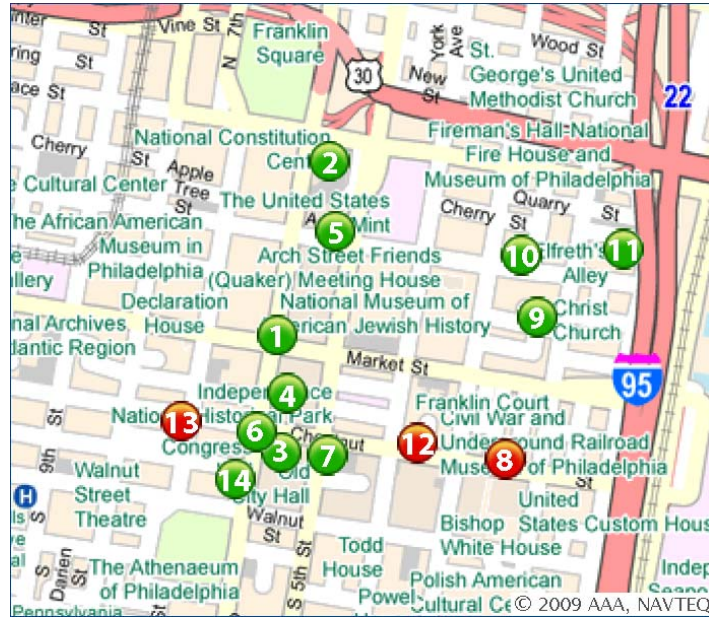
Evening

For dinner, try one of Old City's restaurants or head back toward Independence National Historical Park. If you're in the mood for some hip Asian cuisine, try the fusion [Buddakan](#) at 3rd and Chestnut. And the comfortable yet chic Mexican Xochitl, 408 S. 2nd St., is a great spot for authentic tacos or more exotic South-of-the-Border fare. If meatloaf or macaroni and cheese are more your speed, head to [Jones](#).

After dinner, between March and December when the weather's pleasant, work off your meal by experiencing the ambulatory sound-and-light extravaganza, [Lights of Liberty Show](#). Make your way back to Independence National Historical Park for the show. Afterwards, nab a cocktail on "The Hippest Street in Town." The popular song's lyrics don't

lie: as you amble down South Street between Front and 9th, you'll find plenty of bistros and bars where you can swill that nightcap.

Philadelphia in 3 Days – Day 1 Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using [TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com](#)

Day 2: Morning

Begin in Center City and visit the [Pennsylvania Academy of The Fine Arts](#) and its huge collection of American art. After a few hours of soaking up the visuals, walk south on S. Broad Street toward [City Hall](#), glimpsing a bronze statue of William Penn perched on top, then duck into Macy's, a.k.a. the John Wanamaker Building. Every day at noon, the Wanamaker organ, the largest operational pipe organ in the world, blasts out a dramatic concert within the department store's seven story court.

Day 1 Details - *Get additional information on [AAA.com](#);*

AAA Diamond Rating information available on [AAA.com/Diamonds](#)



- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*



- Exclusive AAA member discounts available

1. Independence Visitor Center

1 N Independence Mall
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Phone: (215) 965-7676

2. Independence National Historical Park

145 S 3rd St
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Phone: (800) 537-7676



3. Independence Hall

Chestnut St & 5th St
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Phone: (267) 519-4295, ext. 19



4. Liberty Bell Center

6th St & Market St
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Phone: (267) 519-4295, ext. 19



5. National Constitution Center

525 Arch St
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Phone: (215) 409-6700



6. Congress Hall

6th St & Chestnut St
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Phone: (267) 519-4295, ext. 19



7. Second Bank of the United States Portrait Gallery

420 Chestnut St
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Phone: (800) 537-7676



8. Amada

217 Chestnut St
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Phone: (215) 625-2450

9. Christ Church

20 N American St
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Phone: (215) 922-1695



10. Betsy Ross House

239 Arch St
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Phone: (215) 686-1252

11. Elfreth's Alley

126 Elfreth's Alley
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Phone: (215) 574-0560

12. Buddakan

325 Chestnut St
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Phone: (215) 574-9440

13. Jones

700 Chestnut St
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Phone: (215) 223-5663

14. Lights of Liberty Show

150 S Independence Mall
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Phone: (877) 462-1776



Afternoon

For lunch, walk east to Reading Terminal Market, where you can taste true Philadelphia eats such as the highly regarded cheese steak or buttered soft pretzels. Try some Amish sassafras jelly or ginger snaps. Of course, dozens of food stalls offer plenty of edible options, including lo mein and pizza. (The market is closed on Sundays.)

Now head back toward City Hall and walk east on Market to find the strangest, most wonderful museum in town: the Mütter Museum at the College of Physicians of Philadelphia. The museum's better than watching a forensic television program, as visitors find anomalous and

aberrant medical oddities on view, such as a woman's corpse whose body turned to soap. Be warned: the Mütter's bizarre displays are not for weak stomachs. Head north to the The Franklin Institute, which offers four floors of interactive exhibits. Walk through a model of a human heart, watch a film in the Tuttleman IMAX Theater and or gaze at blinking stars in the Fels Planetarium.

Day 2 Details - Get additional information on AAA.com;

AAA Diamond Rating information available on AAA.com/Diamonds

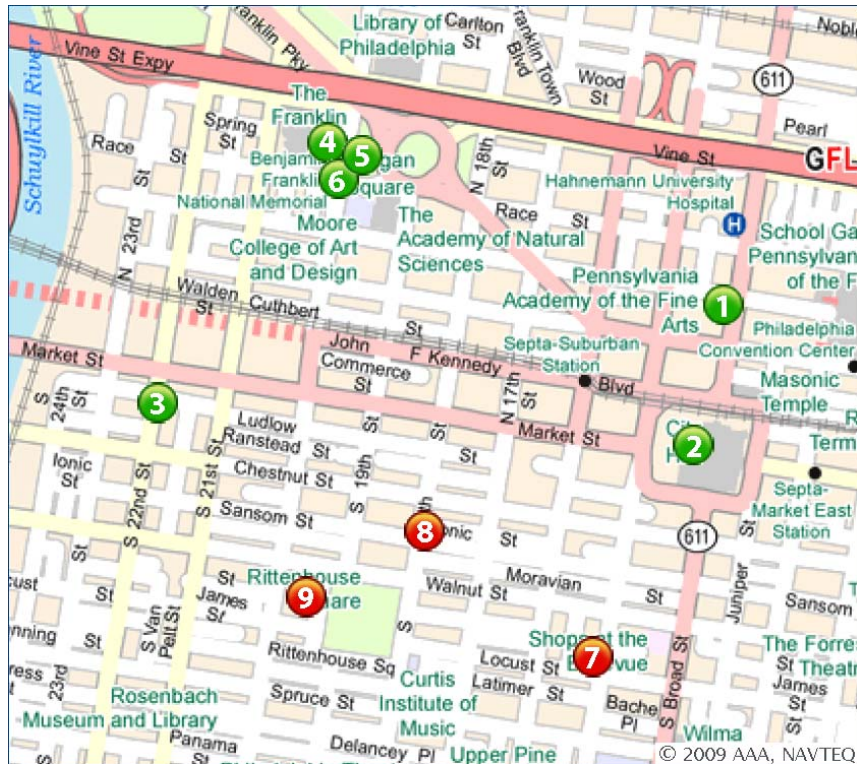


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- Exclusive AAA member discounts available

Philadelphia in 3 Days – Day 2 Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using [TripTik Travel Planner](http://TripTik) on AAA.com

1. Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts

118-128 N Broad St
Philadelphia, PA 19102
Phone: (215) 972-7600



2. City Hall

Broad St & Market St
Philadelphia, PA 19107
Phone: (215) 686-2840

3. Mütter Museum

19 S 22nd St
Philadelphia, PA 19103
Phone: (215) 563-3737

4. The Franklin Institute

222 N 20th St
Philadelphia, PA 19103
Phone: (215) 448-1200



5. Tuttleman IMAX Theater

222 N 20th St
Philadelphia, PA 19105
Phone: (215) 448-1111

6. Fels Planetarium

222 N 20th St
Philadelphia, PA 19105
Phone: (215) 448-1200

7. Good Dog Bar & Restaurant

224 S 15th St
Philadelphia, PA 19102
Phone: (215) 985-9600

8. Tria

123 S 18th St
Philadelphia, PA 19103
Phone: (215) 972-8742

9. Lacroix At The Rittenhouse

210 W Rittenhouse Square
Philadelphia, PA 19103
Phone: (215) 790-2533

Evening

From the museum, turn back toward Rittenhouse Square, where visitors will find bars, restaurants and plenty of shops. You've got a wealth of choices here. For great burgers, fries, beer and a homey atmosphere, try [Good Dog Bar & Restaurant](#). Looking for a chic but comfortable tapas restaurant that serves great wine and brewskies? Head to [Tria](#). Want romance, a splendid view of the historic grassy square and acclaimed cuisine? [Lacroix at the Rittenhouse](#) is the ticket.

After dinner, mosey around Pine Street and make your way along Antique Row, where the window shopping is superb.

Day 3: Morning

Sure, everyone remembers the exciting scene in the movie "Rocky," when the browbeaten boxer runs up the stairs at the [Philadelphia Museum of Art](#). But step inside the museum for the real excitement—here you'll find a huge collection of art. And this mammoth place is easily navigated. Spend a couple hours wandering the collections, and you'll see major paintings by major painters, such as Pablo Picasso, Claude Monet, Edgar Degas and Peter Paul Rubens, to name just a handful.

Afternoon

After soaking up some high culture, you've earned your appetite. There are a few choices close to the museum. Try [Illuminare](#) for brick oven pizza and towering salads. Or dine alfresco (weather permitting) while you down a crab cake sandwich at [Jack's Firehouse Restaurant](#). And for some spice, [Rose Tattoo Café](#) brings the heat with their Cajun cuisine, burgers and quiche.

If you don't mind bussing it or driving, and you haven't yet experienced a Philly cheesesteak, head to South Philly where it all began. On Passyunk Avenue diehards will find two of the best (and original) sandwich shops in town, [Pat's King of Steaks](#) and [Geno's Steaks](#). Place your order "wid" or "widout" (onions and Cheez Whiz that is).

After lunch, if you didn't go to South Philly for cheesesteaks, you're still in the Museum district, so visit the [Rodin Museum](#), where you'll find the largest collection of Rodin sculptures outside of France.

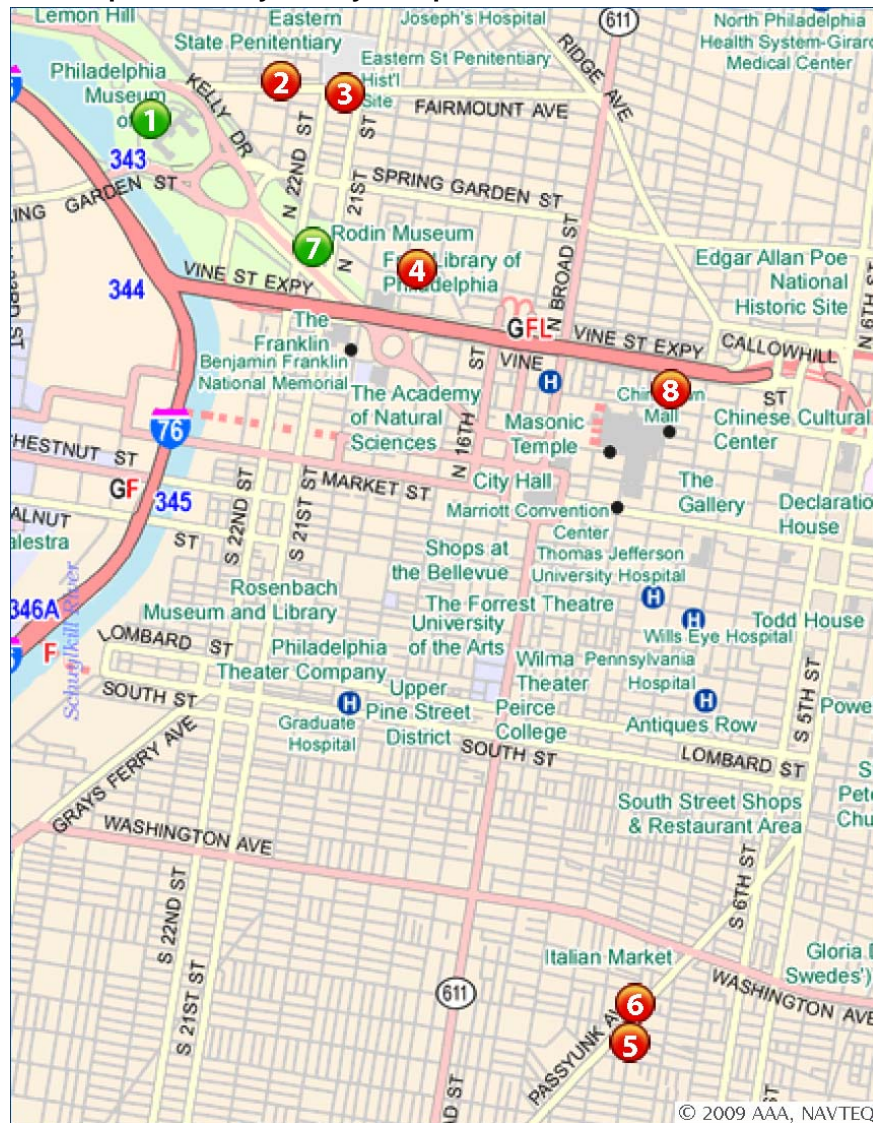
If you couldn't resist the cheesesteaks and you're already in South Philly, head to the Italian Market. Grab a cappuccino from any of the local cafés and soak up the local atmosphere. Right off the docks, vendors hawk their fruits and vegetables to passersby. Cheese shops dole out large samples of olives and brie. And the people-watching is a delight. Don't miss Sarcone's Bakery, whose Italian bread is heavenly.

Evening

To understand Philadelphians, one must understand their passion for sports. Take in a game and cheer for one of city's teams. Grab a dog, a soda and some peanuts and take part in one of America's favorite pastimes—sports. During football season, nothing's more fun than an Eagles' game at Lincoln Financial Field—if you can score tickets. Want a little court or ice action? Watch the Sixers dribble or the Flyers skate at Wachovia Center. When the weather's balmy, don't miss the Phillies' boys of summer playing at Citizen's Bank Park. One important point to note: Philadelphians are fiercely loyal fans, so be on your best behavior.

If sports aren't your game, how about treating yourself to what many say is the primo restaurant in town: Le Bec-Fin. Though luxurious and seriously upscale, the staff is friendly and the prix fixe dinner is legendary. If you want a little culture but more casual eats, head to Center City's Asian district to the [Vietnam Restaurant](#) for delicious noodle dishes.

Philadelphia in 3 Days – Day 3 Map



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Day 3 Details - Get additional information on AAA.com;

AAA Diamond Rating information available on AAA.com/Diamonds



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1. Philadelphia Museum of Art

2600 Benjamin Franklin Pkwy
Philadelphia, PA 19130
Phone: (215) 763-8100



5. Pat's King of Steaks (FYI)

1237 E Passyunk Ave
Philadelphia, PA 19147
Phone: (215) 468-1546

2. Illuminare

2321 Fairmount Ave
Philadelphia, PA 19130
Phone: (215) 765-0202

6. Geno's Steaks (FYI)

9th St and Passyunk Ave
Philadelphia, PA 19147
Phone: (215) 389-0659

3. Jack's Firehouse Restaurant

2130 Fairmount Ave
Philadelphia, PA 19130
Phone: (215) 232-9000

7. Rodin Museum

Benjamin Franklin Pkwy & 22nd St
Philadelphia, PA 19101
Phone: (215) 763-8100

4. Rose Tattoo Café

1847 Callowhill St
Philadelphia, PA 19130
Phone: (215) 569-8939

8. Vietnam Restaurant

221 N 11th St
Philadelphia, PA 19107
Phone: (215) 592-1163

Restaurants

The first question for most visitors to the City of Brotherly Love is not “Where’s the Liberty Bell?” Instead, tourists want to know the best place for a Philly Cheesesteak—a hot topic of debate among the locals. (See *Insider Information*.)

According to legend, Pat Olivieri created the first cheesesteak on his hot dog griddle after getting bored with the same old lunch. His new sandwich became so popular that he opened Pat’s King of Steaks in South Philadelphia. As with any good idea, competition quickly rose with the opening of Geno’s Steaks on the opposite corner. When the craving for a cheesesteak hits, natives head down Passyunk Avenue.

Ordering your steak is almost as important as paying for it, so be sure to scrutinize the instructions at the order window before getting into line. Any hesitation and you'll be expelled to the back (either by the staff or the patrons behind you). Toss a coin and take your pick—both eateries serve up a fantastic sandwich and an entertaining crowd, 24 hours a day.

With thick bread, sharp provolone and juicy sliced beef, the cheesesteak at [Tony Luke's Old Philly Style Sandwiches](#) is definitely in the running for the city's best. Unlike many of its steak-peddling brethren, this restaurant also serves a variety of equally tasty items, including a sinful roast-pork sandwich and even a few vegetarian offerings. This is one of the few steak shops with indoor seating; service is quick and surprisingly friendly. Check out the "Wall of Stars" to see who else dropped by for an Old Philly-style sandwich.



When the locals want a good beer and a great burger, they go to [Good Dog Bar & Restaurant](#). The burger—stuffed with Roquefort cheese and topped with caramelized onions—is not for the faint of heart. Service is exceptional, and the menu is one of the most reasonably priced in Center City; people-watching is a bonus. Here you'll see the after-theater crowd mixing with tattooed Gen-Xers in a kitschy setting. Try out the Internet jukebox, or come on a Thursday night to share your knowledge of trivia during a game of Quizzo.

After a long day at work, young professionals flock to [Tria](#) for a world-class beer or a selection from an extensive list of wines by the glass. For a quick bite or a full dinner, the tapas menu features fresh salads, decadent cheeses and scrumptious desserts. Soulful music, a genial staff and candle-lit décor lend to an unpretentiously cool atmosphere in trendy Rittenhouse Square. Reservations aren't accepted; expect a half-hour wait on weekends.

With a spectacular view of the Square and an equally spectacular menu, [Lacroix at the Rittenhouse](#) is one of the area's most acclaimed restaurants. The staff is cordial while maintaining the service standards expected of a formal dining establishment. Every course is a visual work of art, with imaginative flavors to tempt the palate. At the chef's table, guests have a first-hand view of how a gourmet kitchen works. The inexpensive weekday brunch is a great way to enjoy one of the city's best culinary experiences—for a steal.

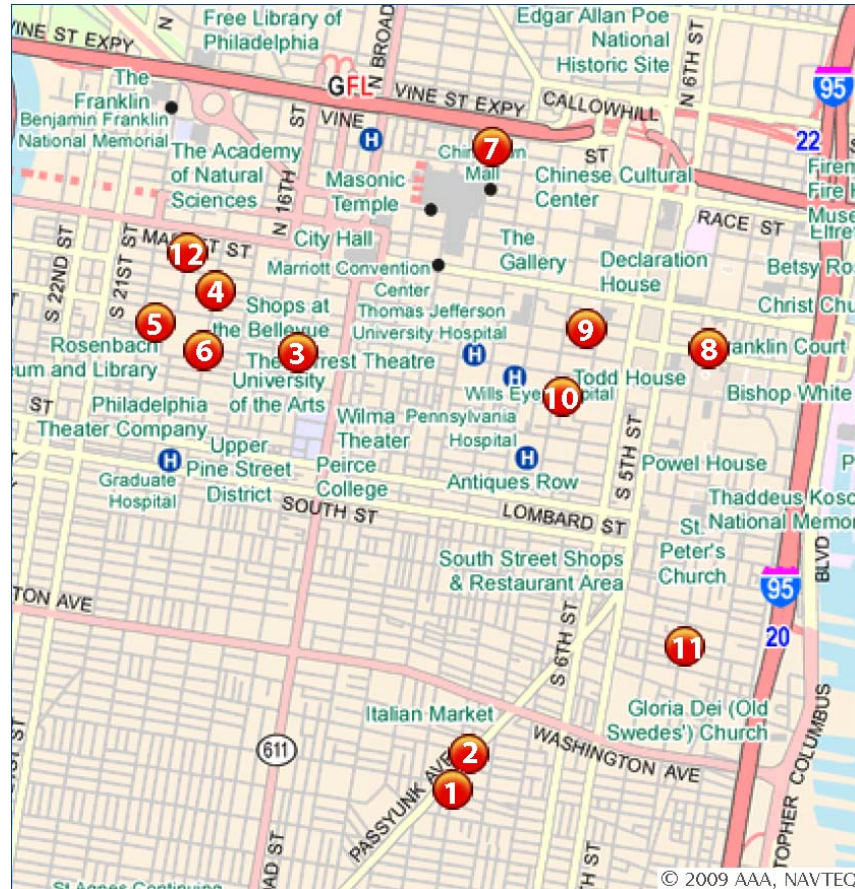
Since entrepreneur Stephen Starr added [Barclay Prime](#) to his dazzling string of local restaurants, the acclaim from critics and patrons alike has been lavish. If you're looking for the most expensive cheesesteak in Philadelphia—\$100, featuring Kobe beef—you'll find it at this gem on Rittenhouse Square. The combination of formal dining and mouthwatering steaks and chops makes Barclay Prime the perfect choice for a night on the town. For a cost-effective sampling of the menu, the Lunchbox includes soup or salad, an entrée, a side dish and dessert.

Le Bec-Fin sets the gold standard for fine dining in Philadelphia. The intimate, elegant dining room is appointed with ornate fabric wallcoverings, carved gilt moldings, silver chandeliers and fresh floral arrangements. There's no reason to be intimidated by this luxury establishment; the warmth and charm of the waitstaff creates an ease to be envied by other restaurants. The star here is clearly the food; the sumptuous prix fixe dinner has been drawing crowds for more than three decades. For diners on a budget, come for lunch to sample French delicacies from the a la carte menu.

With a clean and comfortable atmosphere, [Vietnam Restaurant](#) is popular with everyone from college students to the crowd from city hall. A wide variety of noodle dishes, vegetarian options and an unexpectedly large appetizer menu only add to the appeal. This Center City favorite serves beer and wine, with a decent list at fair prices. Reservations are not accepted, but those in the know are more than willing to wait. For a memorable sunset view, ask for a seat on the third floor.

An imposing gilded statue of Buddha greets patrons at Buddakan, a modern and decadently designed establishment in Olde City. A communal 22-seat table glows at the center of the restaurant, affording its guests a view of the stylish, well-dressed crowd. Start out the night with a shared pitcher of Zen-gria or any of the bar's ever-changing cocktails. All the Asian fusion dishes are large enough to share—a blessing when the menu includes so many creative and flavorful choices.

Restaurants Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using [TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com](#)

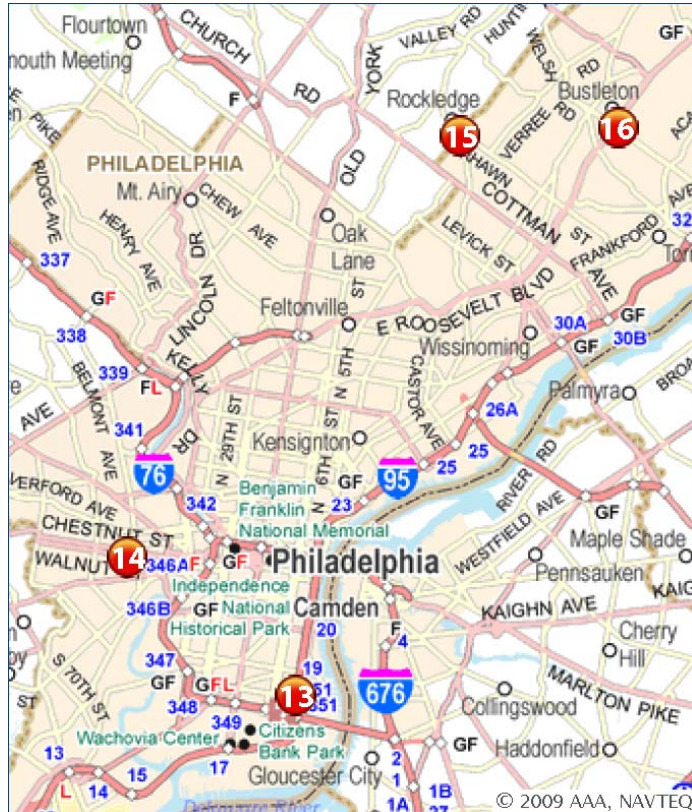
The signature dish is Angry Lobster, served in a nest of mashed potatoes with wok-charred vegetables and coconut curry sauce. Desserts are works of Zen art, sculpted into gravity-defying shapes.

Modern art, neo-Japanese cuisine and pop culture come together to create the experience that is Morimoto. TV's "Iron Chef" Masaharu Morimoto has brought his innovative Japanese cuisine to this sleek, modern space near Independence National Historic Park. Deciding on Kobe beef, black cod miso or an extensive selection of sushi and sashimi can be daunting, which is why many patrons order the Omakase, a multi-course guided tour through the day's specialties.

Restaurants Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](#); AAA Diamond Rating information available on [AAA.com/Diamonds](#)
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- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Pat's King of Steaks (FYI)
1237 E Passyunk Ave
Philadelphia, PA 19147
Phone: (215) 468-1546</p> | <p>7. Vietnam Restaurant 🍷🍷
221 N 11th St
Philadelphia, PA 19107
Phone: (215) 592-1163</p> |
| <p>2. Geno's Steaks (FYI)
9th St and Passyunk Ave
Philadelphia, PA 19147
Phone: (215) 389-0659</p> | <p>8. Buddakan 🍷🍷🍷
325 Chestnut St
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Phone: (215) 574-9440</p> |
| <p>3. Good Dog Bar & Restaurant 🍷🍷
224 S 15th St
Philadelphia, PA 19102
Phone: (215) 985-9600</p> | <p>9. Morimoto 🍷🍷🍷🍷
723 Chestnut St
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Phone: (215) 413-9070</p> |
| <p>4. Tria 🍷🍷🍷
123 S 18th St
Philadelphia, PA 19103
Phone: (215) 972-8742</p> | <p>10. Ristorante La Buca 🍷🍷
711 Locust St
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Phone: (215) 928-0556</p> |
| <p>5. Lacroix At The Rittenhouse 🍷🍷🍷🍷
210 W Rittenhouse Square
Philadelphia, PA 19103
Phone: (215) 790-2533</p> | <p>11. Dimitri's 🍷🍷
795 S 3rd St
Philadelphia, PA 19147
Phone: (215) 625-0556</p> |
| <p>6. Barclay Prime 🍷🍷🍷🍷
218 S 18th St
Philadelphia, PA 19103
Phone: (215) 732-7560</p> | <p>12. Matyson 🍷🍷🍷
37 19th St
Philadelphia, PA 19103
Phone: (215) 564-2925</p> |

Restaurants Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com

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AAA Diamond Rating information available on AAA.com/Diamonds
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13. Tony Luke's Old Philly Style Sandwiches (FYI)
 39 E Oregon Ave
 Philadelphia, PA 19148
 Phone: (215) 551-5725

14. Abyssinia Ethiopian Restaurant
 229 S 45th St
 Philadelphia, PA 19104
 Phone: (215) 387-2424

15. Blue Ox Brauhaus
 7980 Oxford Ave
 Philadelphia, PA 19111
 Phone: (215) 728-9440

16. Nifty Fifty's
 2555 Street Rd
 Bensalem, PA 19020
 Phone: (215) 638-1950

For the best in underground dining (a new category in food reviews), don't miss Ristorante La Buca. The name means "cave" in Italian. Decorated with warm colors and frescoes of the owner's native Tuscany, this space hardly feels like a basement. Philadelphians know they'll never have a bad meal here, especially with a fresh seafood selection. After an enjoyable afternoon at Washington Square Park or historic Independence Hall, you're only a short stroll—and a long flight of stairs—away from a hearty Tuscan meal.

If you're in South Philadelphia but not in the mood for cheesesteak, try the Mediterranean fare at Dimitri's. The meals are delicious, the portions are large, and savory smells from the open kitchen will make your mouth water. This small Queens Village restaurant is BYOB (take along your own wine or spirits). Dimitri's has a devoted following and doesn't accept reservations, so count on a wait, especially on weekends. Put your name on the list and enjoy a drink at a local bar, or make a run to an ATM for the cash-only tab.

Another of Philadelphia's many BYOBs, Matyson offers American bistro fare. Come on a weekday for the fabulous prix fixe five-course meal. This Center City restaurant is known for its flawless combinations of savory and sweet flavors, so it would be a sin not to have dessert (especially the bittersweet chocolate s'mores).

In a neighborhood full of African restaurants, University City's Abyssinia Ethiopian Restaurant stands out with its quality ingredients and hospitable staff. The authentic Ethiopian platters of meats and vegetables are perfectly prepared, and the heat of these deliciously spicy dishes can be adjusted to suit your taste. Fans of the ethnic restaurants in the Adams Morgan district of Washington, D.C., will feel at home in Abyssinia.

A standout for years in the Northeast, Blue Ox Brauhaus is one of the area's few restaurants serving hearty German food and beer. The building dates from the 1600s, with an interior tastefully adorned in rich wood and Bavarian memorabilia. An accordion player often frequents the dining room, playing traditional German tunes to set the mood. The

romantic atmosphere is popular with couples, though the staff always gives ample attention to the young ones. Reservations are recommended for parties of five or more, as seating is limited.

The line on a Saturday afternoon is worth the wait at [Nifty Fifty's](#), a top pick for budget-conscious diners in Northeast Philadelphia. The entire family will love this '50s-style restaurant and its self-proclaimed "World's Largest Soda Fountain" (with more than 100 drink flavors). All menu items are made with fresh ingredients, and service is surprisingly quick and friendly. You're here for the experience—no thought of calories—so go ahead and enjoy the Spicy Fries, Texas Tommy Dog and Butterfinger Milkshake.

Attractions

In a city with dozens of attractions, you may have trouble deciding where to spend your time. Here are the highlights for this destination, as chosen by AAA editors. GEMs are "Great Experiences for Members."

Situated between the Delaware and Schuylkill rivers, Philadelphia was the "Cradle of the Revolution." The American Revolution, of course. You can explore the nascence of modern democracy in the Old City at the AAA GEM [Independence National Historical Park](#)—it's America's most historic square mile and features more than a dozen separate sites, including Independence Hall and Liberty Bell Pavilion.

Begin your sightseeing itinerary with the [Independence Visitor Center](#). At the center, you'll find orientation exhibits, daily listings of area events, informative touch screen computer kiosks and tickets.

Continue your excursion at the adjacent [Liberty Bell Center](#), where the 2,000-pound Liberty Bell is housed. In 1776, its peals rang in the birth of a new nation, and you can stand close enough to read its inscription: "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof...." You can also eyeball the bell's famous crack—the one that silenced it, but did not dim its historical relevance.

Only by going through security and walking through Liberty Bell Center can you enter into the area surrounding [Independence Hall](#). Awash in Colonial charm, the building retains its simple architectural beauty despite throngs of visitors—and there's no denying that the founding fathers' revolutionary spirit lingers here. This is the hall where the delegates of the Thirteen British Colonies met to debate and approve the Declaration of Independence, and where the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution were drafted and adopted.

Speaking of the United States' Constitution—"We the People...."—it's a mere four pages long, but the document is the world's most famous blueprint for democracy. You'll see an original version in the park's 160,000-square-foot [National Constitution Center](#). This interactive museum chronicles more than two centuries of constitutional history with some 100 exhibits. You can don a black robe and sit on the U.S. Supreme Court bench, raise your right hand and take the presidential oath, step into a speakeasy during Prohibition or listen to one of FDR's fireside chats in a 1940s living room.



Formerly a county court house, [Congress Hall](#) served as the first home to Congress, with the House of Representatives meeting on the first floor, appropriately called the "Lower House," and the Senate meeting upstairs, the "Upper House." On the second floor of this AAA GEM attraction, you'll view the elegant meeting chamber and various committee rooms. The building is frozen in time, looking as it did when John Adams was inaugurated there in 1797.

With its thick Doric columns, the Second Bank was once the paradigm for designs of American finance buildings. Today, the bank features a different kind of currency: Art. The [Second Bank of the United States Portrait Gallery](#) features the "People of Independence" exhibit, a veritable

18th-century celebrity roster. The gallery includes 185 paintings of Colonial and Federal leaders, including many incredible works by Charles Willson Peale.

At [Christ Church](#), sit in one of the pews where Betsy Ross, Benjamin Franklin and George Washington prayed. The church, adjacent to the park and also in Old City, is a must-see for architecture buffs; the 1727 structure typifies early Georgian style.

After a busy day of touring, save time for the nighttime [Lights of Liberty Show](#). This multimedia light-and-sound experience tells how and why Americans revolted against the British. Wearing a digital headset with 3-D sound, you walk through Independence National Historical Park as towering images appear on buildings where the actual events occurred. The show immerses you in the drama of the Revolutionary War as it happened—a war scene with British redcoats, a mob protesting the Stamp Act, the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence. It's almost like being there.

AAA GEM [Fairmount Park](#) is the next stop on the itinerary. The park's bucolic acreage extends along both sides of the Schuylkill and is woven with miles of scenic drives, walks, bicycle routes and horse trails. It's one of the world's largest municipal parks—several million trees grow along its paths. Within Fairmount's bounds, you can also visit numerous historic sites and museums.

One of the park's museums, the [Philadelphia Museum of Art](#), houses the third largest public art collection in the United States. You'll recognize the Parthenon-like exterior and steps from the famous scene in "Rocky." The AAA GEM museum boasts collections of Renaissance, Impressionist, Asian, contemporary and decorative art, including the large "Bathers" by Paul Cézanne, the infamous "Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors (Large Glass)" by Marcel Duchamp and an entire gallery devoted to native son Thomas Eakins. Upstairs are more than 80 rooms devoted to other cultures, décors and times, from temple to cloister to boudoir.

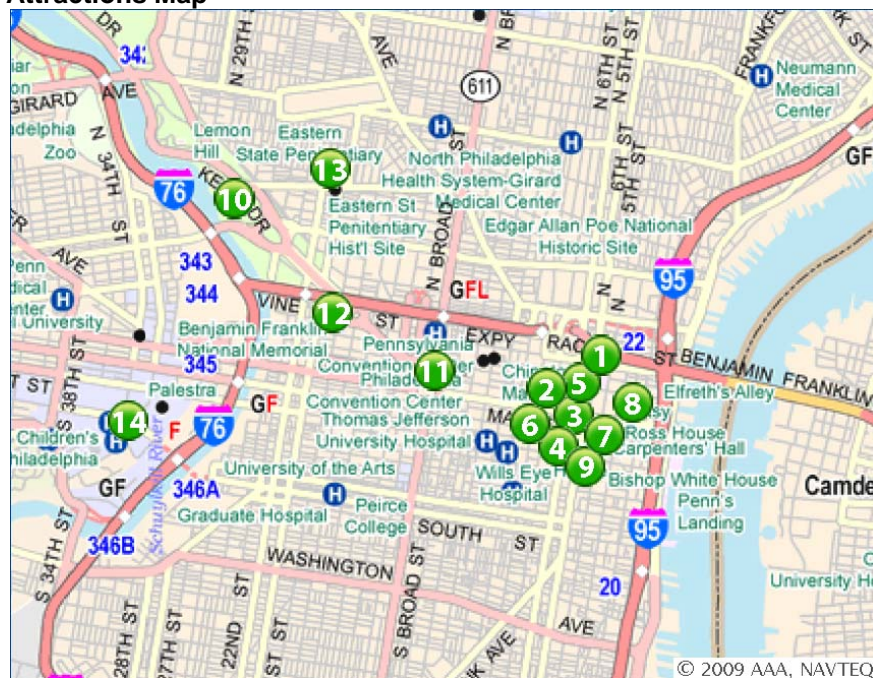
In a city of recognizable buildings, the [Masonic Temple](#) is one of the most impressive structures. Across from City Hall, the temple scales the clouds with its twin Norman-style spires. The interior is equally fabulous, both in variety and scope. Each of the temple's seven lodge halls exemplifies a different architectural period: Corinthian, Ionic, Italian Renaissance, Norman, Gothic, Oriental and Egyptian. Artifacts in the library/museum include George Washington's Masonic apron, embroidered by the wife of the Marquis de Lafayette.

A blast for kids of all ages, the [The Franklin Institute](#) offers four floors of interactive exhibits. There's a walk-through heart, an exhibit on the life of Ben Franklin, an IMAX theater and a planetarium. Try the Sports Challenge, which offers a climbing wall, a pitching cage and virtual reality displays. Other activities include SkyBike, a bicycle that balances riders on a 28-foot-high cable; the Train Factory's 350-ton locomotive; and Space Command's orbital research station. This museum gets high marks for participation.

Students of social change and fans of spooky places will be drawn to the [Eastern State Penitentiary](#). Inside the Gothic, castlelike building, the humane concept of solitary confinement was instituted under the Quakers in the 1830s. This 11-acre prison was developed as a state-of-the-art incarceration facility: it had flushing toilets before the White House. Now it's ghostly, with everything frozen in time—even bed sheets and shoes were left behind when the penitentiary was abandoned in the 1960s.

If you've always wanted to go on an architectural dig, stop at [The University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology](#). A 13-ton granite sphinx sits at the entrance to the Egyptian Galleries, where artifacts range from cat mummies and deity sculptures to tomb walls carved with ancient hieroglyphics. The museum's multi-gallery collection includes nearly a million objects from around the world, including a Navajo house, an Inuit fishing boat, Roman glass, Greek vases and funerary artifacts.

Attractions Map





Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using [TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com](#)

In the suburbs of Philadelphia, you'll find one of the world's most celebrated and notorious art collections, [The Barnes Foundation](#). Once secretive and almost impossible to see (many art historians and critics were, until recently, refused admission), the museum is finally open to the public. The paintings themselves are wondrous—more than 180 Renoirs, dozens of Cézannes and Matisses, works by Degas, Manet, Seurat and Van Gogh—but so are the unconventional displays. Masterpieces are hung symmetrically by size and paired with such quirky objects as Amish chests, antique tools, tribal masks and Navajo rugs. The effect is wholly charming.

Housed in a converted 19th-century gristmill, the [Brandywine River Museum](#) in Chadds Ford features a large collection of paintings by the celebrated family Wyeth. Andrew Wyeth, especially, captured the

Attractions Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](#)

-  - GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*
-  - Exclusive AAA member discounts available

1. Independence National Historical Park

145 S 3rd St
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Phone: (800) 537-7676



2. Independence Visitor Center

1 N Independence Mall
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Phone: (215) 965-7676

3. Liberty Bell Center

6th St & Market St
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Phone: (267) 519-4295, ext. 19



4. Independence Hall

Chestnut St & 5th St
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Phone: (267) 519-4295, ext. 19



5. National Constitution Center

525 Arch St
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Phone: (215) 409-6700



6. Congress Hall

6th St. & Chestnut St
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Phone: (267) 519-4295, ext. 19



7. Second Bank of the United States Portrait Gallery

420 Chestnut St.
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Phone: (800) 537-7676



8. Christ Church

20 N American St
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Phone: (215) 922-1695



9. Lights of Liberty Show

150 S Independence Mall
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Phone: (877) 462-1776



10. Philadelphia Museum of Art

2600 Benjamin Franklin Pkwy
Philadelphia, PA 19130
Phone: (215) 763-8100



11. Masonic Temple

1 N Broad St
Philadelphia, PA 19107
Phone: (215) 988-1909



12. The Franklin Institute

222 N 20th St
Philadelphia, PA 19103
Phone: (215) 448-1200



13. Eastern State Penitentiary

2124 Fairmount Ave
Philadelphia, PA 19130
Phone: (215) 236-3300



14. University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology

3260 South St
Philadelphia, PA 19104
Phone: (215) 898-4000



extremes of the Brandywine Valley—pastoral rolling hills, deep fallen snow, churning rivers and hardy residents. Works by Andrew’s father, the illustrator, N.C., and by Andrew’s son, Jamie (a Realist, like his father), are also on display. The collection includes more than 3,000 American landscapes, still life paintings and illustrations.

The exquisitely maintained grounds of Longwood Gardens were once the pride of industrialist Pierre S. du Pont. Covering 1,000 acres, the gardens are landscaped with fountains and more than 11,000 types of flowers, trees and plants. Wander through formal knot gardens, an Italian water garden, the eight outdoor “rooms” of Peirce’s Woods and vast heated greenhouses, lush with exotic blooms.

The proper way to conclude a trip to Philadelphia is with stops at the AAA GEMS Valley Forge National Historical Park and Washington Crossing Historic Park, where the United States battled for independence.

In beautiful Valley Forge, it’s hard to imagine the Continental Army suffering through a terrible winter, but during the lean, cruel months of 1777-1778, some 12,000 troops were camped here. The welcome center’s exhibit, “Determined to Persevere,” uses Revolutionary War artifacts to tell the story of General Washington’s army and its struggles.



At Washington Crossing Historic Park, you’ll see the spot where boats spirited the “man-who-could-not-tell-a-lie” and his troops to battle across the Delaware. Skirmishes at Trenton and Princeton were resounding victories for the Continental Army—turning the tide in the War for Independence.


Attractions Map




Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using [TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com](#)

Attractions Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](#)

-  - GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*
-  - Exclusive AAA member discounts available

15. Fairmount Park
 2600 Benjamin Franklin Pkwy.
 Philadelphia, PA 19130
 Phone: (215) 438-5711


18. Longwood Gardens
 US 1 & SR 52
 Kennett Square, PA 19348
 Phone: (800) 737-5500


16. The Barnes Foundation
 300 N Latch's Ln
 Merion Station, PA 19066
 Phone: (610) 667-0290

19. Valley Forge National Historical Park
 1400 North Outerline Drive
 King of Prussia, PA 19406
 Phone: (610) 783-1099

17. Brandywine River Museum
 US 1 & Creek Rd
 Chadds Ford, PA 19317
 Phone: (610) 388-2700

20. Washington Crossing Historic Park
 1112 River Rd
 Washington Crossing, PA 18977
 Phone: (215) 493-4076



Events

In addition to its many cultural and historic landmarks, this destination hosts a number of outstanding festivals and events that may coincide with your visit. GEMs are “Great Experiences for Members.”

If you happen to be in Philadelphia on New Year’s Day, don’t miss the Mummers New Year’s Parade. A tradition for over a century, this crazy parade features lavish floats, string and brass bands and more shenanigans than a circus. More than 15,000 Philadelphians decked out in ornate costumes and clown outfits show up for this AAA GEM event. The parade lasts for 10 hours, so don a red nose and a rainbow wig and join the party.

In March, put on your green outfit for the Philadelphia St. Patrick’s Day Parade, the third largest of its kind in the nation. The Philadelphia Irish make merry with more than 100 floats and 10,000 marchers.



In May, celebrate warmer weather at the Rittenhouse Square Flower Market for Children’s Charities. For this annual festival, the fashionable Rittenhouse district offers up music, dance and displays by artists, galleries and boutiques. Up to 50,000 people also enjoy food tastings and a chefs’ demonstration tent.

Philadelphia begins celebrating Independence Day early—in June. There’s a lot to celebrate; Philadelphia is the birthplace of a nation, after all. The Sunoco Welcome America! Festival (a.k.a. America’s biggest birthday party) attracts some 3 million visitors and features more than a week’s worth of family-friendly fun. At this AAA GEM event, you can sample international cuisine, enjoy entertainment and musical shows and experience more than 40 special events commemorating the United States’ birth. After the sun goes down, the sky explodes with the biggest,

boomingest fireworks show—sure to inspire more than a few rousing rounds of “Stars and Stripes Forever.”

In September, the Philadelphia Live Arts Festival and Philly Fringe takes over the city. The 2-week festival draws tens of thousands of visitors, features more than 1,500 artists and presents more than 500 performances. Divided into two distinct parts, the Fringe and the Live Arts feature the best of edgy performances and self-produced artists in theater, dance, literature, music, puppetry and the visual arts.

Philadelphians know how to celebrate the winter holidays. The streets sparkle with lights, the air fills with carols and the scent of wassail and pine, and treasured traditions take over the city’s communities, parks and concert halls. After the Philadelphia Thanksgiving Day Parade, which dates back to 1920, Santa kicks off the Philadelphia Holiday Festival, a AAA GEM event. The season’s festivities include tree lighting ceremonies at City Hall and in neighborhoods across the area, holiday railway rides, light shows, musical performances and New Year’s Eve fireworks. The 5-week long merriment concludes on New Year’s Day with the annual Mummers Parade.

Things to Do

Shopping

Sure, big name department stores like Bloomingdale’s and Nordstrom are nestled in Philadelphia’s suburbs. But those on the hunt for fabulous finds know that the heart and soul of Philly shopping lies in its unique neighborhoods.

Even if you’re not in the market, Center City’s quaint Antique Row, on Pine Street between 9th and 12th streets, delights with its engaging window displays. Here, anything goes, from kitschy bargains to refined elegance: You can pick up an unusual \$4 china plate or a \$40,000 Chippendale highboy, barter for a mustache cup or negotiate for a priceless silver service. Historic samplers and needlework are the

specialty at M. Finkel & Daughter (936 Pine), while stained glass and porcelain entice at Kohn & Kohn (1112 Pine).

The section of Chestnut Street from 8th to 18th streets is a busy corridor where Philadelphians find a mixed bag of stores convenient for generic, everyday shopping. Bargain hunters roll up their sleeves and dive in at Daffy's (1700 Chestnut) for deep discounts on name brands. Athletes and sports fans sprint to Mitchell & Ness (1318 Chestnut) to ogle the amazing collection of reproduction pro jerseys and jackets. At 17th and Chestnut, you'll find the Shops at Liberty Place, an urban mall with the typical retail potpourri enhanced by a stunning glass atrium. A cluster of stores on 13th Street between Walnut and Chestnut is worthy of investigation.

Jewelers' Row, on Sansom between 7th and 8th streets, is Center City's diamond district, second in size only to New York's and reputedly the nation's oldest. You'll surely find a trinket that tickles your fancy in this treasure trove of shops, many operated by the same Philadelphia families for generations. Don't buy on first impulse—checking out the competition generally pays off, since many of the jewelers do offer discounts.

Those inclined toward high-end tidbits land in the Rittenhouse Square area, in a class all its own. As you browse along Walnut Street from Broad to 20th, you'll come across fashion-forward designs at Coach, Diesel, Kenneth Cole, Urban Outfitters (originally launched in Pennsylvania) and a multitude of other chic retailers. For some great deals, peruse the sale racks in the lower level of Anthropologie, another sophisticated chain born in the Keystone State. Pricey designs with a Bohemian flair are all the rage at Joan Shepp, while Boyd's on nearby Chestnut Street is the arbiter of classic elegance amid upper crust digs complete with chandeliers—it even has a sushi and sake lounge. Savor some lunch or the luxury goods of Tiffany, Polo Ralph Lauren and other upscale merchants at Shops at the Bellevue, Broad and Walnut streets.

Foodies must stop by the happily bustling Reading Terminal Market, 12th and Arch streets, a cornucopia of palate-pleasing sensations. Indulge in a steaming cheese steak, freshly baked soft pretzels, succulent pastry and other culinary treats. (Hint: It's also an affordable breakfast stop.) The

Reading Terminal is also home to Hard Rock Cafe Philadelphia, 12th and Market streets. Urbanites looking for a mall-type experience with moderate prices dash into the glass-roofed Gallery at Market East, on Market Street between 8th and 11th, and Market Place East, in a historically handsome building right across the street.

Young hipsters love to pop into the trendy emporiums clustered about Old City. This neighborhood just north of Independence National Historical Park also is dotted with some of the most happening galleries in Philly's art scene. If you're around, you can sample wine and hors d'oeuvres during the "First Friday" evening of the month, when galleries host an open house that turns into a wandering street party. The Bourse, a renovated 1895 grain and stock exchange just across from the Liberty Bell at 21 S. 5th St., is a good place for tourists to pick up some souvenirs. Weary shoppers seek refuge in the food court, a comfortable oasis nestled within a stylish multilevel atrium.

South Street, just south of Society Hill, has an eclectic assortment of funky shops with unique baubles. If you're into vintage and have a hankering for the exotic, this is your turf—the scene heats up at night. Antique hounds should note that a few dealers branch off the main drag. Head a little farther south and you'll come across the Bella Vista neighborhood, home of the 9th Street Italian Market. Running along 9th from Wharton to Fitzwater streets, the market tantalizes your senses with the aromas of garlic and freshly baked bread along with the colorful displays of fresh vegetables, pastas, spices and cheeses. The market's a great lunch spot—roasted garlic pizza is a hit at Sarcone's, while locals swear by both Pat's and Geno's for mouthwatering cheese steaks, a short jaunt south down 9th Street.

On the fringes of Philly, wander the charming cobblestone streets of pretty Chestnut Hill and relish the assortment of some 200 shops. An easy trip from downtown, this northwest enclave with a moneyed vibe attracts those on the prowl for art and antiques, suburbanites out for a spin, and those just happy to park in a quaint café and do a little people

watching. Individually owned boutiques touting specialized merchandise co-exist with established chains.

If you only visit one suburban shopping mall, make it the King of Prussia (US 202 at Schuylkill Expressway), a monstrous labyrinth of stores that makes fighting traffic almost worthwhile. Reputedly the East Coast's largest, the megamall features more than 350 shops and seven major anchors, including Bloomingdale's, Lord & Taylor and Neiman Marcus. You can replenish your energy in one of the numerous eateries, including upscale steakhouse Morton's of Chicago.

Nightlife

Philly is a drinking town, as evidenced by the number of handsome brewpubs and classy lounges. But the city who gave birth to television sensation "American Bandstand" also continues to party hearty with a decent selection of trendy dance clubs and good ol' rock 'n' roll. For a more extensive picture of the scene, consult publications like *Philadelphia* magazine and the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

Clubs providing entertainment include cover charges, and usually require drink or food minimums. To avoid surprises, phone ahead and confirm prices, opening hours, scheduled acts and dress codes.

Every neighborhood has its favorite brewpubs, but there are definitely standouts. Homey touches like an antique wooden bar, brick accents and an inviting fireplace make young movers and shakers want to snuggle up with a cold one and some first-rate munchies at The Black Sheep (Rittenhouse Square/(215) 545-9473). Fergie's (Center City/(215) 928-8118), a rip-roaring Irish pub, throws quite a party on St. Pat's Day—the jovial spot attracts a multifarious gang, including those eager for some good music or fresh mussels along with their brew. Savor one of Philly's best burgers with your brewski at Good Dog (Center City/(215) 985-9600), where youngish patrons like to shoot pool and select tunes from an Internet jukebox amid canine-inspired decor. The packed taproom at Monk's (Center City/(215) 545-7005) specializes in beer from Belgium, with one of their ales actually custom brewed in that country—you might

be able to escape the throngs of kids by nabbing a seat at the back bar. An edgy, 20-to-30 something set hangs out at Standard Tap (Northern Liberties/(215) 238-0630), home of well-crafted drafts and a cranking jukebox—the pub grub is heavenly, from the roast pork sandwich to the duck confit salad.

If your idea of fun is similar to a contact sport—more specifically, a sea of bodies gyrating to a thumping beat—then you'll find bliss partying in Philadelphia's dance clubs. Don't be betrayed by the unmarked alleyway door leading into Fluid (South Street/(215) 629-0565). Philly's most coveted DJs spin funk, punk, rock 'n' roll, trance, progressive and what not in this sleek, high-tech danceteria serving up potent drinks. Themed parties and diverse tunes attract all walks to Shampoo (Northern Liberties/(215) 922-7500), but dress to impress to gain access. With more bars than you can shake a stick at, this massive emporium presents people-watching opportunities galore—in summer, a DJ sets up camp outside in a tented "groove garden" complete with hot tub.

Jazz aficionados head to Chris' Jazz Café (Center City/(215) 568-3131), a locally touted joint featuring top hometown acts and the occasional touring show in cozy digs. Drummer Mickey Roker (of Dizzy Gillespie fame) still does some weekend sets at Ortlieb's Jazzhaus (Northern Liberties/(215) 922-1035), a no-frills jazz den frequented by hard-core enthusiasts who appreciate the talent. It's not the tasty soul food that has them singing the blues at Warmdaddy's (South Philly/(215) 462-2000)—it's the top-notch sound system. Tuesday jam sessions showcase local cool cats at this down-home find with a laid-back vibe.

For those who like to sit and sip, Philly offers plenty of swank lounges and happening bars. In summer, the rooftop deck at Continental Midtown (Center City/(215) 567-1800) is a major hangout—inside, a trendy crowd sips apple martinis and soaks up the ambience of the chicly decorated space. VIPs hobnob in a stylish, sophisticated setting at Denim Lounge (Rittenhouse Square/(215) 735-6700), where the pricey bottle service lures beautiful people who like to make an entrance. Mellow-minded hipsters who would rather skip the scene, settle in a comfy chair

and peruse a decent wine list choose L'Etage (South Street/(215) 592-0656) for a low-key evening with a French flair.

If you're not averse to spending some serious coin, you can opt for bottle service at 32 Degrees Lounge (Old City/(215) 627-3132) and savor your bubbly or iced vodka in a sleek, Eurocentric drinkery where you might spy a cavorting celebrity. Martini lovers nurse their inventive concoctions at the Walnut Room (Center City/(215) 751-0201), an upscale enclave with an unmarked entryway. DJs spin high-energy tunes catering to a packed dance floor.

The Old World style wine bar at Ristorante Panorama (Old City/(215) 922-7800) in the Penn's View Hotel impresses oenophiles with its state-of-the-art dispensing system—if you are new to the wine game, this is a great place to order a “flight,” a sampling of five different vintages to taste. Eclectic touches like a wine bottle chandelier, stamped-tin ceiling and exposed brick walls entice connoisseurs at the Vintage Wine Bar (Center City/(215) 922-3095), where Old City character melds with a new Philadelphia vibe.

Rock ‘n’ roll is alive and kicking in the City of Brotherly Love. Live shows take place nightly at The Khyber (Old City/(215) 238-5888), a smallish, well-worn hamlet where the vibe depends on who's playing and the beer selection is as cranking as the music. A mostly under-thirty set likes to check out the up and comers at North Star (Art Museum Area/(215) 787-0488), a neighborhood hangout small enough to call “intimate” with bar food that's cheap and good. For a refined experience in a café-style venue enhanced by candlelight, try Tin Angel (Old City/(215) 928-0770), home to soft rock, bluegrass, folk, country, rockabilly and other acoustic gigs. Twenty-something punkers and rockers infiltrate Trocadero (Center City/(215) 922-5483) in hopes of discovering hard-hitting, edgy talent—the roomy Chinatown club's ornate accents hint at its past stint as a burlesque house. The focus isn't on mainstream tunes at World Café Live (University City/(215) 222-1400), a modernistic live-music venue hosting a diverse global line-up, from indie bands to hip-hop to acoustical performances. Happy hours are a hot bargain.

Sports and Recreation

Philadelphia, with a representative in every major sports league—baseball, football, hockey, basketball **and** soccer—is a paradise for spectator sports fans. The NFL's Eagles play at Philadelphia's Lincoln Financial Field at S. Broad and Pattison streets; and the Phillies of baseball's National League suit up at Citizens Bank Park, 10th Street and Pattison Avenue. The Wachovia Complex, consisting of the Wachovia Spectrum and the Wachovia Center, also at S. Broad and Pattison streets, plays host to the NHL's Flyers and the NBA's 76ers. For ticket information, phone (215) 463-1000 for the Phillies; (215) 463-5500 for the Eagles; (215) 339-7676 for the 76ers; and (215) 755-9700 for the Flyers.

The Philadelphia Kixx, affiliated with the National Soccer League, play at the Liacouras Center on the campus of Temple University; phone (888) 888-5499.

Rowing is popular on the Schuylkill River; sculls are often seen skimming the water. Periodic races and spectacular annual rowing regattas can be seen from Fairmount Park.

Polo is played by the suburban Brandywine Polo Club, which has games on Sunday afternoons May through September; phone (610) 268-8692. Cricket matches are held in Fairmount Park on weekends in the summer.

Fairmount Park caters to nearly everyone's recreational appetite, with archery, bicycling, canoeing, fishing, golf, hiking, horseback riding, lawn bowling and tennis. The Robert P. Levy Tennis Pavilion, located on the campus of University of Pennsylvania, offers indoor tennis courts; phone (215) 898-4741.

From the Schuylkill River Trail (a small portion of which runs through Philadelphia) to the Delaware Canal National Heritage Trail, there are plenty of hiking, jogging and biking opportunities. Maps showing good routes for running and walking are available at downtown hotels.

Note: The Bartram Trail section of the Schuylkill River Trail is near, or

crosses, state game lands, so wearing blaze orange is recommended during hunting seasons; contact the Pennsylvania Game Commission, (717) 787-4250, for details.

If you want to play the ponies, Philadelphia Park Casino and Racetrack in Bensalem offers Thoroughbred racing all year; phone (215) 639-9000. Delaware Park, near Wilmington, Del., offers Thoroughbred races spring through fall; phone (302) 994-2521.

Note: Policies concerning admittance of children to pari-mutuel betting facilities vary. Phone for information.

Performing Arts

The Philadelphia Orchestra, one of the country's finest symphonies, presents its winter series in the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts. The Kimmel Center also hosts the Opera Company of Philadelphia, the Pennsylvania Ballet, musicals and special concerts. Phone (215) 893-1999 for orchestra, opera and ballet tickets. In summer the orchestra's rich tones ring through Fairmount Park's Mann Center for the Performing Arts. Tickets are sold at the box office, 52nd street and Parkside Avenue. During the summer concerts are held at Penn's Landing. Check at the visitor center for times.

Philadelphia theater is popular. The Forrest Theater presents pre-Broadway and hit shows with name stars; national touring companies appear at the Annenberg Center and the Merriam Theatre.

There also are numerous regional and community theater companies, including the Arden Theatre Company, the Bristol Riverside Theater, the Freedom Theater, the Hedgerow Theater, the People's Light and Theatre Company, the Philadelphia Theatre Company, the Prince Music Theater, the Society Hill Playhouse, the Walnut Street Theatre and the Wilma Theater. College theater can be enjoyed at Temple University or Villanova University.

Insider Info

CityPass offers savings to those who plan to visit many Philadelphia attractions. The pass includes tickets to six attractions: Adventure Aquarium (in nearby Camden, N.J.); The Franklin Institute; Philadelphia Zoo; Philadelphia Trolley Works, The Big Bus Co. and 76 Carriage Co.; an option for either The Academy of Natural Sciences or National Constitution Center; and an option for either Eastern State Penitentiary or the Please Touch Museum.

A pass, valid for 9 days from first date of use, is \$64; \$44 (ages 3-12). CityPass can be purchased from participating attractions; phone (208) 787-4300 or (888) 330-5008. These prices are valid Mar 1, 2010-Feb. 28, 2011.

Philly Cheesesteaks

Want a great sandwich? Slice some medium-roasted eye of chuck very thin. Pros use thin-sliced rib-eye quick cooked on a hot grill with a little oil. Slap the hot meat on a fresh-baked Italian roll. Douse the concoction with heated Cheez Whiz and fried onions. In Philly you order this by saying, "Gimme a whiz-wit." Don't forget to add hot cherry peppers. Now you've got the recipe for a Philly cheesesteak (yes, it's one word). And to Philadelphians, this sandwich is manna and ambrosia rolled into one.

But where did it come from? It all started in 1932 at Pat's King of Steaks. Legend has it that Pat Olivieri, who started with a hot dog stand, soon grew tired of eating frankfurters. One day, for his own lunch, he threw some steak on a hot dog bun; a passing cab driver saw the creation and ordered a cheesesteak on the spot. A sandwich was born, no advertising required.

Now, where does one find the best cheesesteak? In Philly, it's a topic of hot debate. Of course, the unofficial home of cheesesteaks is Pat's. This is the place for purists. But "upstart" Geno's Steaks, founded in the 1960s, does a rocking business, too. Both are located on Passyunk Avenue in the heart of South Philly. And both places are often packed, even if they are positioned just across the street from each other.

The deliberation over who serves the best cheesesteak—Pat’s or Geno’s—goes on every night, all night. But that doesn’t stop the bustling crowds from packing it in after midnight, when the cheesesteak is a late-night tradition. Grab a seat outdoors and enjoy the locals. Even as the rooster crows, you’ll find suburbanites and old couples munching alongside college kids and sports stars.

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