

Philly's Six James Beard Award-Nominated Restaurants

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The Philly food scene is on fire — and there's no greater proof than the city's recent batch of James Beard Award nominations.

Six Philly restaurants and chefs are in the running for the prestigious culinary honor, which celebrates America's delicious, diverse and sustainable food culture. Fine dining options like **Zahav** and **Vetri Cucina** are on the list, alongside Mexican hot spot **South Philly Barbacoa**.

Philadelphia's 2019 nominees were selected from an impressive pool of semifinalists across 21 award categories, including outstanding restaurant, best chef and best new restaurant.

Standouts like Essen Bakery in Queen Village and Suraya in Fishtown were part of the [semifinalist round](#), which 600 judges from around the country worked to cull into the list of more than 100 [nominees](#).

Of course, Philly is no stranger to the James Beard Awards. Recent winners include Zahav, Starr Restaurants and Vernick.

Check out the list of Philadelphia's 2019 nominees below. Winners will be announced on Monday, May 6.

Outstanding Chef - Vetri Cucina, Marc Vetri

Fresh, supple pasta, outstanding appetizers and a 5,000-bottle wine cellar help make chef Marc Vetri's namesake kitchen one of best Italian restaurants in the country. The intimate dining room, guided sommelier experience and multi-course tasting make [Vetri Cucina](#) a great dining destination for a special occasion — and an obvious choice for the nomination for outstanding chef.

Where: Vetri Cucina, 1312 Spruce Street

Outstanding Restaurant - Zahav

This modern Israeli restaurant tucked into a corner of [Society Hill](#) is no stranger to the James Beard Awards, earning past medals for its chef (Michael Solomonov) and cookbook. [Zahav](#) blends flavors from cultures that have influenced Jerusalem over the years, serving up flatbreads, skewered meats and a variety of small plates — each more delicious than the last.

Where: Zahav, 237 Saint James Place

Outstanding Restaurateur - Fork and High Street on Market, Ellen Yin

[Old City](#) neighbors [Fork](#) and [High Street on Market](#) put the focus on fresh and seasonal flavors as part of restaurateur Ellen Yin's High Street Hospitality Group, which is also nominated for its High Street on Hudson spinoff in New York City. Diners at Fork can indulge in seasonal menus of inventive New American dishes, while High Street on Market customers can pop in for a breakfast sandwich or sidle up to a communal dining table for lunch or dinner.

Where: Various locations including Fork, 306 Market Street

Rising Star Chef of the Year - Royal Izakaya, Jesse Ito

This walk-ins-only Japanese cuisine destination in [Queen Village](#) helped put young chef Jesse Ito on the map in Philly in 2016, and earned him a 2019 nomination in the James Beard Awards under-30 category for up-and-coming chefs. Guests can enjoy the delicious *omakase* (tasting menu) at [Royal Izakaya](#) as they watch Ito and staff craft their meal, or opt for a more casual dining room experience.

Where: Royal Izakaya, 780 S. 2nd Street

WWW.ROYALSUSHIANDIZAKAYA.COM

Best Chef: Mid Atlantic - Vedge, Rich Landau

Set in a bright dining room inside an old Philadelphia row home, [Vedge](#) is a plant-based dinner-and-happy-hour spot in [Midtown Village](#). Owners Rich Landau and Kate Jacoby — both previous James Beard Award nominees — make incredible cruelty-free dishes like smoked eggplant rolls, seared mushroom and indulgent dairy-free desserts.

Where: Vedge, 1221 Locust Street

[READ MORE](#)

Best Chef: Mid-Atlantic - South Philly Barbacoa, Cristina Martínez

Tacos, tamales, consommé and more are on the menu at [South Philly Barbacoa](#), the colorful and flavorful Mexican hot spot in the [Italian Market](#). Diners love chef Cristina Martínez's cooking as well as her [community-building efforts](#) in the neighborhood and among the city's immigrant population.

Where: South Philly Barbacoa, 1140 S. 9th Street

10 Iconic Philadelphia Foods & Must-Have Philly Eats

<https://www.visitphilly.com>

Philadelphia takes food very seriously — especially when it comes to the city’s most iconic offerings.

And those best-of-Philly specialties — like a juicy cheesesteak smothered with Whiz, a flavor-packed hoagie on a crusty roll, a slice of freshly baked tomato pie sprinkled with Parmesan cheese and many more — are, of course, best enjoyed when physically in the city itself.

Love for the city’s iconic foods majorly pulls visitors to Philly and, of course, pulls on the heartstrings of locals and former residents, too.

From the salty (soft pretzels!) to the saucy (red-gravy pasta!) to the sweet (Butterscotch Krimpets!), read on for our list of 10 signature eats you’ll enjoy most in Philadelphia.

Philly Cheesesteak

The ultimate iconic Philly food must be the cheesesteak. Imitated by many, but invented by Pat Olivieri of Pat’s Steaks in 1930, a true Philly cheesesteak requires thinly sliced beef and a crusty roll. But the choice of cheese — provolone, American or Cheez Whiz — is a matter of great debate. So is the choice of where to eat it. The age-old feud between South Philly shops [Pat’s King of Steaks](#) and its across-the-street rival [Geno’s Steaks](#) draws thousands of visitors to 9th Street and Passyunk Avenue for taste-offs. Local shops like [Dalessandro’s Steaks and Hoagies](#), [John’s Roast Pork](#), [Joe’s Steak + Soda Shop](#), [Steve’s Prince of Steaks](#), [Tony Luke’s](#) and [Jim’s Steaks](#) have equal numbers of devoted fans.

Where: [Various locations including Jim's Steaks, 400 South Street](#)

Roast Pork Sandwich

It may not be quite as well known as the cheesesteak or the hoagie, but the roast pork sandwich — a regional delicacy born from Italian-American cookery — is without a doubt a signature Philly sandwich. Meltingly tender, oven-roasted pork shoulder, usually shaved or chopped, gets layered with melted sharp provolone cheese and garlicky sautéed broccoli rabe. [John’s Roast Pork](#), [Tony Luke’s](#), [George’s Sandwich Shop](#) and [DiNic’s Roast Pork](#) all deliver classic renditions — as the long lines can attest.

Where: [Various locations including John's Roast Pork, 14 Snyder Avenue](#)

Philly Hoagie

The hoagie, Philly's signature answer to the sub or hero, comes stuffed with fresh meats, cheeses and veggies — or some variation of these ingredients. The bread is critical, with local bakeries like Amoroso's or Sarcone's delivering fresh rolls daily to shops all over the city. One local sandwich chain, [Primo Hoagies](#), has built a small empire with dozens of shops across the East Coast. Still more creative combinations await at [Campo's Deli](#) and [Tony Luke's](#), and new-school purveyor [Matt and Marie's](#) delivers a fresh take with choices such as the Italian Stallion, topped with coppa and salami, locally made Claudio's provolone, house-pickled peppers and pepperoncini aioli.

Where: [Various locations including Matt & Marie's, 100 N. 18th Street](#)

Philly Soft Pretzels

Introduced to the region by German settlers centuries ago, pretzels have long been a favorite local snack. Philly's signature variety is the soft pretzel, an everyday treat purchased from a street vendor, corner store or from a multi-location bakery such as the [Philly Pretzel Factory](#). No matter what form the pretzel takes — braided, sticks, nuggets or even sandwich rolls — they always taste better with mustard.

Where: [Various locations including Philly Pretzel Factory, 132 S. 11th Street](#)

Water Ice

While its name is somewhat confusing, water ice is a perfectly logical solution for those in need of relief on a hot Philadelphia summer day. Elsewhere known as Italian ice, the combination of fruit or syrup with finely shaved ice is a refreshing treat. [John's Water Ice](#), [Mancuso & Son](#) and [Rose's Real Italian Water Ice](#) are just a few age-old favorites, while charming suburban options such as the [Yardley Ice House](#) amaze with an astounding variety of flavors.

Where: [Various locations including John's Water Ice, 701 Christian Street](#)

Tastykakes

Visitors would be hard-pressed to find a Philadelphian who doesn't have nice things to say about Butterscotch Krimpets or chocolate cupcakes with rich striped icing. [Tastykakes](#) have been Philadelphia's sweet snack of choice for more than a century. The company's headquarters at The Navy Yard spans 25 acres and features a LEED-certified bakery. Tastykakes can be ordered directly from the bakery or found in any local convenience store, such as the popular chain [Wawa](#).

Where: [Various locations including Wawa, 912 Walnut Street](#)

Scrapple

A mixture of pork, spices and cornmeal, scrapple is a crispy-fried breakfast meat native to the Pennsylvania Dutch (who, in fact, are German — or Deutsch — in origin). Today, scrapple can be found in greasy-spoon diners and popular breakfast joints like [Dutch Eating Place](#), [The Dutch](#) and [Down Home Diner](#). Some of the most famous purveyors of authentic scrapple are Godshall's Quality Meats, Habbersett and Hatfield, though plenty of restaurants make their own versions in-house.

Where: [Various locations including Down Home Diner, 51 N. 12th Street](#)

Tomato Pie

Made with thick, focaccia-like dough, fresh tomato sauce and sometimes a hint of grated romano cheese, parmesan or oregano, tomato pie is a staple at many Italian bakeries and eateries in Philadelphia. South Philly institutions like [Sarcone's Bakery](#) and [Cacia's Bakery](#) have gained notoriety for their tasty pies, as has [Marchiano's Bakery](#) in Manayunk.

Where: [Various locations including Sarcone's Bakery, 758 S. 9th Street](#)

Red Gravy Pasta Dinner

There's something supremely satisfying about authentic, homemade Italian red gravy served over warm pasta. Given the rich Italian heritage in Philadelphia, it's no surprise that some of the best red-sauce joints and Italian bistros can be found here. [Ralph's](#) in South Philly's [Italian Market](#) has been serving red gravy that's raved about for over a century. Other places known for cooking up tasty sauce include [Mr. Martino's Trattoria](#) on East Passyunk Avenue and [Little Nonna's](#) in [Midtown Village](#) — where the Sunday gravy, served daily while supplies last, includes shortribs, meatballs and sausage over pasta.

Where: [Various locations including Little Nonna's, 1234 Locust Street](#)

Wawa

In and beyond the city, the ever-expanding homegrown convenience store chain [Wawa](#) inspires fierce loyalty. Customers can't go wrong when ordering from the market's expansive menu of delicious made-to-order food and drinks, which includes hot and cold sandwiches like hoagies and sourdough melts; soups and sides like mac and cheese and mashed potatoes; and specialty coffee drinks and frozen beverages like lattes and milkshakes. A variety of standard convenience store fare is available as well.

Where: [Various locations including Wawa, 201 South Broad Street](#)

34 Excellent New Philly Restaurants to Check out this Spring 2019

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Spring's beginning always feels sweet, especially with a promising yield of new restaurants to explore.

The recently opened additions include a concept from restaurateur Michael Schulson (Harp & Crown, Double Knot, Sampan) a second wave of ramen shops and an abundance of Thai eateries offering Philly diners the ultimate in curry convenience. Also, some favorite spots return, some with new names, others with new decor and menu.

Here's a look at some new dining excursions to consider this season, arranged alphabetically.

20th Street Pizza

Former Blackbird Pizza owner Mark Mebus brings his [vegan pizza](#) genius to [Rittenhouse](#) via a New York-style, by-the-square and by-the-slice operation with a focus on seasonal vegetables. Also for sale: Dottie's vegan doughnuts and vegan cookies from Crust Bakery.

Where: 20th Street Pizza, 108 S. 20th Street

WWW.20THSTREET.PIZZA.COM

Aether

[Fishtown](#) now has a sophisticated seafoodery among its legion of excellent restaurants. The owners, the team behind Elements and the Mistral in Princeton, New Jersey, put the focus on the raw bar, seasonal plates and natural wines.

Where: Aether, 1832 Frankford Avenue

WWW.AETHERFISHTOWN.COM

Alpen Rose

Michael Schulson's steakhouse adds a carnivorous [option](#) to his [Midtown Village](#) empire. The 40-seat dining room features wood paneling and a central hearth — a warm and inviting setting to enjoy dry-aged meats.

Where: Alpen Rose, 116 S. 13th Street

WWW.ALPENROSEPHL.COM

Angelo's

Already a local pizza legend for the [New York City-and Trenton-style pies](#) he created at the now-closed Haddonfield's Angelo's Pizzeria, Danny DiGiampietro has moved across the river and reopened in [Bella Vista](#). There's house-made dough, of course, but also rolls and pretty much everything else. Truly old-school, it's first-come, first-served, with no phone.

Where:Angelo's, 736 S. 9th Street

WWW.ANGELOSPIZZERIASOUTHPHILADELPHIA.COM

Aurora Grace Chocolates

Confections tempt at this sweets shop from celebrated pastry chef Aurora Wold. [Aurora Grace](#) specializes in beautiful, hand-painted chocolate bonbons, plus macarons, cookies, cakes and more.

Where:Aurora Grace Chocolates, 517 S. 5th Street

WWW.AURORAGRACECHOCOLATES.COM

Avalon Bistro

[West Chester](#)'s popular [restaubar](#) now has an ideal dinner-and-a-movie option next to the Bryn Mawr Film Institute. The wine system offers 30 by-the-glass pours.

Where:Avalon Bistro, 818 Lancaster Avenue, Bryn Mawr

[READ MORE](#)

Bloomsday Cafe

The owners of Haverford's Green Engine Coffee Co. expand on their coffee shop [concept](#), adding "spirits supply," natural wine by the glass and bottle, in Headhouse Square. All-day eats complement select, small-producer vintages and coffee by Rival Bros.

Where:Bloomsday Cafe, 414 S. 2nd Street

WWW.BLOOMSDAYCAFE.COM

Braeloch Brewing

Live music, a beer garden and a laid-back, dog-friendly atmosphere await at [Chester County](#)'s latest [addition](#) to the region's brewpub scene.

Where:Braeloch Brewing, 225 Birch Street, Kennett Square

WWW.BRAELOCHBREWING.COM

Casablanca Moroccan Cuisine

A richly detailed interior sets the stage for traditional [Moroccan fare](#) in a cozy atmosphere. A seven-course fixed-price menu includes bastilla, a choice of entrees such as spicy chicken, beef shish kebab or lamb with honey and almond, plus tagine and baklava—and live music.

Where:Casablanca Moroccan Cuisine, 1047 W. Lancaster Avenue, Bryn Mawr

WWW.CASABLANCAMAINLINE.COM

Conshohocken Brewing

The [popular brewpub](#) has a new spot in King of Prussia with 14 taps and an easygoing menu of sandwiches, salads and pizzas. Still to come is the attached new production brewery.

Where:Conshohocken Brewing Company, 3100 Horizon Drive, King of Prussia

WWW.CONSHOHOCKENBREWING.COM/KOP

Chatayee Thai

Chatayee Venus Kapugthong eschews fusion cooking for authentic, homestyle fare. Her expansive Thai [restaurant](#) in [Midtown Village](#) prepares massaman and panang curries, satay and a full vegan menu.

Where:Chatayee Thai, 1227 Walnut Street

WWW.CHATAYEETHAI.COM

Craft Hall

It's all under one roof at FCM Hospitality's new riverfront [complex](#). Mainstay Independent Brewery, Lost Bread Co. Bakery, two bars and a full kitchen, plus a playground and live music stage offer many reasons to visit.

Where:Craft Hall, 901 N. Delaware Avenue

WWW.CRAFTHALLPHILLY.COM

Crunchik'n

Ocean City, New Jersey's popular [Korean-fusion purveyor](#) made a name for itself cooking up twice-fried chicken, kimchi crunch balls and bulgogi cheesesteaks. [Midtown Village](#)'s edition offers more of the same deliciousness.

Where:Crunchik'n, 212 S. 11th Street

WWW.CRUNCHIKN.COM

CryBaby Pasta and Wine Bar

The convivial space that last hosted [Queen Village](#)'s Ela has turned over to become a "[rock 'n' roll wine bar and pasta restaurant](#)" by restaurateur-couple Bridget Foy and Paul Rodriguez and chef-restaurateur couple Carla Goncalves and David Gilberg. Sharing plates, pasta and larger entrees can be matched with Italian beer, wine and cocktails.

Where:Cry Baby Pasta and Wine Bar, 627 S. 3rd Street

WWW.CRYBABYPASTA.COM

Diner @ Manayunk

Open for breakfast, brunch and lunch, this new, casual [enclave](#) offers a homey option for daytime eating. The Southern-tinged menu includes salty caramel brioche French toast, seafood grits and avocado breakfast sandwiches.

Where:Diner@Manayunk, 4371 Main Street

Eat Greek

Fast-service gyros, spanakopita and avgolemono soup come to Conshohocken. Diners can order at the counter and take a seat in the no-fuss [dining room](#) for healthy Greek delicacies.

Where:Eat Greek, 4 E. 1st Avenue, Conshohocken

WWW.EATGREEK.COM

Fiore

New York chefs Justine MacNeil and Ed Crochet opened a [spot](#) in Philly's [Queen Village](#) neighborhood. Breakfast and lunch star house-made pastry and charcuterie. For dinner, there's full-service Italian.

Where:Fiore, 757 S. Front Street

WWW.FIORE-FINEFOODS.COM

Green Papaya Asian Bistro

This [pan-Asian BYO spot](#) serves cuisine that spans Thailand, Malaysia and Vietnam. Chef Jimmy Tran, formerly of Center City's Aqua, cooks up stuffed tofu with papaya salad, pho and roti canai.

Where:Green Papaya Asian Bistro, 202 Lancaster Avenue, Ardmore

WWW.GREENPAPAYABISTRO.COM

Hajimaru Ramen

[Fishtown](#)'s new Hakata-style [ramen kitchen](#) ladles out classic bowls of brothy noodles with all the trimmings, plus Japanese small plates such as fried chicken and gyoza.

Where:Hajimaru Ramen, 200 E. Girard Avenue

Johnny Mañanas

After dominating an East Falls intersection for more than a decade with its giant chili pepper landmark, the [Tex-Mex restau-bar](#) reemerges in the Goldtex building. The colorful new corner venue turns up the party with spicy tacos and margaritas.

Where:Johnny Mañanas, 315 N. 12th Street

WWW.JOHNNYMANANAS.NET

Kabobeesh

Samir Sabir's beloved, 20-year-old South Asian [halal grill](#) has added a casual adjacent outpost. On the menu: Tandoori chicken pizza, masala cheesesteaks and fries dusted with cardamom, curry, turmeric, chili and coriander.

Where:Kabobeesh, 4201 Chestnut Street

WWW.KABOBEESH.COM

Liberty Kitchen

A pickle-maker and a cheesemonger joined forces to open this [market, commissary and food workshop](#) in [Fishtown](#). With an emphasis on local makers, the market peddles groceries and casual food like mac and cheese and hoagies.

Where:Liberty Kitchen, 1244 N. Front Street

WWW.LIBERTYKITCHENPHL.COM

Luna Café

An [Old City](#) bruncherie adds a Kensington outpost. [Luna](#) offers a full coffee bar and serves vegetarian-friendly bowls, pancakes and breakfast sandwiches.

Where:Luna Café, 1700 N. 3rd Street

WWW.LUNAPHILLY.COM

Makhani Modern Indian

Chef Sanjoy Banik and longtime Philly restaurateur Shafi Gaffar team up for high-end Northern Indian fare in [Old City](#). This intimate bring-your-own-bottle (BYOB) [spot](#) specializes in rich curries, plated individually.

Where:Makhani Modern Indian, 7 N. 3rd Street

WWW.EATMAKHANI.COM

Neighborhood Ramen

Along with the second great ramen wave in Philly comes this [Queen Village shop](#) with a mural by Philly's Kyle Confehr. From-scratch broth is the base for a tight menu of five ramens and three sides (gyoza, sesame cabbage salad, oshinko pickles). One rule: No takeout or doggie bags allowed.

Where:Neighborhood Ramen, 617 S. 3rd Street

WWW.NEIGHBORHOODRAMEN.COM

Nui Nui Kitchen

Thai native Nui Kullana adapts [Southeast Asian flavors](#) to a modern mix of small and big plates with a vegan emphasis. The exposed brick dining room will soon have its own full-service bar, but for now, it's BYO.

Where:Nui Nui Kitchen, 301 Bridge Street, Phoenixville

WWW.NUINUIKITCHEN.COM

Pelicana Chicken

[University City](#) now has a [South Korean chicken joint](#) to call its own. Chicken can be ordered boneless, on the bone or as wings only with flavorings and sides such as corn salad and cheese sticks.

Where:Pelicana Chicken, 4002 Spruce Street

WWW.PELICANAUSA.COM

Pizzeria Beddia

Award-winning Joe Beddia returns to [Fishtown](#) with his legendary pizza in an expanded venue. No more standing in line and hoping for the best; the new [place](#) is open seven days a week, takes online reservations and serves cocktails and natural wine.

Where: Pizzeria Beddia, 1313 N. Lee Street

WWW.PIZZERIABEDDIA.COM

Poe's Sandwich Joint

Takeout sandwiches cater to the late-night crowds at this [Fishtown shop](#) that stays open until 3 a.m. Tasty munchies include smoked Gouda cheesesteaks, chicken cutlets on Sarcone's rolls and funnel cake "fries."

Where: Poe's Sandwich Joint, 1429 Marlborough Street

[READ MORE](#)

Rudee's Thai Cuisine

Classic Thai dishes—Tom Yum soup, pad si-ew and mango sticky rice—arrive in Wynnewood. This small, bright [eatery](#) comes from the owners of Heng's Thai Cuisine in Springfield, [Delaware County](#).

Where: Rudee's Thai Cuisine, 333 E. Lancaster Avenue, Wynnewood

WWW.RUDEESTHAI.COM

The Common

Chef Patrick Feury turned the short-lived Danlu into a New American [restaurant and bar](#) with expansive seating, communal tables and lots of plant life. The menu makes the most of local ingredients in dishes such as creamy sunchoke soup with smoked shrimp and pappardelle with braised Lancaster beef.

Where: The Common, 3601 Market Street

WWW.THECOMMONPHL.COM

The Post at Cira Garage

Local brews, arcade games and bar food make a winning combination at this [University City beer hall](#). Visitors can chow on wings and meatball sliders in between rounds of shuffleboard, darts and board games.

Where:The Post at Cira Garage, 129 S. 30th Street

WWW.THEPOSTPHL.COM

Village Bar + Kitchen

Plenty has rebranded as a full-service neighborhood [restaurant](#) catering to families. The comfort food menu highlights artisan producers and accessible flavors with dishes like honey harissa wings and rigatoni Bolognese, plus cocktails, wine and beer.

Where:Village Bar + Kitchen, 705 South 5th Street

WWW.VILLAGEBARKITCHEN.COM

Woosa Bubble Tea

[Powelton Village](#) has gotten bubblier thanks to this recently opened [tea-porium](#). Tapioca and jelly enthusiasts will find all the usual boba flavors, made with real tea and real milk.

Where:Woosa Bubble Tea, 3639 Lancaster Avenue

The 10 Most Essential Things to Do on Your Visit to Philly

<https://www.visitphilly.com>

There's never a shortage of awesome things to do in Philadelphia — but there are some things you just can't miss while you're here.

Whether it's running like **Rocky**, refueling with a **cheesesteak** and then wandering along **Boathouse Row**, or touring **Independence Hall**, devouring a roast pork sandwich at **Reading Terminal Market** and then visiting an amazing museum on the **Benjamin Franklin Parkway**, these are the experiences that make our city stand out among the rest.

Read on for the 10 most essential experiences to be had in the City of Brotherly Love.

[Snap a photo in front of the Liberty Bell](#)

Dramatic home of the internationally known symbol of freedom...

It doesn't make a sound, but [The Liberty Bell](#)'s message rings loud and clear: "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof." This inscription on the cracked but mighty bell is one reason it became a symbol to abolitionists, suffragists and other freedom-seekers around the world. The bell, which is free to visit year-round with no tickets required, draws people from around the nation to snag a photo in front of the soaring glass walls overlooking [Independence Hall](#).

Where: [The Liberty Bell Center, 526 Market Street](#)

[Pose with the Rocky Statue & run up the "Rocky Steps"](#)

Two of the most famous tourist attractions in Philadelphia...

Since Rocky's first triumphant run on the silver screen in 1976, the steps of the [Philadelphia Museum of Art](#) have become an international destination. Travelers from around the world embark on their own jog up [the stairs](#), pumping their fists in the air as they cherish the spectacular view of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway and the city skyline. To finish off the experience, head to the bottom of the stairs and snap a photo with the bronze statue of Rocky, originally created for *Rocky III*.

Where: [Rocky Statue and Rocky Steps, Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2600 Benjamin Franklin Parkway](#)

[Enjoy an authentic Philly cheesesteak](#)

You have to eat one on your first visit to Philadelphia...

The [Philly cheesesteak](#) is inarguably the city's most famous food. These awesome sandwiches consist of chopped (or thinly sliced) steak and a choice of cheeses and/or fried onions on a hoagie roll. Those in the know order their cheesesteak with two words only: cheese selection (provolone, American or Whiz) and “wit” or “without” onions. The debate about which local spot cooks up the best sandwich may never end, but for an iconic Philly experience, visit the corner of South 9th Street and Passyunk Avenue, where rivals [Geno's Steaks](#) and [Pat's King of Steaks](#) feed the masses daily.

Where: [Various locations including Pat's King of Steaks & Geno's Steaks, East Passyunk Avenue & South 9th Street](#)

[Tour Independence Hall, the birthplace of the United States](#)

Where the Declaration of Independence was signed and where the U.S. Constitution was created...

While historical attractions abound in Philly, [Independence Hall](#) holds monumental significance to the development of the nation. In 1776, the Founding Fathers signed the Declaration of Independence in the building's Assembly Room. Just 11 years later, representatives from a dozen states met here to lay the framework for the U.S. Constitution. Today, the UNESCO World Heritage Site is the centerpiece of [Independence National Historical Park](#), and guided tours are available year-round. Free, timed tickets are required and can be picked up at the [Independence Visitor Center](#) but plan ahead — tours fill up fast!

Where: [Independence Hall, 520 Chestnut Street](#)

[Visit the famous *LOVE* sculpture](#)

An iconic work of art by Robert Indiana...

One of the City of Brotherly Love's best-known landmarks is [LOVE](#) itself — the Robert Indiana sculpture in John F. Kennedy Plaza (or [LOVE Park](#), as it's referred to by many). The sculpture was recently restored and repainted, and the park was entirely redesigned to add more green areas and a high-tech water feature. The *AMOR* sculpture — a Spanish version of the *LOVE* sculpture — is on display at [Sister Cities Park](#), a short walk from *LOVE* Park.

Where: [Love Park, North 15th Street & Arch Street](#)

Chow down on food from dozens of vendors at Reading Terminal Market

America's oldest farmers' market and current foodie paradise...

Set below a former railroad terminal, Center City's 125-year-old [Reading Terminal Market](#) serves as both a dazzling tourist destination and a source for fresh produce, seafood, meats and cheese for locals. The public space also provides open seating where customers can enjoy meals from dozens of restaurants, including Pennsylvania Dutch cuisine and acclaimed DiNic's hot roast pork sandwiches. Retail merchants sell housewares, jewelry, linens and more.

Where: [Reading Terminal Market, 51 N. 12th Street](#)

Visit the museums on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway

America's most artistic mile...

The [Benjamin Franklin Parkway](#), modeled after the Champs Elysees in Paris, is sometimes called Philadelphia's most artistic mile. Some of the city's most important cultural institutions are housed here, including the [Barnes Foundation](#), [The Franklin Institute](#), [The Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University](#), the [Rodin Museum](#) and the crowning [Philadelphia Museum of Art](#). (Another super-popular attraction, former prison [Eastern State Penitentiary](#), is just a 15-minute walk from the Philadelphia Museum of Art.) No Philly experience is complete without a dip into the city's cultural offerings.

Where: [Various locations including the Barnes Foundation, 2025 Benjamin Franklin Parkway](#)

Take in an epic view of City Hall — then tour the massive building

The largest municipal building in the country and the finest example of the Second Empire style...

[City Hall](#) has been the home to Philadelphia city government for more than a century. Once the tallest building in the U.S., the elaborate 14.5-acre masonry structure remains the country's largest municipal building, and its exterior features more than 250 sculptures. Residents and visitors can enjoy an interior tour that explores the building's history, art and architecture or a 15-minute tower tour. Both [tour options](#) include a view from the observation deck, located below the 37-foot-tall, 27-ton bronze statue of William Penn atop the clock tower.

Where: [City Hall, 1400 John F. Kennedy Boulevard](#)

Explore Philly's revitalized waterfront

Philly's ever-evolving waterfront features loads to do in all seasons...

Once made up of undeveloped piers and underutilized public spaces, the [Delaware River waterfront](#) has become one of the most activated spaces in Philadelphia in the 21st century. That's thanks to the opening of a number of exciting attractions and parks — [Cherry Street Pier](#) and [Race Street Pier](#) as well as seasonal spots like [Spruce Street Harbor Park](#) and [Blue Cross RiverRink](#) — and diverse and well-attended events throughout the year. Plus, those gorgeous views of the Benjamin Franklin Bridge — which connects Philadelphia to New Jersey — don't hurt, either.

Where: [Various locations including Spruce Street Harbor Park, 301 S. Christopher Columbus Boulevard](#)

Admire the quiet beauty of Boathouse Row on the Schuylkill River

19th-century boathouses lining the Schuylkill River near the Philadelphia Museum of Art...

In 1821, the creation of the Fairmount Dam, now behind the [Philadelphia Museum of Art](#), turned the Schuylkill River into a placid surface ideal for rowing. By the mid-19th century, the city approved the construction of the 10 charming crew clubhouses that make up [Boathouse Row](#). Now a National Historical Landmark, the boathouses — still in use today by amateur and collegiate crew clubs — provide one of the city's most recognizable and Instagram-worthy sights. Get a close-up view during a stroll along Kelly Drive or a wide-angle look from Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, and don't miss the boathouses at night, when glittering lights framing the boathouses create idyllic reflections on the river's surface.

Where: [Boathouse Row, 1 Boathouse Row](#)

20+ Things to Do in Philadelphia's Historic District After Dark

<https://www.visitphilly.com>

Many of the museums and attractions in [Philadelphia's Historic District](#) close at night, but the area's appeal doesn't wane when the sun goes down. Nightlife across the area caters to visitors with interests ranging from craft beer bars to age-old ghost stories to avant-garde theater.

While eateries like [The Franklin Fountain](#) and [Moshulu](#) vividly recall history, hangouts like [Mac's Tavern](#) offer an authentic taste of today's local scene.

And while venues like [Franklin Square](#) and [Blue Cross RiverRink Summerfest](#) offer fun for the whole family, other spots encourage an adults-only night out on the town.

No matter what you're in the mood to do tonight, do it in one (or many) of the awesome spots in our Historic District guide below.

[Lounge in a hammock at Spruce Street Harbor Park.](#)

A waterfront, hammock-filled haven with hanging lights to brighten up a relaxing night

Look for the colorful lights along the Delaware River and you'll find [Spruce Street Harbor Park](#), which offers a mix of outdoor areas to relax and play. After a day of sightseeing, rest your weary legs in one of the many colorful hammocks and Adirondack chairs spread throughout the space, and, if you choose, unwind with a brew or frozen cocktail.

Where: [Spruce Street Harbor Park, 301 S. Christopher Columbus Boulevard](#)

[Snack atop a floating barge at Spruce Street Harbor Park.](#)

Dine as if you were vacationing in the islands

Celebrated local restaurants like [Distrito](#) and [HipCityVeg](#) operate casual outlets at [Spruce Street Harbor Park](#). Grab a bite and enjoy it in the Oasis, a section of the park that includes floating gardens, landscaped barges and a Caribbean-style net lounge.

Where: [Spruce Street Harbor Park, 301 S. Christopher Columbus Boulevard](#)

Go rollin' near the river at Blue Cross RiverRink Summerfest.

Philadelphia's first outdoor roller rink and a seasonal favorite at Penn's Landing

At [BlueCross RiverRink Summerfest](#), guests can strap on a pair of skates and go for a spin just steps from the banks of the Delaware River. After the skates come off, head inside to the air-conditioned “crab shack” from Philly’s celebrated eatery Chickie’s and Pete’s.

Where: [Blue Cross RiverRink, 101 S. Columbus Boulevard](#)

Chow down on a late-night cheesesteak at Sonny's Famous Steaks.

Old City's spot to score a sandwich well into the wee hours of the morning

When post-bar hunger sets in, engage in one of Philadelphia’s favorite pastimes: late-night cheesesteaks. [Sonny's Famous Steaks](#) serves hot, fresh sandwiches along with a hearty side of great people-watching until 3 a.m. on Friday and Saturday nights.

Where: [Sonny's Famous Steaks, 228 Market Street](#)

Eat, drink and people-watch in the district.

Tons of tastes to explore

The scents that waft from the many restaurants throughout Philadelphia’s Historic District are enough to make a hungry sightseer’s mouth water. Area eateries range from grab-and-go bites to five-star dining experiences. Click “read more” for our guide to the [top restaurants](#) in the Historic District.

Where: [Various locations including Amada, 217-219 Chestnut Street](#)

Watch free movies by moonlight.

Newer films and longtime favorites shown under the stars

Throughout the summer months, attractions in Philadelphia’s Historic District screen outdoor films when the sun goes down. Check the schedules for [Penn's Landing](#), [FringeArts](#) and the [Betsy Ross House](#) for exact dates, times and updated weather advisories.

Where: [Various locations including The Great Plaza at Penn's Landing, 101 Columbus Boulevard](#)

[Admire the Benjamin Franklin Bridge at night.](#)

The perfect spot to catch the sunset

Nothing says romance like a moonlit riverside stroll. Head to [Race Street Pier](#) for incredible sunset and nighttime views of the Benjamin Franklin Bridge, which connects Philadelphia to Camden, N.J.

Where: [Race Street Pier, Columbus Boulevard and Race Street](#)

[Play like a kid at Franklin Square.](#)

Carousel rides, mini-golf, burgers and more

Who says grown-ups can't act like kids once in awhile? At [Franklin Square](#), visitors of any age can putter around the Philly-themed miniature golf course, ride the historic Parx Liberty Carousel and dine on burgers and milkshakes at SquareBurger, the park's eatery. Park hours do vary by season — and in conjunction with special events — so be sure to [click here for current hours](#) before heading out to the park after dark.

Where: [Franklin Square, 200 N. 6th Street](#)

[Toast to the Founding Fathers at Independence Beer Garden.](#)

Cold beer and tasty food on Independence Mall

With more than 40 beers on tap, a deliciously approachable menu and a stock of board and lawn games, Independence Beer Garden has been a neighborhood favorite every summer since its first season in 2014. The venue is directly opposite Independence Mall and steps from the [Liberty Bell Center](#).

Where: [Independence Beer Garden, 100 S. Independence Mall W.](#)

[Learn to “huzzah” on a Tippler's Tour.](#)

Experience a taste of Colonial tavern life

Philadelphia's thriving beer scene is as old as the city itself, and the [Tippler's Tour Colonial Pub Crawl](#) is the perfect way for guests to drink their way through history. Led by a knowledgeable guide outfitted in period costume, the weekly event visits three modern-day watering holes and one colonial tavern. Tours vary by season, so [check here for the current pub crawl](#) offering.

Where: [Independence Visitor Center, 1 N. Independence Mall W.](#)

“Sneak” into Independence Hall with Independence After Hours.

Explore a famous landmark in a whole new way

Go behind [Independence Hall](#)’s velvet rope on an [Independence After Hours](#) tour. Participants enjoy a colonial-style dinner at [City Tavern](#) before eavesdropping on our Founding Fathers at Independence Hall. Tour availability varies by season. [Check here](#) for times, tickets and more.

Where: [Independence Hall, 520 Chestnut Street](#)

Sip cocktails on a rooftop.

Alfresco opportunities await

Get a bird’s-eye view of Philadelphia’s Historic District while sipping cocktails at a [rooftop bar](#) in the neighborhood. Stratus Rooftop Lounge attracts chic crowds who come for cocktails and live DJ sets, while the open-air Deck on the Moshulu offers up waterfront breezes alongside culinary refreshment.

Where: [Locations include the Moshulu, 401 S. Columbus Boulevard](#)

Indulge with old-fashioned treats at The Franklin Fountain.

Delicious treats with clever, history-inspired twists

The old-fashioned decor and costumed servers are just part of the appeal at [The Franklin Fountain](#), which is open until at least midnight seven days a week. This Victorian-inspired ice cream saloon tempts people of all ages with its handmade ice cream, banana splits, thick shakes, sundaes and flavored phosphates and fountain drinks—all served by soda jerks. During colder months, there’s hot chocolate, hot milkshakes and homemade pie.

Where: [The Franklin Fountain, 116 Market Street](#)

Groove to live DJs and chill on the Delaware River at Morgan's Pier.

Summer dining and nightlife in the shadow of the Benjamin Franklin Bridge

Located within walking distance from [Independence National Historical Park](#), [Morgan's Pier](#) feels miles away from the city. Just below the Ben Franklin Bridge, leafy trees, a gourmet picnic menu and a beer garden unite at this seasonal dining destination. Earlier in the evening, people enjoy brews and food during sunset; later on, they listen to live music or DJs while taking in the waterfront view.

Where: [Morgan's Pier, 221 N. Columbus Boulevard](#)

Take in a show at one of several intimate theaters.

Performances of every kind

Thanks to organizations like the [Arden Theatre Company](#) and Christ Church Neighborhood House, arts and culture flourish in Philadelphia's Historic District. These intimate theaters each contain less than 400 seats and showcase some of the region's most talented actors, singers, dancers and creative professionals.

Where: [Various locations including the Arden Theatre, 40 N. 2nd Street](#)

Savor casual fare at The Shack Beer Garden at La Peg.

Alfresco bites and beers with a bridge-side view

The Shack at [La Peg](#), a casual outdoor beer garden, sets up shop each spring and remains open as long as the weather is fine. The menu features classic crowd-pleasers like burgers, pulled pork sandwiches and lobster rolls, paired with beer, wine or cocktails. The best part of the offerings? All of the food and drink comes with a side of spectacular views of the Benjamin Franklin Bridge.

Where: [La Peg, 140 N. Columbus Boulevard](#)

Gallery hop on First Friday.

A monthly open house at the area's many galleries

On the first Friday night of each month, the Old City Arts Association hosts [First Friday](#), an open-house-style event at dozens of the neighborhood's shops and galleries. Members of the public sip wine, stroll from storefront to storefront and interact with artists and business owners.

Where: [Various locations including The Clay Studio, 137-139 N. 2nd Street](#)

Savor bites aboard a boat on the Delaware River.

Two vessels with on-the-water dining

Two of the most unique restaurants in Philadelphia's Historic District offer seating not just near the water but *on* the water. The [Spirit of Philadelphia](#) tour takes guests on a scenic Delaware River cruise, while diners who prefer to remain closer to land opt for [Moshulu](#), a permanently docked historic Tall Ship.

Where: [Moshulu, 401 S. Columbus Boulevard](#)

Salsa and spin the night away at Cuba Libre or Brasil's.

A little bit of Old Havana in Old City

Get ready to salsa and spin at [Cuba Libre](#) and [Brasil's](#), two of the hottest spots in the Historic District. Both venues evoke the spirit of Latin America with festive decor, drinks and dancing.

Where: [Cuba Libre Restaurant & Rum Bar, 10 S. 2nd Street](#)

Catch an avant-garde experience at FringeArts.

Progressive performances on the Delaware River Waterfront

The theater at FringeArts — Photo by Sarah Bishop Stone for FringeArts

For unique theater and special events, head to [FringeArts](#), which is headquartered in a stunning historic building on the Delaware River Waterfront. Inside, a 232-seat performance space hosts everything from cabaret to works-in-progress to acts that defy categorization. After the show, grab a cocktail at La Peg, the venue's inviting bar and restaurant.

Where: [FringeArts, 140 N. Christopher Columbus Boulevard](#)

Get spooked with Ghost Tours of Philadelphia.

Philadelphia's most unusual nighttime attraction

With great history comes great mystery, and Philadelphia is packed with both. Explore the city's supernatural side on a candlelit stroll through the back streets of Old City with [Ghost Tours of Philadelphia](#).

Where: [Signer's Garden, 434-498 Chestnut Street](#)

Hang out like the cast of "It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia".

A casual drinking spot with celebrity street cred

Want to see where the cast of ["It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia"](#) hangs out when they're in town? Head to Mac's Tavern, an Old City gastropub co-owned by Rob McElhenney and Kaitlin Olson, two of the show's stars.

Where: [Mac's Tavern, 226 Market Street](#)

The 35 Most Popular Attractions in Philadelphia

<https://www.visitphilly.com>

With more than 43 million annual visitors, Philadelphia's top attractions get a lot of well-warranted attention — and it's not hard to see why.

Every year, hundreds of thousands of residents and visitors chow down on delicious food at **Reading Terminal Market**, snap selfies with the **Liberty Bell**, explore the halls of the **Philadelphia Museum of Art** or head to outside-the-city hot spots like **Peddler's Village** and **Longwood Gardens**.

Below is a guide to the most popular spots in Philadelphia and the Countryside to put on — and check off — those must-see lists. Data is based on 2017 attendance numbers provided to the *Philadelphia Business Journal* and from the [National Park Service](#) as well as attendance info self-reported by some attractions.

Read on for our guide to the most visited attractions in Philadelphia and the surrounding region.

[Reading Terminal Market](#)

One of the oldest and largest public markets in America...

The most visited attraction in Philadelphia? [Reading Terminal Market](#), the city's famous indoor food paradise that's a one-stop shop for local produce, delicious sandwiches, fresh-baked pastries and artisanal cheeses available from dozens of vendors. More than 7 million people visited the market in 2017, and for good reason — it's amazing. Pro tip: Check out our guide on [10 great things to eat at the market](#) before you go.

Where: [Reading Terminal Market, 51 N. 12th Street](#)

[SugarHouse Casino](#)

Fun and games on the Delaware River...

This popular [casino](#) on the Delaware River waterfront has 1,891 slots, over 100 table games, a 28-table poker room, seven restaurants and bars, a multipurpose event space and a seven-story parking garage. The attraction stands out as one of Philadelphia's premier entertainment destinations, attracting 4 million visitors in 2017.

Where: [SugarHouse Casino, 1001 N. Delaware Avenue](#)

[Independence Visitor Center](#)

All-in-one center for info, tickets to Independence Hall, tips from experts and more...

The [Independence Visitor Center](#) supplies visitors to Philadelphia with useful information about where to go, what to see and how to get there. The popular starting point for many visitors (and the place to secure tickets to visit Independence Hall) welcomed more than 2.6 million people in 2017.

Where: [Independence Visitor Center, 599 Market Street](#)

[The Liberty Bell Center](#)

Dramatic home of the internationally known symbol of freedom...

Many of the visitors to [Independence National Historical Park](#) line up to see the [Liberty Bell](#), one the park's — and the country's — most iconic attractions. In 2017, the famously fractured bronze bell drew over to 2.2 million visitors.

Where: [The Liberty Bell Center, 526 Market Street](#)

[Valley Forge National Historical Park](#)

Where the spirit of the Revolution received its sternest test...

No battles were fought in Valley Forge, but the time the Continental Army spent here went down as one of their most trying periods. Exhibits, artifacts, replicated huts and the original headquarters tell the story of the pivotal winter that George Washington and his troops endured at the site. The 3,600-acre [Valley Forge National Historical Park](#) — a magnet for runners, bicyclists and picnickers as well as history buffs — attracted more than 2.1 million visitors in 2017.

Where: [Valley Forge National Historical Park, 1400 N. Outer Line Drive](#)

[Peddler's Village](#)

Charming countryside village just one hour from Philadelphia...

[Peddler's Village](#) offers small-town colonial charm just one hour from [Center City](#) Philadelphia. With festivals for every season, 60-plus stores for shopping and the just-for-kids Gigglesberry Fair area, it's no wonder the [Bucks County](#) attraction welcomed 2 million visitors in 2017.

Where: [Peddler's Village, 2400 Street Road, New Hope](#)

Longwood Gardens

One of the world's premier horticultural display gardens...

Longwood Gardens attracts visitors — more than 1.5 million in 2017 — from around the globe to its 1,100 acres in Kennett Square that are filled with stunning gardens, woodlands, meadows and fountains. The horticultural haven also hosts hundreds of events each year, including fountain shows, gardening demonstrations, educational programs, activities for kids, concerts and musical theater.

Where: Longwood Gardens, 1001 Longwood Road, Kennett Square

Philadelphia Zoo

Animals and plants thrive at America's first zoo...

At the Philadelphia Zoo, visitors discover Zoo360, the world's first system of see-through mesh trails that cross over pathways, connect habitats and encourage animals to travel and explore throughout the campus. Other wild highlights of America's first zoo: Key Bank Big Cat Falls, PECO Primate Reserve and KidZooU, a wildlife academy of dynamic displays, rare breeds and hands-on experiences. In 2017, the attraction drew nearly 1.2 million visitors.

Where: Philadelphia Zoo, 3400 W. Girard Avenue

Franklin Square

Carousel rides, mini-golf, burgers and more...

One of the original five squares in William Penn's plan for the city, Franklin Square, which drew 1.1 million visitors in 2017, is now a modern and fun family park, with a Philly-themed miniature golf course, a dazzling fountain, playgrounds and an old-fashioned carousel featuring famous Philly horses. When hunger strikes, SquareBurger (open seasonally) delivers with awesome burgers, fries and shakes — including the Cake Shake, made with Philadelphia's own Tastykakes.

Where: Franklin Square, 200 N. 6th Street

The Franklin Institute

One of the oldest and most beloved science museums in the country...

The Franklin Institute, one of the leading science centers in the country, showcases the science involved in every aspect of life. In addition to the 11 hands-on permanent exhibits like the highly interactive *Your Brain*, the newly reimagined *SportsZone* and the *Giant Heart*, a rotating roster of special exhibitions add to the museum's appeal. Attracting 925,000 visitors in 2017, the educational space is also home to the Fels Planetarium, the Tuttleman IMAX Theater and the Joel N. Bloom Observatory.

Where: The Franklin Institute, 222 N. 20th Street

Philadelphia Museum of Art

One of the largest art museums in the country and a must-see attraction...

The Philadelphia Museum of Art and its the “Rocky Steps” may have been immortalized in the classic *Rocky* film franchise, but the cultural institution is even more impressive inside. The astounding collection here comprises art from across the globe and through the ages — including Renaissance, American, Asian, impressionist and contemporary masterpieces — to make the museum one of the most important art destinations in the country. In 2017, more than 750,000 visitors came to take in the museum's seemingly endless body of work.

Where: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2600 Benjamin Franklin Parkway

Elmwood Park Zoo

A community zoo dedicated to habitat conservation...

Attracting 650,000 people in 2017, the Elmwood Park Zoo features animals from around the globe, including bison, red pandas, jaguars, giraffes and zebras. Visitors buy tickets to hand feed some awesome animals like giraffes and bison. Treetop Adventures, a park inside the zoo that includes more than 50 challenging games and zip lines high in the trees, also offers thrills.

Where: Elmwood Park Zoo, 1661 Harding Boulevard, Norristown

Independence Hall

Birthplace of both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution...

Another popular spot in Independence National Historical Park is [Independence Hall](#), birthplace both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. A national treasure, the building is one of only 23 World Heritage sites in the nation. More than 625,000 people visited in 2017.

Where: [Independence Hall, 520 Chestnut Street](#)

Please Touch Museum

Where kids ages 1-7 are boss...

Recognized as one of the nation's top children's museums, the [Please Touch Museum](#) offers children and families play-based learning experiences across more than 60,000 square feet of interactive exhibits in [Fairmount Park](#)'s National Historic Landmark Memorial Hall. Special temporary exhibitions, hands-on daily programming, original theatrical performances, art-making creative spaces and more are all included with general admission, helping to bring over 500,000 visitors to the museum in 2017.

Where: [Please Touch Museum, 4231 Avenue of the Republic](#)

The West Wing of Independence Hall

Home to original printed copies of the Constitution and more...

Adjacent to [Independence Hall](#), the Great Essentials exhibit in the West Wing showcases original printed copies of the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution. Also on display is the silver Syng inkstand, believed to be the actual inkstand used to sign the Declaration of Independence and Constitution. More than 425,000 visitors strolled through the building in 2017.

Where: [West Wing of Independence Hall, Chestnut Street between 5th and 6th streets](#)

Eastern State Penitentiary

Radical 19th-century prison designed to create social change...

This former prison introduced Americans to a new form of housing inmates: solitary confinement. Al Capone and Willie Sutton were among the 75,000 inmates who spent time at [Eastern State Penitentiary](#), which drew more than 400,000 people in 2017 to explore its gorgeous Gothic architecture. Self-guided tours and a [Halloween haunted house](#), along with exhibitions and special events, make the massive prison a favorite among those who dare to enter.

Where: [Eastern State Penitentiary, 2027 Fairmount Avenue](#)

Museum of the American Revolution

An expansive collection of art and artifacts from the nation's Revolutionary Period...

The [Museum of the American Revolution](#) has quickly become one of the most popular attractions in the city, attracting more than 275,000 visitors in the eight months after its opening in April 2017. This museum tells of the dramatic founding of the United States through historic artifacts, immersive galleries, theaters and re-created historic environments. Although several hundred Revolutionary-era artifacts are on display, one of the most significant is George Washington's Headquarters Tent, which served as Washington's office and sleeping quarters throughout the war.

Where: [Museum of the American Revolution, 101 S. 3rd Street](#)

National Constitution Center

The world's only museum dedicated to the U.S. Constitution...

The [National Constitution Center](#) suggests its visitors begin their exploration with *Freedom Rising*, a 17-minute, live theatrical production about the American quest for freedom. Next up: the interactive main exhibit *The Story of We the People* and Signers' Hall, featuring 42 life-size statues of the delegates present for the signing of the Constitution. The only museum dedicated to America's most important document brought in more than 260,000 visitors in 2017.

Where: [National Constitution Center, 525 Arch Street](#)

Congress Hall

Home of the U.S. Congress from 1790-1800...

This historic building housed U.S. Congress from 1790 to 1800, during the time when Philadelphia served as the temporary capital of the United States. Originally built as the Philadelphia County Courthouse, [Congress Hall](#) welcomed nearly 260,000 visitors in 2017.

Where: [Congress Hall, 6th and Chestnut streets](#)

The Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University

Dinosaurs, butterflies and more inhabit America's oldest natural history museum...

At more than 200 years old, [The Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University](#) is America's oldest natural history museum. Those of all ages — and there were 240,000 of them who visited in 2017 — can get face-to-face with towering dinosaurs, wander through a tropical garden filled with live butterflies, meet live animals and see three continents of wildlife in their natural habitats.

Where: [The Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, 1900 Benjamin Franklin Parkway](#)

Once Upon a Nation / Historic Philadelphia, Inc.

History that speaks to you...

In locations throughout [Philadelphia's Historic District](#), modern-day visitors get the chance to experience colonial times through immersive living-history experiences that include [period dinners](#), [pub crawls](#) and re-enactments. Storytellers also recount lively tales at the 13 [Once Upon A Nation](#) benches sprinkled throughout the district. The area's rich historical attractions drew nearly 240,000 visitors last year.

Where: [Various locations including Independence Hall, 520 Chestnut Street](#)

Barnes Foundation

One of the world's foremost collections of French impressionist and post-impressionist paintings...

Located on Philadelphia's [Benjamin Franklin Parkway](#), the [Barnes Foundation](#) houses one of the finest collections of impressionist, post-impressionist and early modern paintings in the world, with a jaw-dropping 181 Renoirs, 69 Cézannes, 59 Matisses and 46 Picassos, along with works by Van Gogh, Seurat, Modigliani and more. The captivating collection also includes American paintings and decorative arts, metalwork, African sculpture and Native American textiles, jewelry and ceramics — all presented in Albert C. Barnes' distinctive arrangements. The impressive collection brought more than 230,000 visitors to the museum in 2017.

Where: [Barnes Foundation, 2025 Benjamin Franklin Parkway](#)

Penn Museum

Transforming understanding of the human experience...

The [Penn Museum](#), one of the world's finest archaeological and anthropological museums, attracted more than 170,000 visitors in 2017 with its collection of a million objects from across the globe. The [renovated Middle East Galleries](#) feature 1,200 fascinating objects, including one of the world's oldest wine jars and the 4,500-year-old crowning jewelry of a Mesopotamian queen. The museum, currently undergoing a major building transformation, reopens its refreshed Mexico & Central America and Africa galleries in November 2019.

Where: [Penn Museum, 3260 South Street](#)

Mütter Museum

Medical wonders in an architectural gem...

The [Mütter Museum](#) is a riveting storehouse for the anatomically strange. The museum's display of more than 25,000 provocative items is designed to give a beneath-the-surface perspective of what physicians study. Inside, guests find a wide smattering of abnormal body parts preserved in fluid, skeletal formations including that of a 7-foot-6-inch man, diseased and enlarged organs and more fascinating specimens. No wonder nearly 160,000 people came to explore the museum in 2017.

Where: [Mütter Museum, 19 S. 22nd Street](#)

[Old City Hall](#)

Built to be Philadelphia's City Hall, [Old City Hall](#) was used by the U.S. Supreme Court from 1791 until 1800 while Philadelphia was the nation's temporary capital. More than 145,000 visitors saw the restored courtroom, where the Supreme Court made some of its first decisions, in 2017.

Where: [Old City Hall, 5th and Chestnut streets](#)

[Morris Arboretum](#)

A romantic Victorian landscape garden...

The 92-acre [Morris Arboretum](#) in Philadelphia's [Chestnut Hill](#) neighborhood offers an ever-changing landscape that enticed more than 140,000 people to visit its colorful gardens, champion trees and beautiful fountains in 2017. Highlights include the award-winning exhibit *Out on a Limb* — which takes visitors 50 feet up into treetops on a canopy walk that requires no climbing — and the outdoor Garden Railway, featuring a miniature world with model trains on a quarter-mile track.

Where: [Morris Arboretum, 100 E. Northwestern Avenue](#)

[Carpenters' Hall](#)

Meeting place of the First Continental Congress...

At [Carpenters' Hall](#), the First Continental Congress voted to support a trade embargo against England, one of the first unified acts of defiance against the King. In 2017, more than 130,000 people visited the building where feisty American colonists fanned the flames of independence.

Where: [Carpenters' Hall, 320 Chestnut Street](#)

[Christ Church](#)

Where colonial America made its break with the Church of England...

[Christ Church](#) — once the tallest building in North America — is where colonial America made its historic break with the Church of England. Just a few blocks away at 5th & Arch streets is the [church's burial grounds](#), where visitors can view the graves of Benjamin Franklin and his wife as well as those of several signers of the Declaration of Independence and other early American leaders. In 2017, Christ Church drew more than 130,000 visitors.

Where: [Various locations including Christ Church, 20 N. American Street](#)

Independence Seaport Museum

An interactive museum exploring Philadelphia's maritime heritage...

Independence Seaport Museum focuses on the importance of the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers to Philadelphia. Along with displays that chronicle the city's contributions to naval and commercial maritime history and several interactive activities, the attraction — which drew 110,000 visitors in 2017 — offers folks the rare opportunity to board and explore two National Historic Landmark ships: 1890s Cruiser Olympia and the World War II Submarine Becuna.

Where: Independence Seaport Museum, 211 S. Christopher Columbus Boulevard

National Museum of American Jewish History

Preserving and interpreting the American Jewish experience...

This National Museum of American Jewish History delves into the stories and contributions of Jewish people in the U.S., from early settlers to history-makers such as Albert Einstein, industry giants such as Estée Lauder and artists and entertainers, including Barbra Streisand and Steven Spielberg. The venue — which welcomed 100,000 visitors in 2017 — aims to inspire in people of all backgrounds a greater appreciation for the freedoms to which Americans aspire, with four floors of artifacts, memorabilia and interactive media that tell its narrative in chronological order.

Where: National Museum of American Jewish History, 101 S. Independence Mall East

Battleship New Jersey

Admiral "Bull" Halsey's flagship and the nation's most decorated battleship...

While exploring the Battleship New Jersey museum and memorial, visitors can enjoy interactive exhibitions that display artifacts from the ship's past. A walk down Broadway, the longest and most impressive passageway on the battleship, is part of the Turret II guided tour. In 2017, 90,000 visitors went to explore America's most decorated battleship, which also hosts special events and overnights.

Where: Battleship New Jersey, 100 Clinton Street, Camden, NJ

The African American Museum in Philadelphia

Celebrating and interpreting African-American history and culture...

The African American Museum in Philadelphia is the first institution built by a major U.S. city to preserve, interpret and exhibit the heritage and culture of African-Americans. In 2017, more than 85,000 people visited the museum, which takes a fresh and bold look at the stories of African-Americans and their role in the founding of the nation through the core exhibit *Audacious Freedom*. Special exhibitions and programs explore the history, art, stories and cultures of those of African descent throughout the African diaspora.

Where: The African American Museum in Philadelphia, 701 Arch Street

Second Bank of the United States

A who's who of Revolutionary War-era portraiture...

Nearly 70,000 visitors stepped inside the beautifully columned Second Bank of the United States in 2017, which today paints a picture of America's roots with walls lined with more than 150 portraits of the nation's earliest movers and shakers. (Just steps away, the First Bank of the United States — although closed to the public — also has a photo-worthy exterior.)

Where: Second Bank of the United States, 420 Chestnut Street

Woodmere Art Museum

Salon-style displays of American paintings and decorative arts...

Housed in a 19th-century stone mansion on six acres in the city's Chestnut Hill neighborhood, the Woodmere Art Museum focuses on art and artists from Philadelphia, while bringing together this art with nature in a collection that highlights historical and contemporary art and outdoor sculpture. The museum, which also offers exhibitions and programs for all ages throughout the year, welcomed 50,000 visitors in 2017.

Where: Woodmere Art Museum, 9201 Germantown Avenue

Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site

An early American “Iron Plantation” — a forerunner of today’s iron and steel industries...

Set inside the 848-acre French Creek State Park, [Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site](#) offers visitors a glimpse of daily life at a colonial-era village dedicated to producing iron. The historic site received nearly 50,000 visitors in 2017.

Where: [2 Mark Bird Lane, Elverson](#)