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U.S. SERIES
THE NORTHEAST CORRIDOR

Greetings from PHILADELPHIA

48 hours, solo, at your own pace

POCKET EDITION · 2027

48-HOUR GUIDE · SAFETY GUIDE · PLANNING CALENDAR
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Welcome to Philadelphia

Philadelphia is one of the most walkable big cities in America, and one of the richest in history. Within a few blocks you can stand where the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were debated, then eat a roast pork sandwich at a century-old market, then climb the museum steps made famous by a movie.

Traveling solo here works because the city is compact, flat, and friendly, with a grid of numbered streets that is easy to read. Museums, markets, and neighborhood taprooms all welcome a single visitor, and a good meal never costs as much as in New York or Boston.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Read through once before you go. Day One covers Independence Hall, the Liberty Bell, Old City, and Reading Terminal Market. Day Two climbs the Rocky Steps at the Museum of Art, visits the Barnes or Eastern State, and ends with South Philly. Section 03 is the new-for-2027 feature on Independence Hall. Reserve timed tickets for Independence Hall in advance, especially in spring and summer.

ESSENTIAL QUICK FACTS

CURRENCY
US dollar (cards accepted nearly everywhere)

TRANSIT
SEPTA buses, subway, and trolleys · about $2.90 a ride

TIME ZONE
Eastern (UTC–5; UTC–4 in summer)

EMERGENCY
911 · non-emergency 311

TIPPING
18–20% in restaurants

SALES TAX
8% — added at the register

01 DAY ONE

Independence Hall · Old City · Reading Terminal Market

The first day is the historic core: two of the most important rooms in American history, a lunch at a market, and an evening in Old City.

MORNING · 8:30 AM – 1:00 PM

8:30 AM

Breakfast — Reading Terminal Market

A century-old indoor market with dozens of stalls, including Dutch Country bakers, coffee counters, and the Amish-style Dutch Eating Place.

The market is busiest at midday, so come early for breakfast.

10:00 AM

Independence Hall

The red-brick building where the Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776 and the Constitution was drafted in 1787. Rangers lead timed tours of the Assembly Room.

Reserve timed tickets in advance; entry is free but required.

11:30 AM

The Liberty Bell Center

The famous cracked bell is displayed in a modern glass pavilion facing Independence Hall, with exhibits on its role in the abolition and suffrage movements.

The line moves fast; go in the early morning or late afternoon.

AFTERNOON · 1:00 PM – 5:30 PM

1:00 PM

Lunch — Reading Terminal Market

Order a roast pork sandwich with sharp provolone and broccoli rabe from DiNic's, a market favorite.

Eat at the counter or a shared table; nobody minds a solo diner.

3:00 PM

Elfreth's Alley

A narrow cobblestone lane lined with colonial-era houses, often called the oldest continuously inhabited residential street in the country.

The museum house is small; the street itself is the main attraction.

4:30 PM

Christ Church Burial Ground

A quiet cemetery where Benjamin Franklin is buried. Toss a penny on his grave for luck, as visitors have for generations.

It is a short, calm stop in the middle of Old City.

EVENING · 6:00 PM – 10:00 PM

6:30 PM

Dinner — McGillin's Olde Ale House

A cozy pub operating since 1860 with a long wooden bar, tasty pub food, and a lively crowd.

The bar is perfect for one.

8:30 PM

A Walk on Penn's Landing

A riverside park with a view of the Delaware River and the Ben Franklin Bridge, lively in summer.

Stay in lit, busy areas after dark.

02 DAY TWO

The Museum of Art · The Barnes · South Philly

The second day moves outward, with a famous staircase, great art, and an evening in an Italian-American neighborhood.

MORNING · 8:30 AM – 1:00 PM

8:30 AM

The Rocky Steps

Run or climb the 72 steps at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, made famous by a boxing movie, and pose beside the Rocky statue nearby.

Go early for a quiet climb and a good view of the skyline.

10:00 AM

Philadelphia Museum of Art

One of the country's great museums, with works by Cézanne, Duchamp, and Eakins, as well as period rooms and a large arms-and-armor hall.

Check hours; the museum is often closed on Tuesdays.

12:30 PM

Lunch — Parkway cafes

The Benjamin Franklin Parkway and nearby Fairmount have cafes and counters for a relaxed lunch.

Ask the museum staff for a recommendation for the day.

AFTERNOON · 2:00 PM – 6:00 PM

2:00 PM

The Barnes Foundation

A private collection of Impressionist and early Modern art arranged in the original, unusual way the collector displayed it.

Reserve a timed ticket in advance.

4:30 PM

Eastern State Penitentiary

A vast, crumbling prison that once held Al Capone, now a haunting museum with an audio tour narrated by Steve Buscemi.

Dress warmly in cooler months; much of the tour is outdoors.

EVENING · 6:30 PM – LATE

6:30 PM

Dinner — South Philly

Head to the Italian Market and East Passyunk for pasta, pizza, and a cheesesteak.

For a classic cheesesteak, try Jim's on South Street or Pat's King of Steaks.

8:30 PM

Philadelphia's Magic Gardens

A mosaic maze of mirrors, tile, and found objects covering a whole block on South Street.

It is a short, quirky stop that suits solo wanderers.

03 INDEPENDENCE

Independence Hall

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know Independence Hall is where both the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution were debated and adopted?

The building, completed in 1753 as the Pennsylvania State House, hosted the Second Continental Congress, which adopted the Declaration in 1776. Eleven years later, delegates met in the same Assembly Room to draft the Constitution. It was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1979.

A SHORT HISTORY

Independence Hall stood at the center of the new nation's politics during the 1770s and 1780s. The building later fell into disrepair, and was saved and restored in the 19th and 20th centuries. Today it is part of Independence National Historical Park.

HOW TO VISIT

Tours of the Assembly Room are free but require a timed ticket, which you can reserve in advance online. Arrive early, bring photo ID, and expect a security screening. Tours last about 20 minutes.

BEST TIME TO GO

Early morning on a weekday has the shortest lines. Summer is crowded, and spring and fall are more pleasant. Tickets sell out for peak days, so reserve ahead.

04 WHERE TO EAT

Cheesesteaks, roast pork, and soft pretzels

Philadelphia eats are casual and cheap. Most places below suit a solo diner at a counter, market stall, or bar.

BREAKFAST & LUNCH

Reading Terminal Market
CENTER CITY · $8–18
A market with dozens of stalls, from roast pork to Amish baked goods.

DiNic's
READING TERMINAL · $12–16
Roast pork with provolone and broccoli rabe, a market favorite.

Pat's King of Steaks
SOUTH PHILLY · $10–16
The original cheesesteak stand, open since 1930.

Jim's Steaks
SOUTH STREET · $10–16
A neighborhood cheesesteak shop popular with locals.

DINNER & LATE NIGHT

McGillin's Olde Ale House
CENTER CITY · $14–26
Pub food and beer in the city's oldest continuously operating tavern.

Zahav
SOCIETY HILL · $60–90
Modern Israeli dining; reserve well ahead, and try the bar.

The Franklin Fountain
OLD CITY · $8–14
An old-fashioned ice cream parlor with hand-made sundaes.

Wawa
CITYWIDE · $6–10
The beloved convenience chain, famous for its hoagies and coffee.

05 GETTING AROUND

Navigating Philadelphia

Center City is flat, walkable, and organized on a grid of numbered streets. SEPTA fills in the gaps.

Walking	Free	Old City, Society Hill, and Rittenhouse Square are all close together.
SEPTA subway and trolley	about $2.90	The Market-Frankford Line and the Broad Street Line cover major corridors.
Airport Line (PHL)	about $6	A train from the airport reaches Center City in about 25 minutes.
Regional Rail	by trip	Commuter trains reach the suburbs and the airport.
Indego bike share	by the minute	Docked bikes are available across the city.
Rideshare	by trip	Useful for evenings and the museum district.

Philadelphia's streets run in a grid. Market Street divides north from south, and the Delaware River is the eastern edge.

06 BACKUP PLANS

Philadelphia on a rainy afternoon

Rain and cold are common in the shoulder seasons. These are good indoor options.

PARKWAY
Philadelphia Museum of Art
A world-class museum with works from every era.

PARKWAY
The Barnes Foundation
An unusual and beautiful collection of Impressionist art.

CENTER CITY
Reading Terminal Market
Food and shopping under one big roof.

OLD CITY
National Constitution Center
A museum on the U.S. Constitution, with interactive exhibits.

RITTENHOUSE
Rosenbach Museum & Library
A small museum of rare books and manuscripts.

CENTER CITY
The Wanamaker Organ
A giant pipe organ played daily in the Macy's building; check the schedule.

07 NEIGHBORHOODS

Know your neighborhoods

COLONIAL HISTORY
Old City
Independence Hall, the Liberty Bell, and Elfreth's Alley.

BRICK & GASLIGHT
Society Hill
Quiet, historic streets and the Physick House.

SQUARES & CAFES
Rittenhouse
A leafy square, boutiques, and restaurants.

FOOD & SHOPPING
Center City
Reading Terminal Market and the Convention Center.

ITALIAN MARKET
South Philly
Cheesesteaks, pasta, and the Italian Market.

MUSEUMS
Fairmount
The Museum of Art, Eastern State, and Fairmount Park.

08 GOOD TO KNOW

What nobody tells you

- Reserve timed tickets for Independence Hall in advance, especially in spring and summer.
- Philadelphia is walkable. Wear comfortable shoes and plan a walking route.
- A "cheesesteak" is ordered by cheese and onions: "wit" or "wit-out."
- Many museums close on Mondays or Tuesdays. Check hours before you go.
- Tip 18–20% in restaurants. Sales tax is 8% and is added at the register.
- Summers are hot and humid; winters are cold. Spring and fall are best.

WHEN TO GO

Mar–May	Spring	Blossoms, mild days, and the Philadelphia Flower Show in March.
Jun–Aug	Summer	Hot and humid, with outdoor events and the Fourth of July celebrations.
Sep–Nov	Best overall	Mild weather, fall color, and the Philadelphia Marathon in November.
Dec–Feb	Winter	Cold, with holiday markets and the Mummers Parade on New Year's Day.

09 SOLO TRAVELER SAFETY

Is Philadelphia safe?

Safe in the main visitor areas, with standard big-city awareness. Old City, Rittenhouse, Society Hill, and the museum district are busy and well-lit. Avoid the Kensington area, and take care in less-lit areas of North and West Philadelphia at night.

NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY AT A GLANCE

Old City	●●●●●
Rittenhouse Square	●●●●●
Society Hill	●●●●●
Reading Terminal / Center City	●●●●○
South Philly (day)	●●●●○
Fishtown at night	●●●○○
Kensington	●○○○○

COMMON SCAMS

Be wary of anyone offering free tickets or a "bargain" tour near tourist spots. Never leave valuables in a parked car, and watch your phone on transit.

HEALTH & MEDICAL

Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Center City and Penn Presbyterian near University City are the nearest major hospitals. Summer humidity and winter cold both call for water or warm layers. Carry travel insurance.

SOLO TRAVELERS

Share your plan with someone back home and keep your phone charged. Use rideshare late at night, and stay on busy, lit streets.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Police, fire, medical	911
City services and non-emergency	311
Poison Control	1-800-222-1222
Nearest ER	Thomas Jefferson University Hospital · 111 S 11th St.

10 PLANNING CALENDAR

Philadelphia, month by month

Exact dates shift each year, so confirm before booking.

JAN 1 MUMMERS PARADE

- A parade of string bands and elaborate costumes marches down Broad Street on New Year's Day.

MAR FLOWER SHOW

- The Philadelphia Flower Show is the nation's oldest and largest indoor flower show.

JUN ODUNDE FESTIVAL

- One of the largest African American street festivals in the country takes over South Street.

JUL 4 INDEPENDENCE DAY

- Fireworks, concerts, and festivities celebrate the nation's birthday in the city where it began.

SEP FALL FESTIVALS

- Street fairs and outdoor events fill the neighborhoods.

NOV–DEC HOLIDAY SEASON

- Christmas Village at City Hall and the Wanamaker Light Show draw crowds.

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Every Stop, Mapped

Scan the code to open the free interactive Philadelphia map — every stop in this guide, filterable by day, food, and transport.

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