

WELCOME TO PHILADELPHIA

A WALKING CITY

Laid out by William Penn in a gridiron pattern in 1682, Philadelphia has always been a walking city. You should get out of the hotel and tramp around the city streets. There are many things to see within a few blocks of the hotel; other sites will take you a little further, so put on your walking shoes.

Walk out the Arch Street or north side of the hotel and look right. Here is the Reading Terminal Market, a European-style market that has been in place for more than 100 years. There are several restaurants, but it is also fun to wander around and admire the displays of seafood, meat, produce, cookies, candy, and more. It is also fun, especially on Saturday, to observe the shoppers. The market plays a crucial role in the 1981 film *Blow Out* with John Travolta. The Reading Terminal train shed is preserved as an entrance to the convention center from the second floor of the hotel. The Reading Railroad once connected Philadelphia to the Pennsylvania coal fields. It was also an important passenger line. You will recall “Take a ride on the Reading,” from your Monopoly game.

Go out the south or Market side of the hotel. To the left at twelfth and Market is the Loews Hotel, once the PSFS building, an important modern skyscraper designed in the international style in 1932 by George Howe and William Lescage. The hotel lobby retains some of the art deco decoration. To the right on Market is Macy’s, once John Wanamaker’s, a pioneer department store designed in 1902 by Daniel Burnham. Walk to the center court, a great interior space. Look up at the pipe organ, notice the bronze eagle from the 1904 World’s Fair, long a favorite meeting spot for lost shoppers. Wander around. This is what a department store used to look like.

Go west on Market (if the numbers are getting larger you are going west and there are 100 numbers to the block). Enter City Hall, a flamboyant Second Empire extravaganza built between 1870 and 1901. It is worth studying the exotic carvings and trying to figure out the symbolism. City Hall is located at Penn’s Center Square where Broad Street, the main north-south street (the equivalent of 14th), meets Market Street. Go north two blocks to Broad and Cherry. The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, founded in 1805, moved into this exotic and innovative building, designed by Philadelphia architect Frank Furness in 1876, just in time for the Centennial Exposition. It has a wonderful collection of American art from Benjamin West and Winslow Homer to John Sloan and beyond. It is both a school and a museum. It is here that Thomas Eakins taught, and here he was fired for removing the loincloth from a male model.

Walk south on Broad Street through City Hall. At Broad and Chestnut on the right notice the rotunda of what was once the Girard Trust Company, designed in 1905 by McKim, Mead and White. Now it is the lobby of the Ritz Carleton Hotel and a great place to get an expensive drink. Continuing south on Broad notice the Union League Club, organized in

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1864 to support Lincoln and the Union, now an exclusive club where portraits of only Republican presidents grace the walls. At Broad and Spruce is the Academy of Music, built in 1855. It is architecturally, if not acoustically, more pleasing than the Kimmel Center, the new home of the Philadelphia Orchestra, one block south.

To explore the mid- to late-nineteenth century, go west on Walnut Street and walk four blocks that are filled with banks, upscale shops, and restaurants, but look up, for many of these buildings were once town houses. A plaque on the wall between 1522 and 1528 marks the location of the home of S. Weir Mitchell, a novelist and physician whose specialty was treating women with “nervous ailments.” Among his patients were Jane Addams and Charlotte Perkins Gilman. At eighteenth and Walnut you will come to Rittenhouse Square, one of Penn’s original squares, and since the mid-nineteenth century one of the elite places to live in the city. It is one of the great urban spaces, better than Russell Union Square in San Francisco, or Russell Square in London, after which it was modeled. Sit on one of the park benches or at one of the outdoor cafes and look at the people. You may also recognize locations from *Trading Places*, the film with Dan Aykroyd and Eddie Murphy. The Curtis School of Music now occupies one of the few remaining town houses on the square at Eighteenth and Locust. Two impressive blocks of town houses are nearby on the 1800 and 2000 blocks of Delancy Place (between Spruce and Pine), but notice the smaller, working-class houses, former carriage houses, and livery stables in the alleys nearby. In the mid- to late-nineteenth century, when most of these houses were built, Philadelphia was known as the “Workshop of the World.” In 1890 the three largest employers in the city were Baldwin Locomotive, Disston Saw, and Stetson Hat. Today the two largest employers are the University of Pennsylvania in West Philadelphia and Temple University in North Philadelphia. There are more than sixty colleges and universities in Philadelphia and its suburbs.

The area from South to Vine and from the Delaware River to the Schuylkill (pronounced Skoo-kill) is called by locals “Center City.” It includes business towers, high rise condominiums, and many town houses. More than 100,000 people live in this central district and more are moving in every day. Philadelphia, next to Chicago and New York, has more people living in the central district than any other city does. As you walk east toward the Delaware River, you are walking back in time. In 1775 Philadelphia, with a population of a little over 30,000, was the largest city in the colonies and, outside of London, one of the largest in the British Empire. But the city extended only as far west as Seventh Street. The Atwater Kent Museum—the museum of the city of Philadelphia—is on Seventh Street between Chestnut and Market. What is an Atwater Kent? You should visit Independence Hall and the new Constitution Center, but do also wander around the old colonial city from Second to Fifth, from Lombard to Market. Much of this area is called Society Hill. It was a busy residential and commercial area at the time of the Revolution and then it became a slum. It is here that the

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modern historical preservation movement began in the 1950s. You will find restored eighteenth-century houses next to modern town houses, along with old churches, synagogues, and burial grounds. Near Sixth and Lombard is the Mother Bethel, an African Methodist Episcopal Church, founded by Richard Allen in 1787. This section of the city contained the largest free black population of any city in the country in the decades before the Civil War. Not far away lived W. E. B. DuBois when he was doing research for *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899).

There is much more to see but don't miss Christ Church on Second just north of Market. If you had sailed up the Delaware in 1775 this impressive mid-eighteenth-century Georgian church would have been the tallest structure in Philadelphia. It is here that Washington, Franklin, and many of the other founding fathers worshipped, or at least occupied the pews. Continue north a block to Elfreth's Alley, a well-preserved early eighteenth-century street that gives one a sense of how people lived 300 years ago. Wander back to the hotel, but don't forget to explore the little streets and alleys.

For those who like to run, I suggest that you go west from the hotel to the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. This wide boulevard, inspired by City Beautiful Movement, was cut diagonally through the grid starting early in the twentieth century. Patterned on the Champ Elysees, it wasn't completed until about 1930, but it now extends from City Hall to the art museum. You may want to emulate Rocky and run up the steps of the museum, but you should also sample the great collections inside. Run around the museum to the right along boathouse row to the biking and running path along the Schuylkill, or explore the Fairmont Water Works, built in the classical style early in the nineteenth century.

Whether you run or walk, get out of the hotel and experience a lively, vibrant city.

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