

12 Places You Can See for Free in Philly

DESTINATION & TOURISM | JANEEN CHRISTOFF | MARCH 09, 2016



PHOTO: You can see the Liberty Bell for free. (Photo courtesy of Thinkstock)

In 2015, Philadelphia was named the first World Heritage City in the U.S. and, then, Lonely Planet singled out the “City of Brotherly Love” as the [Best Place to Visit in 2016](#).

Philadelphia’s historical role in U.S. history is undeniable, but history isn’t the only reason why Philadelphia is reigning number one this year. The city also has a number of other accolades that are bringing visitors into its midst – chief among them are its abundant number of free attractions and self-guided tours that give guests the freedom to move about and experience the city without breaking the bank.

At the [Edgar Allen Poe National Historical Site](#), once the home of the legendary writer, visitors can learn how the famous writer influenced some of the heavy-hitters of today. Self-guided tours are free and there are ranger-led tours Friday through Sunday.

If you want to check out the birthplace of our nation, head to Independence National Historical Park, which includes the Liberty Bell Center, The President's House: Freedom and Slavery in the Making of a New Nation and Independence Hall, where our forefathers signed the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. First-come-first-served tours are available for free or you can book online for \$1.50. All of the other attractions in the park are free and do not require tickets.

The National Museum of American Jewish History offers a free exhibition. "Only in America" Gallery celebrates the lives of 18 Jewish-Americans who showed that America was a place of extraordinary opportunity. Spoiler alert: You can see Albert Einstein's pipe and the camera from the Steven Spielberg-produced film "Super 8."

In Historic Philadelphia, Once Upon a Nation has 13 storytelling benches. Storytellers recount the history of each location as it happened more than 200 years ago. Children can collect flags at each bench and obtain a certificate of completion and a coupon that can be used at the Betsy Ross House and the Franklin Square Shop. The benches are open through the summer, from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

The United States Mint offers self-guided tours, during which visitors can watch coin production and see the nation's first coining press.

Valley Forge National Historical Park offers visitors a glimpse of the Revolutionary War with historic structures such as Washington's Headquarters and the National Memorial Arch. A guided cell phone tour guides visitors through the park by car, by bike or on foot. Call 484-396-1018.

[The Mummies Museum](#) traces the tradition back to Swedish settlers who brought the tradition of dressing in costume at Christmas and performing pantomimes to the original colonies. There is a pay-what-you-wish donation to the museum, which offers collection of Mummer memorabilia.

On Wednesday nights, starting at 5 p.m., the Philadelphia Museum of Art opens its doors to visitors who can pay what they wish to explore the entire main building and see notable works that include artists such as Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dalí and more. This is another attraction that offers visitors the option to enjoy a free guided tour via cell phone to get a deeper perspective of the collections.

Art lovers can find even more inspiration at the Rodin Museum, home to the largest collection of works by the artist outside of Paris. Guests pay what they wish to see treasures such as The Gates of Hell and the bronze cast of The Thinker.

For those who want to tour Herr's Snack Factory, there is a tour that finishes with samples of freshly cooked chips. Until June of this year, the tours are free – so get there soon. They are available on weekdays and reservations are required.

The cell phone tour is quite popular in Philly, the Museum Without Walls: AUDIO, a program of the Association for Public Art, also utilizes mobile technology to give visitors free insight into its more than 65 outdoor sculptures along the Benjamin Franklin Parkway and in Fairmount Park and Center City. There are three-minute segments available, using a cell phone and the program's free mobile app or as audio downloads or streaming audio from the website.

There are also free, guided tours at some of the city's most sought-after breweries. Sip and learn at Yards Brewing Company and Philadelphia Brewing Company (PBC). The tours offered in the early afternoon on Saturdays and Sundays at Yards and on Saturdays at PBC.