

**CONTACTS:** Cara Schneider  
(215) 599-0789, [cara@visitphilly.com](mailto:cara@visitphilly.com)  
Donna Schorr  
(215) 599-0782, [donna@visitphilly.com](mailto:donna@visitphilly.com)  
**Tweet Us:** [@visitphillyPR](https://twitter.com/visitphillyPR)

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## **25 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT PHILLY'S FOOD SCENE**

### *Think Outside The Hoagie Roll For Great Eats In Philadelphia*

**PHILADELPHIA, January 2, 2019** – The food scene in Philadelphia goes well beyond the cheesesteak and soft pretzel. It's also amazing vegan fare, BYOB (bring-your-own-bottle) restaurants, world-class craft local beer, a flourishing distillery culture, and chef-driven concepts and passion projects. Philly's food scene is about neighborhoods that grow with their restaurants—and competing chefs who work together. It's about sourcing ingredients from the region's rich farmland and giving casual dining its due. It's about embracing delicious diversity. Here's a primer of 25 less-known components of Philly's lush and luscious food landscape:

#### **Major Attributes:**

1. **Richly Rewarding Food Shed** – A wealth of the region's nearby farms, urban greenhouses and hyper-local rooftops (a specialty of Philly's Fishtown neighborhood) and brownfield gardens (such as Kensington's **Greensgrow**) supply the freshest ingredients to restaurants and markets. Everything from obscure heirloom tomatoes and specialty corn hybrids to luscious dairy products, grass-fed meats, seafood and indigenous herbs are found in close proximity to the kitchens where they are prepared.
2. **BYOB** – The bring-your-own-bottle phenomenon has enabled eminently talented chefs to open small storefront restaurants without the expense of one of Philly's expensive liquor licenses—and made it possible to enjoy a high roller-quality meal without breaking the budget. Indeed, some of the greatest culinary creativity on display can be found at **A Mano, Bibou, Helm, Noord, Perla, Cadence** and dozens more.
3. **Delicious Diversity** – Philadelphia has long been a melting pot of vibrant cultures and flavors. Today, the ever-changing population and cosmopolitan diners all but guarantee the success of mom-and-pop eateries celebrating every part of the globe. Neighborhoods from South Philly, including the easily-accessible South 9<sup>th</sup> Street Italian Market, West Philadelphia's Baltimore Avenue, Center City's Chinatown and Northeast Philadelphia offer Indonesian, Vietnamese, Mexican, Ethiopian, Indian, Korean, Sengalese, Szechuan, Afghan and Malaysian cuisine.
4. **The Best Bar Food** – Eating at the bar is a great way to dine at some of Philadelphia's most sought-after restaurants—without making a reservation months in advance. **Volvér, R2L, Townsend, The Olde Bar, Lacroix (Bar 210), Fork, Zahav** and others offer last-minute diners a more casual way to experience high-end food and service, without the wait.

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5. **Destination Dining** – Outside city limits, the region's outstanding dining options have picturesque charm. These include **Junto** (Glen Mills), **Andiario** (West Chester), **Sovana Bistro** (Kennett Square), **Charcoal BYOB** (Yardley) and **Birchrunville Store Cafe** (Birchrunville).
6. **Chefs Who Collaborate** – Collaboration among Philadelphia's restaurant industry pros consistently wows out-of-town food pros. Some popular cooperating spots include **Sancho Pistola's**, whose "Too Many Cooks In The Kitchen" beer dinner is legendary; **Hungry Pigeon**, is helmed by chefs Scott Schroeder (South Philly Taproom, American Sardine Bar) and Pat O'Malley (formerly Balthazar); and at **Zama**, chef Hiroyuki "Zama" Tanaka invite chefs such as Marc Vetri and Jose Garces to create their own maki for charity. Pop-up engagements **Muhibbah** and **Cooking 4 the Culture** gather chefs for standalone (and standout) dining events around the city.
7. **Fast Casual** – Philly stays true to its working-class roots by offering quick, laid-back ways to get amazing cuisine. Some widely spreading fast-casual concepts include cheesesteak and roast pork-maker **Tony Luke's** global proliferation; **Pizzeria Vetri** has opened in Washington D.C., as has quick-serve vegan concept **HipCityVeg**, and Philly-based healthful stir-fry and salad bowl maker **Honeygrow** has locations from Boston to Chicago to northern Virginia.

#### **Foods & Dishes To Try:**

8. **The Other Cheesesteak** – Any listing of local specialties must include the roast pork Italiano sandwich. Some people even *prefer* the zesty flavors of sharp provolone cheese and garlicky broccoli rabe to the tamer flavors of the classic cheesesteak. Pennsport's **John's Roast Pork**, Reading Terminal Market's **DiNic's Roast Pork**, South Philly's **Cosmi's Deli** and any location of **Tony Luke's** are great spots to sample this specialty.
9. **The Mushroom Capital** – A scenic drive from Center City, Kennett Square in Chester County, serves as an epicenter for the nation's mushroom production, with more than a million pounds of fungi cultivated a week. September's annual **Mushroom Festival** celebrates the famous crop with family activities, food, culinary demos and more.
10. **Bread & Cheese** – In recent years, Philly's stepped up its bread game, with **High Street on Market** baking innovative concoctions with buckwheat and ancient grains, **Essen's** upmarket challah, **Philly Bread's** signature spin on the English muffin, **Mighty Bread Co.'s** sourdough specialties, **Lost Bread Co.'s** burnt barley baguettes and scores of restaurants turning out their own house-made loaves. On the curd side, cheesemaking operations have multiplied in Bucks, Chester and Lancaster counties, turning Southeastern Pennsylvania into a veritable cheese region. No bread and cheese lover's trip to Philly is complete without a visit to the South 9<sup>th</sup> Street Italian Market, home to **Di Bruno Bros. House of Cheese**, **Claudio's Specialty Foods** (makers of fresh mozzarella) and **Sarcone's Bakery**.
11. **Water Ice** – Elsewhere this frozen confection is known as Italian ice—made famous by Philly-born **Rita's**—but in Philadelphia and the surrounding area, it's "wudder" ice. Superior versions can be found across South Philly at **John's**, **Mancuso & Son**, **Italiano's** and **Pop's**.
12. **Scrapple** – Created during lean times, this cornmeal- and wheat flour-based patty of pork scraps (hence the name) has a cult foodie following, cropping up in classic and trendy breakfast dishes. It can be sourced from local farms or from most diners and breakfast counters, particularly **Dutch Eating Place**, **Green Eggs Café**, **Hungry Pigeon** and **Sabrina's Cafe**.

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### Trending In Philly:

13. **Vegans Rule** – Regarded as the world's best vegan restaurant, **Vedge** sets the standard for plant-based fine dining. Its success has spawned deliciously ethical offshoots **HipCityVeg**, **Blackbird Pizzeria**, **Charlie was a sinner.**, **V Street**, **Bar Bombón**, **Honest Tom's Plant Based Taco Shop**, **The Tasty** and **Miss Rachel's Pantry**.
14. **Carnivore Craze** – Meanwhile, meat remains at the center of the plate (and the appetizer and even dessert plates too) at a growing number of eateries. **Kensington Quarters**, **Butcher Bar**, **Cleavers** and **Urban Farmer** buck the veg trend and celebrate the primal (and paleo) pleasures of beef, pork and the like.
15. **Mexican Dining** – Over the past few decades, Mexican food has come to dominate the Philly restaurant scene. Diners can choose from simple storefront taquerias, sleek restaurants like **Distrito** and Stephen Starr's **El Vez**, elegant fine dining at **Tequila's**, small, family-run eateries like **Blue Corn** and **South Philly Barbacoa** and gastropubs with Mexican flair.
16. **Food Halls** – Like food corridors in miniature, Philly's food halls vibrate with the energy of startups, artisans and quick-serves. In 2017, **Chinatown Square** transformed a vast space in the heart of Chinatown with curry, ramen, nori dogs, bao, poke, bibimbap, Korean tacos, rolled ice cream and karaoke. In 2018, the country's first formal commodities exchange, the historic **Bourse Building**, reopened as a food hall complete with matzo ball soup, local chocolates and artisan cocktails, while **Franklin's Table** food court at the University of Pennsylvania harbors on-trend tenants such as Goldie, Little Baby's Ice Cream, Kensington Quarters, Pitruco Pizza and more.
17. **Food Learning** – With so many food-obsessed Philadelphians to learn from, the secrets of wine connoisseurs, chefs and butchers are in easy reach. Classes at **Tria**, **Reading Terminal Market**, **Cook** and **Kensington Quarters** are all about sharing the secrets behind the city's best flavors.

### More Than Grocery Stores:

18. **Historic Markets** – Since its earliest days, Philadelphia has supported excellent markets, and locals avidly patronize them even in the era of Instacart. The circa 1892 indoor **Reading Terminal Market** offers an eclectic mix of restaurant stalls, Amish foodstuffs and farm-fresh produce, meat and seafood. The open-air **South 9<sup>th</sup> Street Italian Market** serves as the hub of an increasingly international neighborhood where one can find excellent cheese, cannoli, tamales and hummus among the many goods for sale.
19. **Farmers Markets** – With an abundance of regional producers bringing their goods to the city's year-round markets, locavores thrive in Philly. In the warmer months, every neighborhood hosts its own outdoor farmers market—a couple not-to-miss markets take place in season on Saturdays in **Rittenhouse Square** and Sundays at **Headhouse Square**. Within a short drive to the surrounding suburbs are dozens of venues for pick-your-own fruit, pumpkins and flowers.
20. **Artisan Food Products** – Buying local also means supporting the many wonderful makers that produce edibles here. Some notables include **Soom Foods' tahini** (sesame paste), **Éclat Chocolate**, **EPIC Pickles** and ice cream by **Zsa's**, **Little Baby's** and **Weckerly's**.

### Delightful Drinks:

21. **Coffee** – Seattle may retain the biggest name in the business, but Philly has some of the most cutting-edge coffee sourcers and roasters around. Local purveyors **La Colombe**, **Elixir**, **ReAnimator**, **Greenstreet**, **Rival Bros.**, **Peregrine** and **Square One** ensure a citywide supply of freshly roasted coffee.

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25. **Beer** – The onetime beer-brewingest town in the Western Hemisphere has reemerged as a leader, with more than 15 breweries and counting inside city limits, and more in its suburbs. Hops-philes make annual trips to **Philly Beer Week**, featuring dozens of bars, bottle shops and events.
26. **Distilleries** – Craft spirits constitute another trend, with many local distilleries popping up over the past several years. From **Dad's Hat** Rye Whiskey to **Boardroom Spirits'** beet-based brandy and **Federal Distilling's** vodka, creative entrepreneurs are reinventing the way Philly drinks.
27. **Wine** – Philadelphia has worked hard to carve out a niche for itself in the wine world. Bars such as **Tria**, **Jet**, **Vintage**, **a.bar** and **Panorama** promote wine awareness and education, **Philadelphia Wine Week** has blossomed into one of the city's most festive events, and many of the city's finest restaurants promote special dinners with winemakers and growers. Outside of the city, the burgeoning winery scene merits a day trip (or two).
28. **Cocktail Culture** – With its rigorous food scene, it's only natural that Philly also supports an equally passionate cocktail culture. Liquid innovation can be found at cocktail bars **Fiume**, **ITV**, **Hop Sing Laundromat**, **The Franklin Bar**, **the Ranstead Room**, **Tiki** and at any high-end restaurant.

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