

CONTACTS: Cara Schneider
(215) 599-0789, cara@visitphilly.com

WHY PHILADELPHIA IS THE MUST-VISIT DESTINATION OF 2021

2021 Brings An Outdoor Version Of The Philadelphia Flower Show, Major Jasper Johns Exhibit, New Independence Mall Attraction & An Upgrade To Valley Forge National Historical Park Visitor Center

PHILADELPHIA, January 19, 2021 – Good things happen in Philadelphia, according to [*Condé Nast Traveler*](#), recently naming Philadelphia one of eight must-visit destinations in the world for 2021. The popular magazine joined [*Travel + Leisure*](#), [*Esquire*](#), [*Frommer's*](#) and others in raving about Philadelphia recently. The takeaway? Philadelphia should be on travelers' 2021 must-visit lists thanks to a slate of openings, expansions and first-ever happenings, along with its iconic history, vast open spaces, resilient restaurant scene, cool neighborhoods and diverse hotel offerings.

In 2021, Philadelphia will emerge from the pandemic with so much to look forward to. In May, Independence Mall will welcome its newest attraction: the **Faith and Liberty Discovery Center**. In June, the **PHS Philadelphia Flower Show will move outdoors** for the first time in its 192-year history. And in the fall, the **Philadelphia Museum of Art, fresh off the unveiling of its Frank Gehry-designed renovation**, will mount an exhibition of works by **Jasper Johns: *Mind/Mirror***, which will occur alongside a mirror exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City. Hotel openings include the city's first **W Hotel** and a boutique property in a National Historic Landmark building, the **Guild House Hotel**.

"In 2021, there are potentially 120 million domestic trips up for grabs, and 10% of these trips are from residents who live in northeast drive markets*," says Jeff Guaracino, president & CEO, VISIT PHILADELPHIA®. "Philadelphia is the perfect destination for first-time and repeat visitors eager to dip their toes back into travel. First off, it's a town that's easy to get to and easy to get around. Beyond that, it's a classic but modern city filled with walkable neighborhoods, iconic attractions, green spaces galore, fun events, acclaimed hotels and some of the best chefs and restaurants in the U.S., many of which are James Beard Award winners."

To make trips as easy as possible, visitors can book the **Visit Philly Overnight Hotel Package**, including free hotel parking and a buy-one-get-one offer on attraction tickets sold at the Independence Visitor Center. The package is available at more than 35 hotels through June 1, 2021. It is bookable at visitphilly.com/overnight.

-more-

Here's a look at some of the major events, exhibits and openings taking place in Philadelphia in 2021.

Find more information about these happenings and the latest on food, drink, retail and culture at visitphilly.com:

Attraction News:

Philadelphia's attractions are as iconic as they come — think the Liberty Bell, Independence Hall, the Rocky Statue and cheesesteaks, among others — making it a bucket-list destination for families, history buffs, movie fans, foodies and others. While a classic destination in every way, Philadelphia happily welcomes invention and reinvention, new and renewed, and that's what these attractions will deliver in 2021.

- **The Franklin Institute** – Philadelphia's beloved science museum begins the year with a world-premiere exhibit: **Crayola IDEAworks: The Creativity Exhibition**, a state-of-the-art experience that helps guests hone problem-solving skills and fosters creativity. Visitors will put their creative skills to action by testing solutions to problems based on current scientific research, including designing a ball that works for astronauts in low gravity, building a sustainable neighborhood and restoring sea life to coral reefs. **February 13-July 18, 2021.**
- **Faith and Liberty Discovery Center** – This \$60 million, 40,000-square-foot immersive experience is the latest development in a decades-long transformation of Independence Mall. It will explore the nation's founding tenets shared in the *U.S. Constitution*, *Declaration of Independence* and the *Bible*. The space will include interactive galleries, a 3-D theater and an education center. Among the highlighted Americans: civil rights and Baptist leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Catholic anti-war activist Dorothy Day and Quaker William Penn, founder of colonial Philadelphia. The Center will also direct visitors to explore the Faith and Liberty Heritage Trail, including some of the nation's early religious institutions such as Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, home to the denomination's founding congregation, and Mikveh Israel, home to Philadelphia's oldest Jewish congregation. **May 1, 2021.**
- **Please Touch Museum** – This year, the Please Touch Museum debuts an all-new, 5,000-square-foot permanent gallery that seeks to inspire creativity by telling the story of innovation at the Centennial of 1876, which took place in Fairmount Park right outside of the museum. The gallery's centerpiece will be a scale model of the Centennial exposition created by dozens of artisans in 1889 that depicts exactly how it looked on July 4, 1876. **Spring 2021.**
- **Valley Forge National Historical Park Visitor Center Renovation** – The site of the 1777-78 winter encampment of the Continental Army under General George Washington, Valley Forge National Historical Park welcomes 2 million-plus visitors annually to explore its 3,600 acres of historic structures, objects and sprawling grounds. A gateway to Montgomery County, the welcome center hasn't seen a significant upgrade since opening in 1976. In 2021, a four-year, \$14 million upgrade project is expected to be complete with a full renovation of the official Visitor Center for Valley Forge and Montgomery County; a new five-part museum exhibit and film; and an expanded trail system with interpretive signage, a new shelter and overlook. **Summer 2021.**

-more-

- [Philadelphia Museum of Art](#) – In 2021, the Philadelphia Museum of Art’s much-anticipated Frank Gehry-designed master plan comes to fruition. Dramatic changes taking place inside the iconic building include the opening up of spaces not seen by the public for decades. Among the highlights: a soaring forum, with its inaugural installation of Terecita Fernandez’s *Fire (United States of the Americas)* (2017); 20,000 square feet of new gallery space to be filled with art that rethinks the story of Philadelphia and the nation; a renovated Lenfest Hall; views that show off the city skyline from inside the building; and an outdoor portico overlooking the Schuylkill River. Later in the year, the museum will partner with the Whitney Museum of American Art on simultaneous exhibitions of the work of **Jasper Johns: Mind/Mirror**, considered the country’s most significant living artist. Originally scheduled to show in 2020, the unprecedented collaboration will chronologically show paintings, sculpture, drawings, prints, books and costumes that mirror the other’s display, creating an immersive exhibition that itself, is a study in Johns’ fascination with reflections. Exhibit: **September 29, 2021–February 13, 2022.**

Popular Events Return:

Every year, the region’s events provide irresistible reasons for visitors to come to Philadelphia. That couldn’t be the case in 2020, but Philadelphia’s popular events, pro sports and live entertainment will return in 2021 — some with a new twist and some just as they’ve always been: awesome. Among them: [Wawa Welcome America](#), the [Penn Relays](#), [Head of the Schuylkill Regatta](#) and [Philly Tech Week](#).

- [PHS Philadelphia Flower Show](#) – The nation’s longest-running horticultural event is making history in 2021 by moving its show outdoors for the first time in its 192-year history. The 2021 show, themed “Habitat: Nature’s Masterpiece,” will use South Philadelphia’s expansive FDR Park as the setting for displays by the world’s premier floral and landscape designers. As always, the annual gardening celebration will feature top-of-the-line horticulture and landscape design, demonstrations, entertainment, themed nights and a marketplace. **June 5-13, 2021.**

The Great Outdoors:

Philadelphia is a big city with easy access to sprawling parks, magnificent gardens and well-traversed trails, and never have these assets been more important than they were in 2020. Here’s a look at some upgrades coming to Philly’s great outdoors this year:

- [Indego Expansion](#) – Philadelphia’s bike-share system recently announced a five-year expansion plan that will increase its fleet of bikes, expand its neighborhood reach and introduce electric bikes to the mix. The first part of the expansion comes in 2021, when Indego will add about 30 new stations, largely in West Philadelphia and South Philadelphia, and welcome 300 electric bikes to its offerings.
- [Delaware River Trail](#) – Once completed in 2021, the central portion of the Delaware River Trail will run between Washington Avenue and Spring Garden Street on the east side of Columbus Boulevard. The multi-use trail will provide a protected lane for walkers, joggers and cyclists, as well as a link between waterfront destinations like Race Street Pier, Blue Cross RiverRink Summerfest and Winterfest, Spruce Street Harbor Park Sustained by Univest and Washington Avenue Pier. Key design features include a curb-separated, bi-directional asphalt bicycle path and separate pedestrian sidewalk, as well as new landscaping, pedestrian lighting and street furnishings. **Fall 2021.**

Food & Drink:

Philadelphia's restaurants showed serious resilience in 2020, pivoting to take-out food and drink, erecting elaborate pop-up spaces for outdoor dining and collaborating with friends in the business to thrive amid the pandemic. While several beloved restaurants closed both temporarily and permanently, others emerged onto the scene — a trend that will continue into 2021.

- **New Brewery Openings** – Greater Philadelphia's lengthy [craft beer trail](#) will soon grow even bigger with new breweries and expansions debuting in and beyond the city. Each drinking destination offers an experience that's wholly different from the next. In 2021, look for [Victory Brewing Company](#) to open on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway; [Cartesian Brewing](#) to come to East Passyunk; [Mystic Ways Brewing](#) in Perkasië; and [Aristaeus Craft Brewing Co.](#) in Langhorne.
- **New Restaurant Openings** – The Philly restaurant scene just keeps getting better and better — despite the toughest year on record for restaurants in 2020. Noteworthy additions on the way in 2021 include: [Honeysuckle](#) from chef and artist Omar Tate (*Esquire* magazine's Chef of the Year); **The Landing Kitchen and the Lark** in Bala Cynwyd from chefs Nicholas Elmi ([Laurel](#)) and Fia Berisha ([Aether](#)); [Lost Bread Cafe](#) in Rittenhouse; **Grace and Proper** in the Italian Market from the team behind [Hawthorne's](#) and [The Cambridge](#); [Lamberti Pizza & Market](#) in Washington Square West; **Bagels & Co.** at the Piazza in Northern Liberties; and **Lola's Garden** at Suburban Square in Ardmore from [FCM Hospitality](#). Plus, watch for new locations of spots like **DiBruno Bros.** (Wayne) and **Stove and Tap** (West Chester), with much more in the works from Philadelphia's intrepid restaurateurs later this year.

New Hotels:

From 2018 through 2020, the region added 25 hotels and nearly 4,000 rooms to its supply. The new additions are a mix of big-name brands, luxury properties, budget accommodations and small boutique hotels. Despite a rocky 2020, that growth will continue into 2021 as Philadelphia welcomes four new hotels to the scene.

- [Live! Casino & Hotel Philadelphia](#) – A brand-new, 1.5 million-square-foot hotel and casino opens in South Philadelphia in early 2021. Conveniently located within walking distance to Lincoln Financial Field, Wells Fargo Center and Citizens Bank Park, Live! Casino & Hotel Philadelphia houses more than 200 upscale hotel rooms, plus more than 2,100 slots and electronic table games, a FanDuel® Sportsbook, and dining and entertainment venues. **February 11, 2021.**
- [Guild House Hotel](#) – Just in time for Women's History Month comes the grand opening of a boutique property in a National Historic Landmark building that belonged to — and will honor — a 19th-century working women's advocacy and support group known as the New Century Guild. The rooms and suites — 12 in total — in the Midtown Village hotel are named after members of the Guild, which included notable abolitionists, suffragists, activists, poets and artists. Among them: Eliza Sproat Turner, a teacher, writer and New Century Guild founder; Florence Kelley, a founding member of the NAACP; and Emily Sartain, artist and director of the Philadelphia School of Design for Women (now Moore College of Art and Design). Amenities at the invisible service hotel include luxury bath and body products; specialty coffees, teas and chocolates; and customized itineraries, airport pickup and curated experiences upon request. **June 6, 2021.**

- [W Philadelphia](#) – Less than one block from iconic City Hall, this 295-room hotel will bring modern luxury with a stylish dose of Philly vibrancy and artistry. Among the amenities, including the FIT gym, the Living Room cocktail lounge and bar terrace, is a year-round heated pool — outdoor pool, that is. **Spring 2021.**
- [Element Philadelphia Hotel](#) – Element’s largest global property opens in the very center of Center City, next door to its dual-branded property, the W Hotel Philadelphia. Element guests will enjoy a kitchen in every guest room or suite, a signature Westin Heavenly® bed, onsite Italian restaurant Dolce and both complimentary breakfast each morning and glass of wine or beer each evening. **Spring 2021.**

**Source: Tourism Economics*

VISIT PHILADELPHIA® is our name and our mission. As the region’s official tourism marketing agency, we build Greater Philadelphia’s image, drive visitation and boost the economy.

On Greater Philadelphia’s official visitor website and blog, visitphilly.com and uwishunu.com, visitors can explore things to do, upcoming events, themed itineraries and hotel packages. Compelling photography and videos, interactive maps and detailed visitor information make the sites effective trip-planning tools. Along with Visit Philly social media channels, the online platforms communicate directly with consumers. Travelers can also call and stop into the Independence Visitor Center for additional information and tickets. 6th & Market Streets, [\(800\) 537-7676](tel:8005377676)

Note to Editors: For high-resolution photos and high-definition B-roll of Greater Philadelphia, visit the Photos & Video section of visitphilly.com/mediacenter.