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How To Celebrate AAPI Month In May (And Beyond) In Philadelphia

From dining at one of the city's many AAPI-owned restaurants to supporting the thriving AAPI-owned retail scene, there are many ways to support our vibrant AAPI community year-round.

PHILADELPHIA, May 12, 2023 – May is Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month, the official annual celebration honoring the contributions and accomplishments of Asian Americans, Pacific Islander Americans and Native Hawaiians. In Philadelphia, our prominent and diverse AAPI community makes an impact across the city at every time of year.

Here's how you can support and celebrate it during any month, from Chinatown to South Philly and everywhere surrounding:

Dig In To The Culinary Offerings

Philadelphia is [brimming with AAPI-owned restaurants](#) serving mouthwatering dishes both traditional and with a twist. Restaurant scene staples like Chutatip “Nok” Suntaranon’s eatery **Kalaya Thai Kitchen**, Ellen Yin’s concept **Fork** and Jesse Ito’s omakase at **Royal Izakaya** have received nods from the James Beard Foundation, while other go-to hotspots include **Gabriella’s Vietnam**, Cambodian noodle house **Mawn** and LGBTQ+-owned Indonesian staple **Hardena**.

The city’s Chinatown neighborhood in itself is [teaming with dozens of eateries](#) offering tastes of Cantonese, Sichuan, Burmese, Taiwanese and other Asian culinary styles. Here, family cooks and acclaimed chefs alike pile on the flavor for a multisensory experience at tiny takeout-only operations and spacious family-style restaurants. Can’t miss locations include **Bubblefish**, a one-stop shop for bubble tea and sushi; **Ocean Harbor**, where carts are piled high with mouthwatering dim sum; and **Sang Kee Peking Duck House**, a Philadelphia staple since 1980.

Explore The Arts and Culture Scene

Philadelphia’s AAPI-focused cultural scene is electric, featuring a constantly rotating array of exhibitions, performances and arts nonprofits.

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Community-based arts center **Asian Arts Initiative** organizes exhibits, workshops and other events aimed at exploring the diverse experiences of Asian Americans and creating positive community change, while the grassroots member community **Philadelphia Asian Performing Artists** specializes in community-building events, professional development programs and performances that seek to address the lack of economic and artistic opportunities for people of Pan-Asian descent.

Also of note: **Philadelphia Museum of Art**'s sprawling Department of East Asian Art, which includes more than 9,000 objects from China, Japan and Korea, as well as Southeast Asia, Central Asia and West Asia. The **Penn Museum**'s Asia Galleries additionally include 25,000 objects, many of which illustrate the early development of Buddhism.

Learn The Local History By Visiting Attractions

Philadelphia has close ties to the Chinese coastal city, Tianjin, which became Philly's sister city in December 1979. It was one of the first such pairs in the U.S. after the two countries established diplomatic ties in the same year. Over the decades, that relationship proved to be mutually beneficial in education, commerce, culture and other sectors.

One of Philadelphia's iconic structures is the colorful, 40-foot-tall **Friendship Gate** that marks the entrance to Chinatown. Created by artist Sabrina Soong, the [brightly painted archway](#) signals to visitors they've made it to the neighborhood full of eclectic shops, food, festivals and events. Soong designed the original gate in 1984, and it underwent an artisan renovation in 2008. The portal follows a traditional Qing Dynasty style, and was created in part with engineers and artisans from Tianjin, China.

Philadelphia's **Shofuso Japanese Cultural Center** is a traditional-style Japanese house and garden situated in Fairmount Park. Featuring a serene koi pond, weeping cherry tree, pebble beach and more, [the attraction](#) has roots tracing back to the 1876 Centennial Exposition. Today the center hosts events, festivals and tea ceremonies throughout the year.

Support Retail and Small Businesses

Thousands of the [retail outposts](#) in Philadelphia's thriving small business ecosystem are owned by individuals of Asian descent, from boutiques and clothing stores to beauty supply and bicycle repair shops. These establishments are located throughout the city and region, from Center City's Chinatown to Ardmore. Some of these businesses are **The Lash Boutique** in Old City, **Queen & Rook Game Cafe** in Queen Village, **Kayuh Bicycles and Cafe** in Francisville and pet grooming boutique **Ham + Bone** in Fishtown.

During warmer months, visitors can check out the **Southeast Asian Market** in FDR Park, where a community of refugees and immigrants transform the South Philadelphia outdoor space into a bustling cultural landmark boasting upward of 70 food and wares vendors from Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia and other countries.

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Entities that promote and represent Philadelphia's Asian-owned businesses include the nonprofits Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation and Asian American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Philadelphia.

About Visit Philadelphia:

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Compelling photography and videos, interactive maps and detailed visitor information make the site an effective trip-planning tool. Visitors can also find loads of inspiration on Visit Philly's social media channels.

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