

**CONTACT:**

Ashley Carter  
(856) 236-9439, [ashley@visitphilly.com](mailto:ashley@visitphilly.com)

Sydney Milkman  
(215) 527-1348, [sydney@visitphilly.com](mailto:sydney@visitphilly.com)

## Philadelphia City & History Tours to Explore This Summer

*From iconic attractions to neighborhood hidden gems, discover tour experiences that preserve the city's history and the changemakers who shaped it*

**PHILADELPHIA, June 24, 2026** – America's 250th anniversary is an opportunity to reconnect with the nation's history in the city where it all began. Named the [Most Walkable City to Visit](#) in the USA Today 10Best Readers' Choice Awards for the fourth consecutive year, Philadelphia makes it easy to explore centuries worth of American history on foot, while bus tours and alternative transportation offer a convenient way to take in city views.

Whether following the footsteps of the founders on walking tours like [Founding Footsteps](#)—recently named the No. 1 history tour in the country—or discovering after-hours true-crime tales and folklore, the city offers experiences for every interest. Many tours intentionally highlight the contributions of Black leaders, LGBTQ+ pioneers and women whose stories helped transform a radical idea into a functioning democracy.

Below are some of the city's notable walking, bus and self-guided tours to enjoy this summer.

### **Audio and Self-Guided Tours**

#### **[Betsy Ross House](#)**

**239 Arch Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106**

Take a step back in time to the Colonial era and explore the life of Betsy Ross at your own pace with this insightful self-guided audio tour. Visitors will learn about Betsy's complex life, from her widowhood and struggle to survive as a single woman to her dynamic role in the Revolutionary War. Kids can also take their own specialized audio tour and learn about the life of children in the 18th century as they solve 13 "History Mysteries." **Hours:** Sunday to Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

#### **[Carpenters' Hall](#)**

**320 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106**

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Start with a self-guided tour of Carpenters' Hall, the largest rental space in the city, solidifying its key role in the Revolutionary War. Then continue through Old City and Society Hill on a self-guided tour curated by Carpenters' Hall, offering deeper insight into the artisans, leaders and everyday Philadelphians whose contributions had an irreplaceable impact on history. **Hours:** *Tuesday to Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Closed on Mondays*

## [LGBTQ+ History from Philadelphia Inquirer](#)

### **21st and Delancey Streets**

As the site of the 1965 Annual Reminders—the nation's first major demonstrations for LGBTQ+ rights—Philadelphia has played a pivotal role in the fight for equality. This self-guided tour from The Philadelphia Inquirer explores that legacy through public art, historical markers and landmark institutions, including the John Fryer historical marker and Giovanni's Room, the country's longest-running LGBTQ+ bookstore.

## [Philadelphia Historic Architecture Tour](#)

### **Locations vary; please check the website for details**

Known as “PHAT” for short, Philadelphia Historic Architecture Tours give an insightful guide through Philadelphia's captivating buildings that played a role in American history. With a variety of self-guided audio tours to choose from, including two to three-hour tours through Old City and Philadelphia's Historic District — inspired by legendary city planner Edmund Bacon and led by registered architect Reid Addis — are available.

## [The National Park Service's Independence National Historical Park](#)

### **Please check the APS app for starting locations**

The National Park Service's free official app offers a complete guide to what's been dubbed the most historic square mile in the United States. Choose from one of five self-guided audio tours (on topics like civil rights and Benjamin Franklin) or use the interactive map to explore the 35 included sites at your own pace. Bonus: Kiddos can sign the Declaration of Independence, ring the Liberty Bell and more in a separate Junior Ranger app.

## **Bus and Alternative Transportation**

### [City Sightseeing: Hop-on Hop-off](#)

#### **111 S Independence Mall E, Philadelphia, PA**

Starting at the Bourse Building, right across from Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell, guests can discover America's origins. Along the way, enjoy breathtaking views of historic landmarks, including Christ Church Burial Grounds, Elfreth's Alley and the Betsy Ross House, to name just a few. **Duration:** *90 minutes.* **Tour schedule:** *Daily tours are available from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.*

## [Franklin Mobile Tours](#)

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**Locations vary; please check the website for details**

See Philadelphia through a different lens aboard a modern electric vehicle. Guests can relax and take in sweeping views of the city while exploring some of its most popular attractions, with tour options ranging from a 15-minute overview to a comprehensive 90-minute journey through Old City's historic streets and landmarks. **Duration:** 20-90 minutes. **Tour schedule:** Monday to Friday 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

## [Philly Bike Tour Co.](#)

**2015 Fairmount Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19130**

Grab a bike and pedal your way through the city streets while covering approximately 10 miles. Iconic stops include the Rocky Steps, the Liberty Bell and Rittenhouse Square, while discovering hidden gems, neighborhood stories and local history along the way. Ideal for first-time visitors, this experience offers an active and memorable introduction to the City of Brotherly Love. **Duration:** 3 hours to 4 hours. **Tour schedule:** Daily tours are available at 9:30 a.m.

## [Trolley Works](#)

**Southwest Corner of 6th & Market Street**

All aboard the Big Bus! Philadelphia Trolley Works operates this double-decker ride. Daily tour service offers 27 hop-on, hop-off stops, where visitors can enjoy everything from the Rocky Steps and historic Old City to South Street's independent shops and the nation's first zoo. **Duration:** 90 minutes; **Tour schedule:** Sunday to Friday 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

## **Haunted/Dark History Tours**

### [Eastern State Penitentiary](#)

**2027 Fairmount Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19130**

Opened in 1829, Eastern State Penitentiary was once one of the most influential prisons in the world, pioneering a controversial system of incarceration centered on solitary confinement and reflection. Today, the preserved ruins serve as a historic site and museum, offering visitors an immersive look at the history of crime, punishment and prison reform in America. **Duration:** 45 minutes. **Tour schedule:** Daily tours are available at 10:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

### [Ghost Tours of Philadelphia](#)

**Independence Visitor Center, 599 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106**

As night falls, explore the eerie side of Philadelphia's history on a candlelit ghost tour through Old City, Society Hill and Independence National Historical Park. Enjoy an evening stroll through cemeteries to centuries-old streets, discover the legends, mysteries and haunted tales that earn Philadelphia its

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reputation as a haunted city. **Duration:** 70 to 90 minutes. **Tour schedule:** Daily tours are available at 7:30 p.m.

## [Grim Philly Tours](#)

**Locations vary; please check the website for details**

Named a Best of the Best experience by TripAdvisor's Travelers' Choice Awards, Grim Philly invites guests to uncover the city's hidden side through immersive walking tours packed with folklore, history and intrigue. Whether exploring the legends of Philadelphia's haunted past, the stories behind its historic nightlife, or infamous true-crime cases, each tour offers a unique after-dark perspective. **Duration:** 2 hours; **Tour schedule:** Daily tours are available at 8 p.m.

## [Spirit of '76 Ghost Tour](#)

**Tour departs from PingPod: 325 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106**

This spooky stroll is for the real thrill seekers; the outdoor adventure uncovers the ghosts of Independence Hall, the dancing statue of Benjamin Franklin and paranormal Pine Street Church & Cemetery come alive along tales of long-time Philly residents like Edgar Allen Poe and Leo Callahan (allegedly the only person to escape Eastern State Penitentiary). **Duration:** 90 minutes. **Tour schedule:** Daily tours are available at 9 p.m.

## [Neighborhood Tours](#)

### [Neighborhood Jawnts](#)

**Locations vary; please check the website for details**

This free citywide tour series celebrates the culture, creativity and small businesses that make Philadelphia's neighborhoods unique. The series features 20 hyper-local experiences curated with community partners, inviting residents and visitors to explore neighborhood stories through food, art, history, local leaders and cultural traditions. **Duration:** 90 minutes. **Tour schedule:** Friday 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturdays and Sundays 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

### [Preservation Alliance: Neighborhood Walking Tours](#)

**Locations vary; please check the website for details**

Led by expert volunteer guides, more than 40 tour options showcase distinct areas of the city—including Society Hill, Fishtown, Rittenhouse Square and Chestnut Hill—while themed experiences such as Art Deco Philadelphia, Skyscrapers Old and New and Ben Franklin's Philadelphia offer deeper dives into the stories that shaped the region. **Duration:** 90 minutes. **Tour schedule:** Times and dates vary; please check the website for details.

## [Walking Tours](#)

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## [Beyond the Bell Tours](#)

**Locations vary; please check the website for details**

America's Founding Fathers weren't the only ones who made this nation possible. Choose from one of these inclusive walking tours that highlight the women, LGBTQ+ pioneers and local heroes whose contributions helped shape the nation. Learn about Ona Judge's courageous pursuit of freedom and Barbara Gittings' groundbreaking advocacy for LGBTQ+ rights; guests will discover the people and stories that are essential to understanding Philadelphia's past and America's ongoing journey toward equality. **Duration:** 90 minutes. **Tour schedule:** Daily tours are available at 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.

## [Founding Footsteps](#)

**Locations vary; please check the website for details**

From food and BYOB-friendly drink experiences to walking and trolley tours, Founding Footsteps has earned its place among USA Today's 10Best tours. Known for bringing Philadelphia's history and culture to life, the company offers engaging experiences that connect visitors to the stories, people and places that shaped the city. Its Semiquincentennial Tour, created in honor of America's 250th anniversary, bridges the past and present by connecting 1776 to 2026 through the stories, landmarks and neighborhoods that shaped the nation. The tour also offers first-time visitors a compelling introduction to Old City and Philadelphia's enduring legacy. **Duration:** 1.5 hours. **Tour schedule:** Times and dates vary; please check the website for details.

## [Founding Fathers and Mothers](#)

**21 S 5th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106**

Led by a professional guide, this walking tour of Old City explores the people and places that shaped Philadelphia and the nation. Highlights include Benjamin Franklin's legacy; the influence of the Quakers at Arch Street Meeting House; the role of women in colonial America at Betsy Ross House; and Christ Church and Elfreth's Alley, the nation's oldest continuously inhabited residential street. **Duration:** 90 minutes. **Tour Schedule:** Daily tours are available at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

## [Mural Arts: Icons of Independence](#)

**Independence Visitor Center, 599 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA US 19106**

In celebration of America's 250th birthday, this specialty tour follows a trail of historic symbols that appear in iconic Philadelphia murals. Tour guests will discover how the past meets the present through depictions of Liberty Bells, American flags, famous figures and notable architecture as they trace the steps of history's past. **Duration:** 90 minutes. **Tour schedule:** dates and times vary; please check the website for details.

## [Philadelphia Jewish Quarter Walking Tour](#)

**Locations vary; please check the website for details**

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Discover more than 285 years of Jewish history in Philadelphia with one of three unique heritage tours. These experiences reveal the rich and layered stories of the city's Jewish communities, exploring the neighborhoods where immigrants lived, worked, worshipped and contributed to Philadelphia's cultural fabric. **Duration:** 2 hours. **Tour schedule:** Dates and times vary; please check the website for details.

## [Philly Pigeon Tours](#)

**Locations vary; please check the website for details**

Bring your binoculars and take a sneak peek into the secret lives of pigeons. Led by Aspen Simon and HM Bower, this birding walking tour combines Philly history, the history of some of the oldest city dwellers (pigeons), and neighborhood history, offering a fresh perspective on Bella Vista, Center City, the Italian Market and the feathered residents who have long called them home. **Duration:** 1.5 hours; **Tour schedule:** Dates and times vary; please check the website for details.

## [That Messy History of the Revolution](#)

**522 Arch Street, Philadelphia, PA US 19106**

History comes alive on this entertaining guided walking tour that blends Philadelphia's rich past with humor, candid storytelling and a dose of local gossip. Along the way, guests will learn about the city's most influential figures, not just their accomplishments, but also the rivalries, scandals, quirks and larger-than-life personalities that helped shape Philadelphia. **Duration:** 2 hours. **Tour schedule:** Wednesday to Friday at 10:30 a.m., Saturdays and Sundays at 3 p.m.

## [The Black Journey](#)

**Independence Visitor Center, 599 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106**

Journey through Philadelphia's Black history on this engaging two-hour tour that shines a light on stories too often left out of the history books. Available in two family-friendly formats, the experience takes guests to some of the city's most significant Black heritage sites. Philadelphia was home to thriving communities that were home to some of its most celebrated icons, including W.E.B. Du Bois and Octavius Catto. **Duration:** 1.5 to 2 hours. **Tour schedule:** Monday, by appointment; Saturdays and Sundays, 2-4 p.m.

**For more history and city tour information, please check out our [web guide](#).**

## **About Visit Philadelphia:**

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, [visitphilly.com](http://visitphilly.com), visitors can explore things to do, upcoming events, themed itineraries and hotel packages.

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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](https://visitphilly.com/mediacenter).

*Visit Philadelphia's work is supported by multiple funding partners, including the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Learn more at [VisitPA.com](https://VisitPA.com).*

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