



Historic and Cultural Points of Interest

There is so much to explore in the Philadelphia area, and many attractions are close to the Convention hotel, too! Below are some of our favorites. Be sure to visit the website [Visit Philadelphia](#) for more lots information and recommendations.

Historic Sites in Philadelphia (with distance from the Desmond Hotel)

[City Hall](#) (27 miles)

1400 John F. Kennedy Boulevard Philadelphia, PA 19107

Philadelphia's City Hall is home to 88 million bricks, 250 sculptures, 14.5 acres of floor space and one of Philly's most iconic pieces of art: the 37-foot-tall statue of city founder William Penn. Clocking in at 548 feet, City Hall was the tallest habitable structure in the world until 1908, and it remained the tallest building in Philadelphia until 1986. It's still the largest municipal building in the United States today. But numbers really don't do this massive building justice. Built in the eclectic Second Empire style, City Hall's beauty lies not in its size, but in the intricate details awaiting discovery around nearly every corner — and a view that can't be beat.

[Liberty Bell](#) (28 miles)

526 Market St, Philadelphia, PA 19106

The Liberty Bell bears a timeless message: "Proclaim Liberty Throughout All the Land Unto All the Inhabitants thereof." Go beyond the iconic crack to learn how this State House bell was transformed into an extraordinary symbol. Abolitionists, women's suffrage advocates and Civil Rights leaders took inspiration from the inscription on this bell.

[Independence Hall](#) (28 miles)

520 Chestnut Street Philadelphia, PA 19106

Independence Hall is the birthplace of America. The Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution were both debated and signed inside this building. The legacy of the nation's founding

documents - universal principles of freedom and democracy - has influenced lawmakers around the world.

[Betsy Ross House](#) (28 miles)

239 Arch Street Philadelphia, PA 19106

Did she or didn't she sew the first American flag? Visitors can learn about America's most famous flag maker at The Betsy Ross House, located in Philadelphia's Historic District. Wander through the tiny rooms and tight staircases of the circa-1740 residence on a self-guided tour, then talk to Betsy herself about her role in the American Revolution and her fascinating work and life.

[Elfreth's Alley](#) (28 miles)

126 Elfreth's Alley Philadelphia, PA 19106

Dating back to 1703, Elfreth's Alley is the country's oldest continuously inhabited street. Named for blacksmith and property owner Jeremiah Elfreth, it was home to the eighteenth-century artisans and tradespeople who were the backbone of Colonial Philadelphia. Over 300 years later, the 32 historic houses that line the street remain hot properties, and this tiny cobblestone alley is a designated National Historic Landmark.

[Christ Church](#) (28 miles)

20 N. American Street Philadelphia, PA 19106

Founded in 1695 as a condition of William Penn's Charter, Christ Church is a beautiful example of Georgian colonial architecture. It is bordered by a tree-lined brick path, a small park and a cobblestone alley, which provide the perfect setting for this historic treasure. Notably, the tower and steeple made it the tallest building in America until 1856. Members of this church have included prominent historical figures such as Benjamin Franklin, Betsy Ross, and George Washington. Christ Church remains an active Episcopal Church and continues to hold weekly services.

[Congress Hall](#) (28 miles)

6th and Chestnut streets Philadelphia, PA 19106

Built as the Philadelphia County Courthouse, Congress Hall was home to the U.S. Congress from 1790-1800, when Philadelphia served as the temporary capital of the United States. Members of the House of Representatives met on the first floor, while the Senators met upstairs.

For more information, visit this [National Park Service website](#).

Historic Sites outside Philadelphia (with distance from the Desmond Hotel)

[Wharton Esherick Museum](#) (4 miles)

1520 Horse Shoe Trail, Malvern, PA 19355

The Wharton Esherick Museum is the home and studio of famed American artist Wharton Esherick, located atop Valley Forge Mountain in Chester County, Pennsylvania. Set on 12 wooded acres, the Museum campus is comprised of multiple buildings including Wharton Esherick's Studio, which is now the centerpiece of the Museum. Esherick's highly individual, hand-built Studio was constructed over a 40-year period beginning in 1926, incorporating Arts and Crafts, Expressionist, and organic designs. Two years later Esherick began his 1928 Expressionist garage, now our Visitor Center. In 1973, just one year after its official opening as a museum, the Studio was added to the National Register of Historic Places. In 1993, the Museum was designated a National Historic Landmark for Architecture.

[Valley Forge National Historical Park](#) (5 miles)

1400 N Outer Line Dr, King of Prussia, PA 19406

Valley Forge is the town in which George Washington and the Continental Army took refuge during the winter of 1777-1778. Today the park protects 3,500 acres of meadows, woodlands, historic landscapes, and monuments commemorating the resolve of the Revolutionary War generation and honoring the power of people to pull together, overcome adversity, and find renewal through transformation.

[Hopewell Furnace](#) (22 miles)

2 Mark Bird Ln, Elverson, PA 19520

Hopewell Furnace showcases an early American landscape of industrial operations from 1771-1883, Hopewell and other iron plantations laid the foundation for the transformation of the United States into an industrial giant for the time. The park's 848 acres and historic structures illustrate the business, technology and lifestyle of our growing nation.

[Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle](#) (36 miles)

84 South Pine Street Doylestown, PA 18901

The Mercer Museum was built to house Henry Mercer's extensive collection of objects representing everyday life in the pre-industrial age. The Fonthill Castle offers a window into Henry Mercer's unique architectural and artistic vision. This poured concrete estate has 44 rooms, 18 fireplaces and more than 200 windows.

[Michener Art Museum](#) (37 miles)

138 South Pine Street Doylestown, PA 18901

The Michener Art Museum is home to a world-class collection of Pennsylvania Impressionist paintings and a permanent collection that explores a variety of artistic expressions. The Museum presents changing exhibitions, and hosts a wide range of programs, including lectures, artist conversations, gallery talks, artist studio tours, dance and music performances. The Museum offers diverse programming to nurture a diverse audience and ignite lifelong involvement in the arts.

The Museum is housed in the former Bucks County Jail and is surrounded by the original prison walls. The Patricia D. Pfundt Sculpture Garden, terraces, and courtyard that encompasses 40,000 square feet of public space that includes the Gift Shop, Terrace Cafe, Education Center, the Research Library, and gallery spaces. The stunning glass-walled Edgar N. Putman Event Pavilion provides a striking space for weddings, Museum programs, performances and special events.

[Moravian Pottery & Tile Works Museum](#) (38 miles)

130 E Swamp Rd, Doylestown, PA 18901

Between 1911 and 1912, Henry Chapman Mercer (1856-1930) built the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works to “master the potter’s art and establish pottery under personal control.” The success of the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works rested on Mercer’s pure genius. With a small capital investment, relatively inexpensive operating costs, and an ability to produce a range of wares that made the best use of biotechnology, the pottery produced unique tiles that were praised by critics and sought after by architects. The honest, hand-made quality of his work fully expressed the ideals of the American Arts and Crafts Movement, elevating Mercer to one of the movement’s most important proponents. His tiles were emblematic of the survival, or rebirth, of the handcraft tradition. By the turn of the century, he was recognized as a premiere maker of “artistic” tiles. For the next thirty years, his work was sought out by leading architects and tastemakers to decorate public and private buildings all across the country. Mercer’s pioneering influence was far-reaching and still affects many tilemakers today.

[Washington Crossing Historic Park](#) (50 miles)

1112 River Road Washington Crossing, PA 18977

Washington Crossing Historic Park preserves the site of George Washington’s dramatic boat crossing of the Delaware River during the American Revolution and is a National Historic Landmark. The Upper Section of the park has historic buildings, walking paths, picnic pavilions, fishing, and historical and environmental education programs. The Lower Section of the park has historic buildings, walking paths, picnicking, picnic pavilions, fishing, non-motorized boat launching, outdoor recreation programs, historical and environmental education programs, and hosts special events and re-enactments.

[Gettysburg](#) (115 miles)

1195 Baltimore Pike Gettysburg, PA 17325

The Battle of Gettysburg was a turning point in the Civil War, the Union victory that ended General Robert E. Lee's second and most ambitious invasion of the North. Often referred to as the "High Water Mark of the Rebellion", Gettysburg was the Civil War's bloodiest battle and was also the inspiration for President Abraham Lincoln's immortal "Gettysburg Address".

Art and Science Museums

[American Helicopter Museum](#) (7 miles)

1220 American Boulevard West Chester, PA 19380

Visit the American Helicopter Museum & Education Center! Located in West Chester, PA, this family friendly aviation museum is home to one of the world's largest collections of rotorcrafts. Marvel at the wonders of vertical flight through exciting, immersive, and multi-sensory activities. Our exhibits allow you to get up close and personal with their extensive collection of well-preserved rotary-wing aircraft, many of which you can climb in and experience what it's like to actually pilot them. A fun and educational activity for aviation enthusiasts and visitors of all ages that will excite and captivate the imagination.

[John James Audubon Center at Mill Grove](#) (9 miles)

1201 Pawlings Road Audubon, PA 19403

The John James Audubon Center at Mill Grove is situated on a historic 18th-century site, the farm where John James Audubon lived when he first came to America from France in 1803. It was here that he developed a technique for drawing birds "from life" that would allow him to become one of the world's best-known wildlife artists. The hundreds of life-size portraits of birds contained in his seminal work *The Birds of America* helped inspire the formation of the National Audubon Society.

The property includes the original three-story farmhouse, built in 1762, miles of nature trails along the Perkiomen Creek, and a brand-new building, featuring indoor and outdoor exhibits focused on birds, art, and conservation.

[Brandywine Museum of Art](#) (17 miles)

1 Hoffman's Mill Road Chadds Ford, PA 19317

It's hard to imagine a more bucolic place in which to explore art than the Brandywine Museum of Art, run by the Brandywine Conservancy on a nature preserve. The museum is located amidst the very settings that inspired much of the art on view: rolling hills, snowy drifts, and, always, the Brandywine River. The museum has become synonymous with Andrew Wyeth, whose work is exhibited here in abundance, alongside the illustrations by his father, N.C., and the realistic paintings by his son, Jamie, as well as that of their contemporaries. A veritable tour through the

terrain of the Brandywine Valley, the history of American illustration, and the contributions of the very creative Wyeth family, the museum offers masterpieces for all kinds of art lovers.

[Franklin Institute](#) (26 miles)

222 N. 20th Street Philadelphia, PA 19103

Founded in honor of America's first scientist, Benjamin Franklin, The Franklin Institute is one of the oldest centers of science education and development in the country. Today, the premier museum continues its dedication to public education by offering new and exciting access to science in ways that would dazzle and delight its namesake. In Benjamin Franklin's spirit of inquiry and discovery, the mission of The Franklin Institute is to inspire a passion for learning about science and technology.

[Philadelphia Museum of Art](#) (27 miles)

2600 Benjamin Franklin Pkwy, Philadelphia, PA 19130

The iconic Philadelphia Museum of Art sits majestically on a rise at the end of the city's famous Benjamin Franklin Parkway. The vast collections in this temple of art make it one of the largest art museums in the country — and an absolute must-see on the city's cultural circuit. The museum's holdings encompass more than 240,000 works spanning 2,000 years, including pieces from the ancient world, medieval times, the Renaissance, the Impressionist movement and modern day. On the same trip, visitors can check out paintings by Renoir, van Gogh and Picasso, a collection of suits of armor, a one-acre outdoor sculpture garden, and a complete 14th-century Buddhist temple. World-renowned architect Frank Gehry led a major transformation of the attraction's interior in recent years. A new north entrance opened in fall 2019, and new galleries, public spaces and exhibits opened in May 2021.

[The Academy of Natural Sciences](#) (27 miles)

1900 Benjamin Franklin Pkwy, Philadelphia, PA 19103

The Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University is the oldest natural history museum in the Americas and one of the country's leading scientific institutions, with over 200 years of experience in curation, cutting-edge research and education. The Academy has more than 19 million specimens, all carefully documented and well-preserved for future generations. They serve as the foundation for an active research program that continues to focus on the critical environmental issues of our time, ranging from evolution and biodiversity to human health and climate change. The Academy is also internationally recognized for its pioneering work in water. These studies have contributed significantly to the quality of human life by helping to shape public policy concerning the environment. Among the best known of these is The Clean Water Act of 1972 and 1977, which was developed with critical input from Academy scientists.

[Barnes Foundation](#) (27 miles)

2025 Benjamin Franklin Parkway, Philadelphia, PA 19130

Set on four-and-a-half acres of landscaped grounds, the Barnes Foundation boasts an impressive collection that features 181 Renoirs (more than any other collection), 69 Cézannes (more than in all of France) and groundbreaking African art. The museum's permanent collection also features 59 Matisse, along with works by Manet, Degas, Seurat, Prendergrast, Titian, and Picasso. The Barnes Foundation also hosts groundbreaking temporary exhibitions. These have included a major retrospective of works by female impressionist painter Berthe Morisot and an installation by pioneer video artist Bill Viola.

[Penn Museum](#) (27 miles)

3260 South Street Philadelphia, PA 19104

A million objects — including art and artifacts from around the globe — are housed at the Penn Museum, one of the world's finest archaeological and anthropological museums. From stone tools and household items to architectural monuments and rare art objects, the museum illustrates the story of humanity's history and achievements. With materials from ancient Egypt, Asia, Mesopotamia, the Americas and ancient Greece and Italy, the Penn Museum explores the world — all under one roof. In late 2019, the museum unveiled a major transformation of its Main Entrance Hall and two of its collections — the Africa Galleries and the Mexico and Central America Gallery.