

# Philadelphia



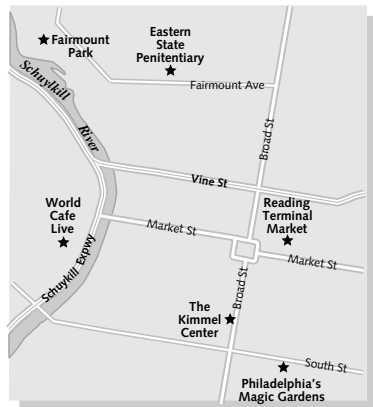
The City of Brotherly Love, once the stomping ground of Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, is the home of the Liberty Bell and the birthplace of the US Constitution. It's a city famous for its pop-culture icons: for Springsteen ballads, and for Rocky getting into fighting shape on the steps of the art museum. It's also the city responsible for cream cheese, cheesesteaks and gargantuan fireworks displays on the Fourth of July.

Despite its rich cultural history, Philadelphia is a city that was notorious just a short time ago for crime, pollution and financial woes. With his much-quoted statement, 'I'd rather be dead than live in Philadelphia,' WC Fields gave voice – and a scathing comic edge – to the public opinion of Pennsylvania's largest city. In the early '90s, Mayor Ed Rendell took the bull by the horns, determined to transform the city and restore its original luster; today's bustling metropolis is a testament to his efforts.

Of course, the recent renaissance didn't solve all of the big city's problems, but it did make Center City into a supremely beautiful and livable urban center, an oasis almost unimaginable in 1990. Some of the outer neighborhoods still suffer from urban blight; others, like University City and Northern Liberties, are thriving cultural centers. Some can't believe their eyes when they see the changes; others debate whether this gentrification is really so desirable. After all, they suggest, Philly wasn't so bad – even WC Fields changed his mind. Before he died in 1925, he jokingly suggested his own epitaph: 'I would rather be living in Philadelphia.'

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Eating the best Philly cheesesteak at **Pat's King of Steaks** (p309) or **Geno's** (p309)
- Being thankful for your freedom at the **Eastern State Penitentiary** (p298)
- Riding the **Fairmount Park** (p299) bike trails
- Listening to live acoustic music at the **World Cafe Live** (p309)
- Looking for creative inspiration at **Philadelphia's Magic Gardens** (p296)
- Heading to the **Reading Terminal Market** (p294) for coffee, croissants and people-watching
- Marveling at the wonder of modern sound technology at the **Kimmel Center** (p295)



■ POPULATION: 1,447,400

■ AREA: 159 sq miles

## HISTORY

William Penn made Philadelphia his capital in 1682, naming it after the Greek phrase for 'brotherly love.' A survivor of London's Great Fire of 1666, Penn oversaw the plans for the city that included a grid system with wide streets, not the narrow, winding maze that caused so much havoc in England's capital. This format was the inspiration for most American cities.

Philadelphia quickly grew to become the second largest city (after London) in the British Empire, before ceding that title to New York City. Opposition to British policy in the colonies became focused here, and colonial leaders met to plan their course of action. The end result was the Declaration of Independence, and in 1790 the city became the temporary capital of the new United States before Washington, DC, got the job in 1800. The US Constitution was drawn up and first read here in 1786. Philadelphia became a center of exciting new developments in the world of arts and science, led by the amazingly talented Benjamin Franklin.

Between 1793 and 1820 the citizens suffered five yellow fever epidemics, which killed thousands but led to the construction of the nation's first city water system.

Philadelphia's fortunes declined in the 1800s as New York City took over as the nation's cultural, commercial and industrial center. Philly never regained its initial status, despite the continuation of cultural and educational innovation, commerce and shipbuilding. In the mid-20th century, like many American cities, it suffered an exodus of middle-class people to the suburbs. In the 1970s, lavish celebrations for the nation's bicentennial inspired a massive cleanup and renovation campaign for a Philadelphia that had become notoriously neglected. That renovation and restoration continues today.

## ORIENTATION

Philadelphia sits on the west bank of the Delaware River in southeastern Pennsylvania. Most of the central area lies between the Delaware in the east and the Schuylkill River, a tributary, in the west. Though Penn's original city was only about 2 sq miles in size, the 1854 annexation of the surrounding towns means that the city now comprises 159 sq miles. Think of Philadelphia as a place with extents so large that it contains both its city and its suburbs. While most of these other

157 sq miles aren't frequented by tourists, they make up a defining part of Philadelphia.

You can drive in Philadelphia, to be sure: this isn't Manhattan. But it goes without saying that driving here is a pain when you're downtown and/or during rush hour. Luckily, the city is easy to get around: it's laid out in a grid. East-west streets are given names. North-south streets are mostly numbered, except for Broad St, the main north-south street (and the equivalent of 14th St), and Front St (the equivalent of 1st St). Market St is the main east-west route and divides the city's center between north and south. Downtown Philly is laid out around public squares, with City Hall more or less at the center in Penn Sq. The other squares are: Washington Sq, near Society Hill; Rittenhouse Sq, west of Broad St; Franklin Sq, near Independence Hall; and Logan Sq at the southeast end of Benjamin Franklin Pkwy. Other central areas of interest are University City (in West Philadelphia), Fairmount Park (northwest of downtown) and South Philadelphia.

## INFORMATION

### Bookstores

**Borders** (Map p286; ☎ 215-568-7400; 1727 Walnut St), near Rittenhouse Sq, has a wide selection of titles on most subjects and a busy cafe upstairs; nearby, **Barnes & Noble** (Map p286; ☎ 215-665-0716; 1805 Walnut St; ☎ 8am-10pm Mon-Fri, 9am-10pm Sat, 10am-9pm Sun) also has a program of events and an upstairs cafe overlooking Rittenhouse Sq.

In University City, the large **University of Pennsylvania Bookstore** (Map p301; ☎ 215-898-7595; nr Walnut & 536th Sts) carries general-interest titles, including travel guides and maps, in addition to textbooks. **House of Our Own** (Map p301; ☎ 215-222-1576; 3920 Spruce Street), situated in an old Victorian home, stocks political books and highbrow literature. Not far away, **The Last Word Bookshop** (Map p301; ☎ 215-386-7750; 2205 40th St) specializes in art titles, classics and used books – there's also a friendly cat in residence. For the best used-book selection in the city, try **The Book Trader** (Map p292; ☎ 215-925-0511; 7 N 2nd St).

### Emergency

For police, fire and medical emergencies call ☎ 911. Other important emergency telephone numbers are:

**Accidental Poisoning** (☎ 215-386-2100)

**Dentist** (☎ 215-925-6050)

**Travelers' Aid Society** (☎ 215-546-0571)