

NSO PennTracks Old City

Overview:

This tour follows the footsteps of Benjamin Franklin, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, all of whom lived in Philadelphia when they were laying the groundwork for a new nation. But you will see more than Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell. This tour also visits 18th century churches, 19th century factories that became 20th century apartments and art galleries, and the hippest restaurants in the city.

Why You Should Return:

Philadelphia is the birthplace of America! The first Continental Congress, Second Continental Congress, Declaration of Independence and the Constitution took place here. Society Hill boasts the finest 18th century neighborhood in America. Old City hosts First Fridays, when the galleries stay open late and the streets are packed. And if you want to try the best new restaurants in the city, they are all here – within a two block radius!

Transportation:

To get to Old City, take the Market – Frankford Line (also known as the Blue Line) to 2nd Street.

To return to Penn, take Blue Line from 2nd and Market streets or 5th and Market streets back to 34th Street.

Emergency:

In case of emergency, contact 911. Report emergency to NSO staff.

1 Market Street | 2nd and Market Streets

Along this street is *Christ Church*, the gorgeous colonial church where Ben Franklin and George Washington worshiped. This is the first Episcopalian church in the world! Today it is surrounded by some of the hottest restaurants and arts venues in the city. Also along this street are many of the old 19th century factories which have been converted into loft apartments and art galleries. Think of this as the SoHo of Philly, and on the first Friday of every month, all of the galleries stay open late, restaurants have specials, and you can often find music in the streets.

2 Elfreth's Alley | 2nd Street between Race and Arch streets

Stroll down Elfreth's Alley, our nation's oldest residential street. Named after a blacksmith, the block long cobblestone street dates back to 1702. The homes that line the narrow street are called Trinity Houses – this type of residence has one room on each story and a winding staircase that connects the floors. Don't miss Bladen's Court, which is an alley within the alley; it once provided access to the backs of several properties that faced Front Street.

3 Betsy Ross House | 239 Arch Street

You know her as Betsy Ross, and you know that she sewed the U.S. flag, but her full name was Elizabeth Griscom Ross Ashburn Claypoole and her life was far more fascinating than you may think. She was born a Quaker, but was excommunicated for marrying outside her denomination. She lost two husbands to the American Revolutionary War, had seven daughters, and lived through nine amazing decades.

4 Free Quaker Meeting House | 5th and Arch streets

Built in 1783, this meeting house is one of the largest in the country. William Penn was a Quaker, and he established Philadelphia as a model of tolerance by allowing people of all faiths and ethnicities to settle here. The simplicity of the building mirrors that of Quaker worship services: there is no minister, no altar, and no liturgy.

5 Christ Church Cemetery | Between 4th and 5th streets on Arch Street

Make sure you take part in a Philadelphia tradition and drop a lucky penny on Ben Franklin's grave. He and many other important historical figures are buried in the Christ Church Cemetery.

6 National Constitution Center | 5th and Arch streets

The National Constitution Center is America's most interactive history museum; it has more than 100 interactive and multimedia exhibits, as well as photographs, sculpture, text, film, and artifacts. It is the only museum devoted to the U.S. Constitution.

7 Liberty Bell | Independence Mall West

The bell was designed in 1751 to commemorate William Penn and his Charter of Rights and Privileges which gave the colonists religious freedom. The quote on the bell, which is a verse from the Book of Leviticus, says, "Proclaim Liberty to all the land and to all the inhabitants thereof." The bell became a national symbol in the 1830's when the abolitionists thought it was perfect a perfect symbol for their cause.

8 Independence Hall | Independence Mall West

The Declaration of Independence was written and signed here in 1776, and in 1787 the Founding Fathers returned to write the Constitution. Philadelphia became the de facto capital in 1774 and was the official capital of the U.S. from 1790-1800.

9 Carpenters' Hall | 320 Chestnut Street

The first Continental Congress was held here in 1774. Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Monroe, Madison came here to discuss the problem with England, namely taxes. The *First Bank of the U.S.* is right behind Carpenters' Hall.

Of Additional Interest

A African American Museum | 701 Arch Street

It is the first institution built by a major United States city to house the work of African Americans. Here you can enjoy four magnificent exhibition galleries that are filled with historical pieces and fascinating art of African American heritage.

B National Museum of American Jewish History | 55 N. 5th Street

Opening its doors on July 4, 1976, it is the only museum in the nation that exclusively collects, preserves, and interprets artifacts linked to American Jewish life.

C Washington Square | 6th and Walnut streets

It is one of the original five public squares designed by William Penn. It was originally a potter's field which means over 2,000 colonists' graves lie beneath your feet. An eternal flame flickers at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier of the Revolutionary War.

D Penn's Landing | 101 N. Columbus Boulevard

Named in honor of William Penn's historic landing in Philadelphia in 1682, Penn's Landing hosts events, classes, attractions and entertainment all year long. Perhaps most notably, this area is home to seasonal parks including Spruce Street Harbor Park and Blue Cross River Rink Winterfest, as well as tons of happenings at the Great Plaza.

See www.oldcitydistrict.org for more information.

Old City

