

ADVENTURE & TRAVEL



JOURNAL CONCIERGE / AN INSIDER'S GUIDE

Philadelphia

This historic heavyweight of a city is a booming cultural and culinary destination, too. To help you devise your own first-class field trip, we enlisted expert guidance.

THE OLD JOKE about his hometown—I came for the history but stayed for the cheesesteaks—amuses Rob McElhenney, co-creator and star of the TV sitcom “It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia.” As he puts it, “It always amazed me that the birthplace of America could be reduced to a sandwich.” While many Philadelphians still pledge their allegiance to a particular cheesesteak purveyor (for Mr. McElhenney, it’s Jim’s South St. [6]), the city’s food scene is infinitely richer these days, drawing inspiration from well beyond the Northeast. For good food as well as other diversions, visit neighborhoods like Fishtown and Northern Liberties where a young, hipster vibe is emerging. If it’s the Revolutionary era you’ve come for, head straight to the Old City, lined with landmarks including Independence Hall (time-d-entry tickets required) and the Liberty Bell. Below, more of the city’s greatest hits and unsung standouts, according to four local authorities. —Janet O’Grady



PHILADELPHIA STORIES Clockwise from top: Boathouse Row on the Schuylkill River Trail; Material Culture, an antique and home furnishings shop in the East Falls neighborhood; Nigel Johnson, manager of the Franklin Fountain; the JG SkyHigh bar, on the 60th floor at the Four Seasons Hotel Philadelphia; the Conservatory at Longwood Gardens; a cheesesteak at Jim’s South St.

THE ACTOR
Rob McElhenney
Co-creator and star of ‘It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia’ and ‘Mythic Quest’



THE ACADEMIC
Adam Grant
Professor at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania; author of ‘Think Again’



THE PLAYWRIGHT
Quiara Alegria Hudes
Pulitzer Prize winner; co-wrote the musical ‘In the Heights’



THE RESTAURATEUR
Stephen Starr
Owner of 34 restaurants, including the new LMNO in Fishtown



WALK THIS WAY / Schuylkill River Trail [1] As a child, my world consisted of walking one square mile, past the row houses of my relatives on Moyamensing Ave., through South Philly to the Mummers Museum. Now my favorite walk is along the Schuylkill River Trail, winding from Boathouse Row to the Falls Bridge.

STRONG SUIT / Philadelphia Museum of Art It has a special place in my heart, especially its armor section, where my wife and I were astonished to see a full suit of armor made for a child. 2600 Benjamin Franklin Parkway

PARIS IN PHILLY / Parc I’ve long loved the classic French dishes and everything about this brasserie on Rittenhouse Square. 227 S 18th St.

OPEN ACCESS / The Mann Center for the Performing Arts I spent so much time as a child there, listening to music in the open air. 5201 Parkside Ave.

TRANSPORTING TREAT / The Franklin Fountain [3] The cotton-candy ice cream is delicious, and it feels like taking a time machine back to the 1950s. 116 Market St.

COMIC SERIES / The Met Philadelphia It’s a historic opera house and concert hall. I go for the stand-up comedy. In the last few years, they’ve hosted comedians ranging from Ali Wong to Jim Gaffigan. 858 N. Broad St.

WINTER BLOOM / Longwood Gardens [5] For a favorite walk, it’s hard to argue with Longwood Gardens in the winter. The holiday lights are spectacular. 1001 Longwood Rd., Kennett Square

MASTERS OF LITERATURE / Joseph Fox Bookshop They’ve kept great literature and big ideas alive for 70 years. They’re an independent, family-owned bookstore with a range of fiction and nonfiction titles, as well as a top-notch collection of children’s books. 1724 Sansom St.

DUMPLING DESTINATION / David’s Mai Lai Wah At this Chinatown restaurant, you can actually taste the egg in their dumpling wrappers. The ginger dipping sauce is straight-up medicinal. 1001 Race St.

PEACE TIME / Garland of Letters Bookstore I love the entrancing multi-incense aroma that gives you a lungful of tranquility the moment you step inside. 527 South St.

MEDIUM RARE / Taller Puertorriqueño This nonprofit sells art and one-of-a-kind crafts, including gorgeous, playful vejigante masks and books by Latinx authors from Philly and around the globe. 2600 N 5th St.

TREASURE TROVE / Material Culture [2] I go here for antiques and treasures from around the world that walk to the beat of their own drum. I bought an old wooden altar there that became a bench for our dining table. It was a bargain, too. 700 Wissahickon Ave.

HEART OF THE CITY / The Franklin Institute An interactive science museum, it’s famous for its walk-through model of a heart. Over the years I have enjoyed taking all my children there. 222 N 20th St.

HAPPY HIDEOUT / Valley Green With its many walking trails, Valley Green [also known as Wissahickon Valley Park] is one of my favorite places to escape for a slice of serenity in the city.

COMFORT FOOD / Villa di Roma The Italian Market is one of the oldest, largest open-air markets in America. It also has restaurants including Villa di Roma, which serves the dish that most says “Philadelphia” to me: Chicken Neapolitan. 934 S. 9th St.

MUTUAL FUND / Audi Festival I co-chair this event held every October. It supports the performing arts collective FringeArts, bringing together the best of art and food in our city. 140 N. Columbus Blvd.

PLUS, DON'T MISS
Four Seasons Hotel Philadelphia at Comcast Center [4] The pool on the 57th floor is reserved for guests, but even if you aren't spending the night you can tuck into the bar on the 60th floor. From \$725 a night / **Lokal** The Old City location of this small hotel group offers stylish lofted rooms and midcentury furniture. From \$270 a night / **Zahav** Chef Michael Solomonov, winner of several James Beard awards, offers another one in 2019 for this Israeli-inspired restaurant in Old City. 237 St. James Place / **Perla** A few nights a week this modern Filipino bistro in East Passyunk serves a traditional kamayan meal, a lively affair where you feast with your hands. 1535 S 11th St. / **The Museum of the American Revolution** Brush up on your early American history by taking your time poking around the 110,000-square-foot space. Across the street is Alexander Hamilton's First Bank of the U.S. 101 S. 3rd St.

JILLIAN GUVETTE FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL