

# Independence Hall in Philadelphia: The Complete Guide

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When it comes to U.S. history, [Independence Hall](#) in Philadelphia is always positioned at the top of every visitor's list. Known as the birthplace of America, this UNESCO World Heritage Site is one of the most visited tourist attractions in the city. If you're vacationing in the City of Brotherly Love, Independence Hall is a must-see destination, as it invites guests to take a step back in time and experience the political climate as well as elements of everyday life during the 1700s, as this historical and revolutionary era truly shaped the nation.

## History and Background

Located in the charming center of the Old City district, in the Independence National Historic Park, this world-famous site is considered the nation's hallowed ground. Facing north, toward the National Constitution Center, this majestic building is where the Founding Fathers signed the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and the United States

Constitution several years later in 1787. Visitors are invited inside via a guided tour only and have the unique opportunity to walk through and view the interior while listening to an experienced park ranger recount the days of the Continental Congress and paint a vivid portrait of this revolutionary era.

## What to See at Independence Hall

- Beginning in the building's courtroom, this tour showcases the main area where the Founding Fathers may have sat to discuss politics and fight legal battles.
- The courtroom is set up to reflect the turbulent revolutionary times, with the furniture arranged as it was during the first Constitutional Convention.
- George Washington's impressive wooden carved "sunburst" chair is on display in the courtroom.
- The authentic inkstand that was used to sign the Declaration of Independence is featured in the building's west wing.
- Visitors can gaze upon the original draft of the United States Constitution, which is on exhibit here as well.

## Tips for Visiting

Independence Hall is free to visit! Understandably, it's one of the city's most popular tourist attractions, so you should expect big crowds during the summer, holidays, and other prime times. This destination is open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. during the summer months and until 5 p.m. the rest of the year. Tickets are free and distributed on a first-come, first-served basis daily, so if you're flexible, go to the Independence Visitor's Center early (before 9 a.m.) to ensure you will have the largest selection of entrance times available.

Another option is to go later in the day, as tickets are not required after 5 p.m. Be sure to check the Independence Hall website, as no tickets are needed on some holidays throughout the year. For those who prefer to plan in advance, you can select tickets online, but you will pay a nominal service fee for this option.

Entrance to Independence Hall is by park ranger-led tour only, and visitors are expected to walk through a security area and metal detector before being allowed inside. Small bags are recommended, and be sure to visit the website for a list of items not allowed inside.

Visitors who enjoy an evening stroll should know that the area is quite dramatic at night. You may not be able to get inside the buildings, but the entire Old City area is lit up brightly and crowds are almost non-existent. However, there are plenty of lively bars and restaurants on the adjacent streets if you wish to have dinner or drinks in the area.

## What's to Do Nearby

Philadelphia's Old City district is home to just about everything historical in the city. This compact and often quaint area is the hub for all things worth seeing from the colonial days. In this part of town, you can see the world-famous [Liberty Bell](#), [Carpenters' Hall](#), the [National Constitution Center](#), and Benjamin Franklin's grave at Christ Church Burial Ground. When you're ready for a break or a meal, be sure to visit [City Tavern](#), one of the oldest restaurants in the city where the menu reflects a number of traditional specialties and the staff wear outfits from the olden days. Another great spot nearby is the [Bourse Food Hall](#), which has been recently refurbished and is now home to a number of food stands and cafés.