

Museum of the American Revolution: The Complete Guide

By Marla Cimini



Opened in 2017, Philadelphia's Museum of the American Revolution is a fascinating destination that showcases a number of interactive exhibits focusing on the revolutionary war. It's a great educational activity for the whole family from avid history buffs to kids who are learning about the country's founding.

Situated in the Old City neighborhood in Philadelphia (close to the Liberty Bell, [Independence Hall](#), and the Constitution Center) this expansive museum provides a full overview of the many events leading up to the Revolutionary War, as well as the colonies, troops—and the many individuals—who were affected across the globe. The collection includes documents, weapons, examples of clothing, artwork, sculpture, and household items from the era.

History

Philadelphia was chosen as the ideal location for this museum because of its historical significance during the Revolutionary War. The city was home to the founding fathers, the site of the first continental congress, and was also the country's former capital.

The American Revolution occurred over two centuries ago when the original 13 colonies revolted against England, who desperately wanted to retain control of the "new world." Many horrific battles were fought between 1765 and 1783, eventually leading to America's independence from Great Britain and the establishment of the United States.

The museum's devoted historical team worked for years to curate over 400 authentic artifacts (from the Philadelphia area as well as across the world) to bring to life the elements of the American Revolution. The 120,000-square-foot museum officially opened its doors on April 19, 2017, which is the anniversary of the famed "shot heard 'round the world," that marked the official beginning of the war.



How to Visit

The Museum of the American Revolution is popular with locals as well as tourists, so expect it to be a busy destination – especially during summer vacation and on weekends. The Museum often hosts special events (especially during the Independence Day timeframe), so remember to check the website in advance of your visit.

It's best if you have at least two hours to spend in this museum, as there is a variety of galleries packed with items on display, as well as theaters and interactive activities. You don't want to rush through this meaningful collection.

Highlights of the Museum

The museum is a fully interactive experience that's geared toward adults as well as children. Though the building is new, the architecture reflects colonial days, and you'll feel like you've taken a step back in time as you enter and ascend the stunning, sweeping circular staircase that takes visitors to the exhibits.

Some of the museum's many alluring highlights include one of the most important and rarest items in the museum is General George Washington's authentic headquarters tent that he personally used from 1778 to 1783. It's kept in a 300-square-foot climate-controlled case. Other especially interesting items include:

- The American flag with thirteen stars.
- Baby booties that were fashioned from a red British soldier's coat.
- A collection of silver camp cups used by George Washington's troops.
- An American musket that was commissioned by George Washington.
- A variety of oil paintings that depict war participants from America, France, and England.
- An official French presentation sword, inscribed with the words "Ex Dono Regis," meaning "Given by the king."
- Visitors also have the chance to experience aromas from that timeframe, including scents of sap from pine needles used on battleships and tea leaves from the tea that was tossed in the harbor during the famed Boston Tea Party.
- There are so many shared personal experiences featured in the museum. As you explore the displays, you'll learn about the individual stories from women, men, slaves, and children who played a role in the war.
- On weekends, the museum hosts a special event, "Revolution Place" on its lower level that's geared especially to children (between the ages of 5 and 12 years old). It features several compelling re-enactments from the 1700s, including a home, a military camp, a tavern, and a meeting house. All of these locations were key to the revolution and through the museum's interactive environments, show a glimpse of what life was like at that time.



Where to Eat and Shop

During your visit, be sure to grab lunch or a light bite at the museum's spacious and airy Cross Keys Café, which is open to the public and located on the first floor. It serves up a robust selection of specialties inspired by the colonial days, such as chicken pot pie, Berkshire ham on pretzel rolls, and macaroni and cheese. The menu also includes overstuffed sandwiches, generously-sized salads, entrees, and desserts such as Tun Tavern bread pudding.

And if you're in the mood for some shopping, plan to spend a little time in the gift shop after you enjoy the museum. The on-site shop contains an abundance of interesting Revolutionary-era related items, including books, artwork, T-shirts, pens, art prints, and toys.