

# Please Touch Museum: The Complete Guide

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If there's one special place in [Philadelphia](#) where children can freely explore and play to their hearts' content, it's the [Please Touch Museum](#). True to its name, it's a place that encourages kids to be curious, ask questions, and learn by touching, exploring, climbing, and building. Featuring an array of unique interactive exhibits, carefully created programs, and special educational events throughout the year, this charming and magical museum in Fairmount Park's Memorial Hall is open to children (and adults) of all ages.



## History

First opened in 1976 as a pilot program within the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences museum, the Please Touch Museum was initially housed in a 2,200-square-foot space. Within seven years it relocated twice: once in 1978 and later in 1983, when the museum moved to a 30,000 square-foot building on 21<sup>st</sup> Street, within the city's museum district.

The following 10 years brought an abundance of changes and growth. The museum was officially accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, and it soon became a top city destination for families.

In 2008, the Please Touch Museum moved into its current location at Memorial Hall. The historic building was originally built as an art gallery for the 1876 Centennial International Exhibition, the First United States World's Fair.



## Highlights

Focusing on learning through collaboration, communication, and creativity, the museum's goal is for children to gain emotional, social, and intellectual skills that will become invaluable as they grow and mature. The creative and fun hands-on exhibits invite children to practice fine motor skills, decision-making, creative thinking, collaboration, and much more. Several of the museum's permanent attractions include:

- **Wonderland:** An Alice in Wonderland-themed experience where kids can explore a hedge maze, wander through a mirrored room, and play a game of croquet with pink flamingos.
- **Healthy Me:** Children can pretend to shop for dinner at a grocery store, take an X-ray of their doll, and garden.
- **River Adventures:** Guests make a big splash in this tiny replica of the Schuylkill River. They can float boats, pump water, learn how locks and dams work, and check out the "Nature's Pond Toddler area," too.
- **Rocket Room:** This exhibit is truly "out of this world," as kids can learn about the planets and solar system, pretend to pilot a space ship, launch rockets, and more.
- **Imagination Playground:** In this room, kids can play with giant foam blocks and be as creative as they wish.
- **Roadside Attractions:** This interactive exhibit is all about transportation. Children can pretend to drive a bus or create their own car in the museum's "garage." They can also concoct special frozen flavors at the ice cream stand.

- **Happy Camper:** This fun experience lets guests enjoy the “outdoors” by stargazing, learning about wildlife, and even roasting marshmallows!
- **Adventure Camp:** Guests can climb into a “treehouse” and participate in a number of activities to enhance fine motor skills, including turning gears, ringing bells, and looking through a periscope.
- **Story Time Cabin:** Filled with books to read, this area is a low-key choice for those who wish to take a break and have a relaxing moment.

## Dining

You don't need to leave the museum to grab a bite to eat. The Please Touch Museum features the Garden Grill Café, a casual dining spot with a small menu that focuses on a variety of kids' favorites: seasonal soups, wraps, sandwiches, hot dogs, chicken, freshly-made grilled cheese, and hand-tossed pizza (you can order either by the slice or a whole pie). There are options for those who have allergies or dietary restrictions as well. You'll also find a few choices for snacks, such as fruit cups, yogurt, and Philly soft pretzels.



## How to Visit

A legendary destination in Philadelphia, The Please Touch Museum is popular with locals as well as visitors. It is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. On Wednesday, it's open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on Sunday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Weekends are the most crowded, so plan to visit during the week if you want more space to explore. Be sure to [check out the website](#) in advance of your visit, as there are often special events on weekends.

There is on-site parking (\$16 a car; free for members) as well as free on-street parking. If you opt for public transit, take the Route 38 bus to Memorial Hall or the Philash Shuttle to Stop 13.

Admission to the museum is \$19.95 for adults and children over one year old. For children under one, admission is free. To ride the carousel, it's an additional \$3 (or \$5 for an unlimited number of rides).