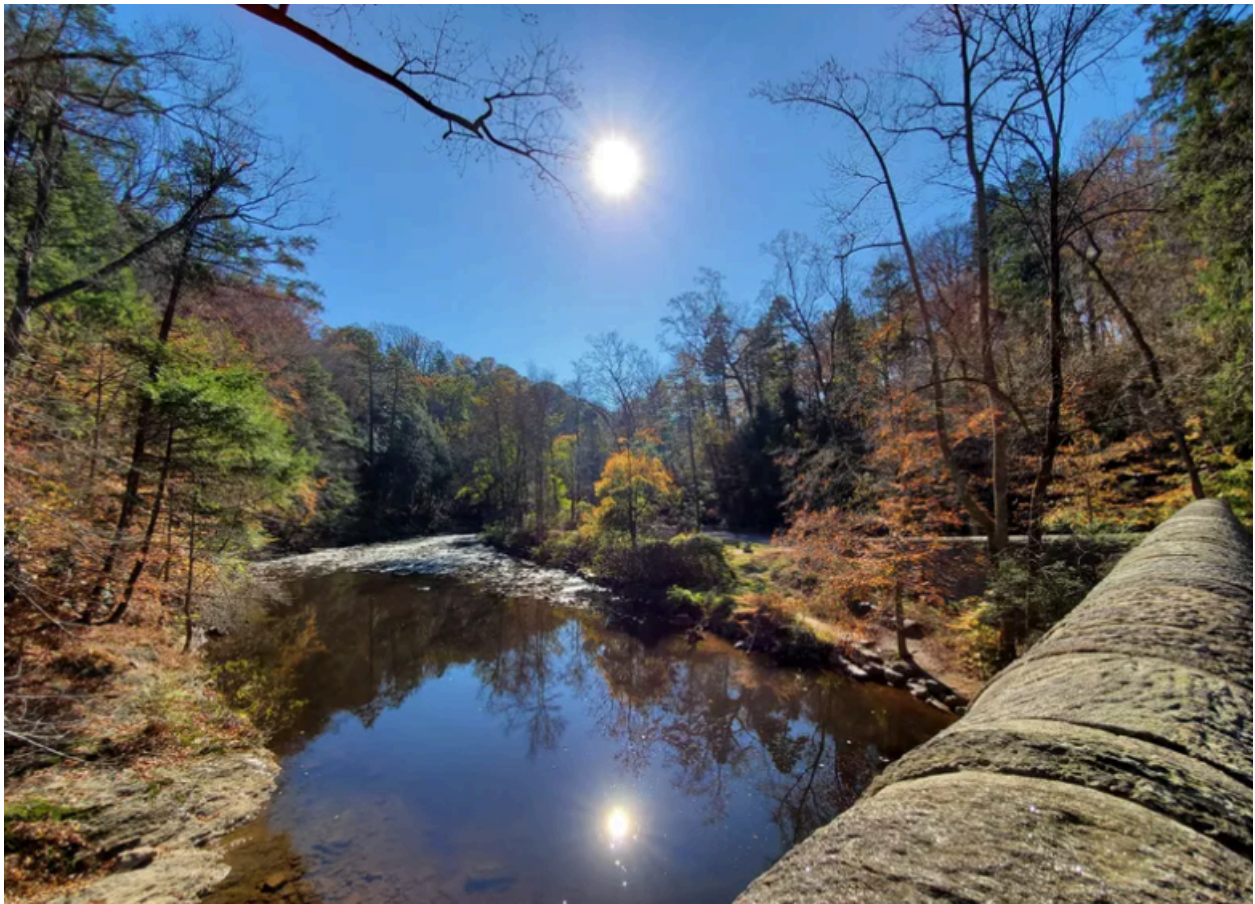


The Top 10 Hikes Near Philadelphia

By Marla Cimini

Nature lovers don't need to travel far from Philadelphia to enjoy some peace and tranquility or a glimpse of wildlife. There are a variety of great hiking trails in the area with picturesque views and diverse terrain. Since the region is rich in history, some of these trails are home to historical landmarks as well. What's more, all of these options are ideal for all levels and ages and are either in (or very close to) the city, so check out these fun outdoor options while visiting.

1. Wissachickon Valley Park



The 2,000-acre [Wissachickon Valley Park](#) is a popular destination and attracts more than a million visitors each year. Featuring nearly 50 miles of hiking trails, there are incredible options for nature-lovers at every age and level. A go-to trail is Forbidden Drive, which stretches for about 5 miles, running along the picturesque Wissachickon Creek (which is a cool place to relax in the summer). This flat, family-friendly pathway is easy for kids, as well as runners, mountain bikers, and those on horseback. In addition to enjoying wooded areas and pretty meadows, you can check out historical sites while strolling along this trail as well.

2. Valley Forge National Park



Featuring more than 30 miles of undulating trails, [Valley Forge National Historic Park](#) is the famous site of George Washington and the continental army's encampment during the Revolutionary War. This lovely 3,500-acre destination includes hiking, biking, and horseback riding trails that wind past historical landmarks, open fields and stunning scenery. There are a number of trails to choose from, and the Joseph Plumb Martin Trail (named after a soldier) includes a 5-mile inner loop, a paved section, and plenty of historical sites, such as recreated campsites, sculptures, and more.

3.Fairmount Park



Comprising two specific park sections (east and west), [Fairmount Park](#) is one of the largest municipal park systems in the United States. This massive green space is divided by the Schuylkill River and is home to the Philadelphia Zoo, picnic areas, playgrounds, statues, a Japanese tea house, and more. There are plenty of walking and hiking options here, too. A local runners' favorite is the Boxer's Trail, which is a wide pathway that runs about 3.8 miles from the city's Strawberry Mansion neighborhood. It meanders through a wooded area and offers a pretty view of the river, and you might catch a glimpse of wildlife, such as deer, squirrels, and rabbits along the way.

4.Fort Washington State Park

At nearly 500 acres, [Fort Washington](#) is an expansive state park in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, and offers visitors an abundance of activities, including hiking, fishing, picnicking, and more. It's also a great spot for bird watching, as it attracts many diverse types of migrating birds during specific seasons. Although experienced hikers can enjoy challenging trails in this area, the Green Ribbon trail is a fun, family-friendly 2.5-mile path that is available to walkers and bikers and even cross-country skiers in winter. The park is open every day from dawn until dusk.

5. Delaware Canal State Park



The [Delaware Canal State Park](#) offers over 800 acres of fields and wooded areas, but the most well-known trail in this location is the 60-mile towpath that runs parallel to the Delaware River and invites visitors to stroll or hike while admiring the scenery by the shoreline. Years ago, the canal was used for transporting coal and other products from Lehigh Canal to Philadelphia's nearby industrial centers. The operation shut down in the 1930s. With a number of easy access points, this serene, historic path meanders past farms and through historic towns, a 90-acre pond, as well as 11 river islands, including Hendricks, Loors, and others.

6.Barclay Farm



A short drive outside of the city is [Barclay Farmstead](#), a small historical farm situated in the city of Cherry Hill, New Jersey. This area features an easy, flat, brief nature trail through a wooded area with signage along the way that provides a brief description of the homestead and the land, which dates back to the early 1800s. In addition to the farmhouse, which offers tours of the interior several days each week, there's a nice-sized playground for kids, and (in season), you can wander the grounds and check out the impressive and thriving community gardens. (There's even a covered bridge nearby)!

7. Washington Crossing Historic Park



Marking the site where George Washington crossed the Delaware River during the Revolutionary War en route to Trenton, New Jersey, in 1776, Washington Crossing Historic Park includes more than 500 acres of lovely landscape and stunning views along the river. This park offers a variety of fun, easy hikes that are less than 3 miles (designated by colors: blue, green, and red) and offer loops for casual visitors. The best place to park is the Nature Center, which provides maps and information about the area. They can also offer more challenging options for avid hikers.

8. John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum



This under-the-radar wildlife refuge is actually very close to the Philadelphia airport, yet visitors feel as if they are miles away from civilization. As the first urban refuge in the United States, the [John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum](#) has been designated as an “important bird area” by the National Audubon Society, there have been more than aviary 300 species spotted here in recent years. With more than 10 miles of mostly easy hiking trails surrounding an expansive pond, the refuge offers a multitude of lookout points, and is home to many other animals in addition to birds. Be sure to stop by the Visitor’s Center when you arrive, as it offers an abundance of essential information.

9. Pennypack Park



Situated in the heart of Northeast Philadelphia, [Pennypack Park](#) is a welcome oasis with approximately 1,600 acres of wooded areas and fields. Although the land was acquired by William Penn in the 1600s, it was the former home to the Lenni-Lepe Indian tribe and still features some historical monuments, such as one of the country's oldest stone bridges. The park offers hundreds of miles of hiking and biking trails (and guided tours on some days) with opportunities to spot wildlife, such as deer, turtles, ducks, raccoons, and many species of birds.

10.Schulykill Banks



Named “Hidden River” by the Dutch settlers, the unassuming Schuylkill River runs through the center of Philadelphia. Schuylkill Banks is a peaceful but popular park that is situated parallel to the river, with much to see and do. The trails in this park pass Bartram’s Garden, a historical site featuring colorful flowers and plants; Fairmount Water Works; and a fishing pier. This park is mostly paved and also features an expansive 2,000-foot boardwalk (with fantastic skyline views) that stretches from Locust Street to South Street. The easiest trail is the East Falls Loop, an 8-mile path that takes hikers and bikers from the northern point of the park to the south. (And be sure to check out the website before you go—there’s fishing here and a skateboard park hidden beneath the Grays Ferry Bridge).