

Escape to Philadelphia

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Spa and Guest Room at the Rittenhouse

Ever wish New York was a little cleaner, smaller, more walkable, yet still full of great shopping, culture, and night-life? Well then, you may be pleasantly surprised by Philadelphia - a perfect weekend escape just a short drive from New York City.

For an enchanting weekend, book a room at the luxurious Rittenhouse Hotel. Combining the ambiance and service of an inn with the sophistication and superb amenities of a world-class hotel, The Rittenhouse serves as a perfect setting for your weekend explorations. Its central location in the heart of the posh Rittenhouse Square shopping district puts you within walking distance of chic restaurants, acclaimed art galleries, and an outstanding array of stores. That is, if you ever make it out of the hotel.

The Rittenhouse prides itself on the high level of personal attention and service offered to its clientele. Top-notch staffers will go out of their way to satisfy your needs. In fact, hotel manager, David G. Benton has bent over backwards to please some of the hotel's celebrity regulars - from building custom furniture for Pavarotti's suite, to revamping a guestroom's shower into a steamroom for Bruce Willis.

The 98 guestrooms are quite spacious, elegantly decorated, and feature an oversized marble bathroom - with a large bathtub, mini TV, telephone and other amenities. The rooms overlook the park and afford a dramatic view of the cityscape and the Schuylkill River.

For muscle toning or aerobics, head down to the Health Club and Spa. Work up a sweat on the state-of-the-art exercise machines, take a dip in the indoor pool, and detoxify in the steamroom or sauna. For real pampering, indulge in a body wrap, a facial or a massage.

If you worked up an appetite, you won't need to look too far. The Rittenhouse offers a variety of venues. The renowned TreeTops Restaurant features innovative regional American cuisine, highlighting the culinary creations of executive chef, Jim Coleman. A well-known commodity, Coleman has recently published a cookbook, "Heart Healthy," and cooks regularly on his weekly TV cooking show. More formal dining awaits you upstairs at Nicholas Nickolas. Enjoy fresh seafood with a unique accent as the overindulgent staff ensures your complete satisfaction.

If you can escape the lure of the Hotel, explore the charms of Philadelphia. After window shopping at the posh boutiques and galleries in the neighborhood, head to the historic district.

As the first capital city and birthplace of the United States, Philadelphia is replete with history. Tour "the most historic square mile in America," Independence National Historic Park, with its refurbished public buildings, old streets and, of course, Liberty Bell. Rangers staff the park, answer any questions and provide free tours. Take a tour through the venerable halls; you'll be transported back to Colonial America as the guide

recreates scenes such as the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the writing of the U.S. Constitution.

Philadelphia museums also have much to offer. Start off at the city's premiere cultural attraction, the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Modeled after a Greco-Roman temple, the beautiful edifice houses over 200 galleries. The collections offer a full range of both fine and decorative arts spanning over 2,000 years.

A short stroll away from the Museum of Art, along the majestic Benjamin Franklin Parkway, you'll find a wealth of attractions. Noteworthy are the Rodin Museum displaying the largest collection of Rodin originals outside of Paris, and the Franklin Institute Science Museum with hundreds of hands-on exhibits and demonstrations.

No art lover should miss Philadelphia's other hot ticket, the Barnes Foundation, located in a nearby suburb. After a recent worldwide tour, this private art exhibit has returned to its original Philadelphia estate. It will stun you with one of the world's greatest collections of Impressionist and Post Impressionist art, including 175 Renoirs, 66 Cezannes, 65 Matisses, Degases, Picassos and many more. Wallpapered from floor to ceiling, these masterpieces are a sight to behold.

Another unique experience awaits you at the Mutter Museum. Observe the history of medicine come to life with 100 year old medical instruments and exhibits of medical oddities including a

The Clocks that decorate Independence Hall

7 foot human skeleton, a collection of famous skulls, and many other historical medical artifacts.

Dining in Philadelphia is akin to that of any major city, with a multitude of world-class restaurants. The most famous is undoubtedly Le Bec Fin. This renowned landmark consistently rates as one of the finest French haute cuisine restaurants in the country. Reserve your Prix-Fixe dinner well in advance. For a fast food Philadelphia treat, be sure to pick-up an original Philly cheese steak on South Street.

For more information on dining, sightseeing and cultural events in the city, contact the Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Center 1-800-537-7676. The Rittenhouse Hotel can be reached by calling 1-800-635-1042.

W.C. Fields may have been joking when he remarked "On the whole, I'd rather be in Philadelphia," but why don't you see for yourself? You won't be disappointed.

