**Philadelphia Museums**

A field trip to Philadelphia should certainly include visits to some of the great museums that are located in our city. Many of the museums here have items of historical importance that are specific to Philadelphia, highlighting some of the events that occurred here. Other museums contain amazing artifacts, and works of art from famous artists. Please read below about some of the Philadelphia museums you can visit while on your field trips and school tours to our great city.

**The Liberty Bell Center**

The Liberty Bell in Philadelphia is an internationally known symbol of freedom. The light-filled building features historic documents and graphic images that help to explore the facts and myths about this famous and historical bell.

X-rays give an insider’s view, literally, of the Bell’s crack and inner-workings. In quiet alcoves, a short History Channel film, available in English and eight other languages, traces how abolitionists, suffragists and other groups adopted the Bell as its symbol of freedom.

Other exhibits show how the Bell’s image was used on everything from ice cream molds to wind chimes. Keep your camera handy. Soaring glass walls offer dramatic and powerful views of both the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall, just a few steps away.
History of the Bell – The bell now called the “Liberty Bell” was cast in the Whitechapel Foundry in the East End of London and sent to the building currently known as Independence Hall, then the Pennsylvania State House, in 1753.

It was an impressive looking object, 12 feet in circumference around the lip with a 44-pound clapper. Inscribed at the top was part of a Biblical verse from Leviticus, “Proclaim Liberty throughout all the Land unto all the Inhabitants thereof.”

Unfortunately, the clapper cracked the bell on its first use. A couple of local artisans, John Pass and John Stow, recast the bell twice, once adding more copper to make it less brittle and then adding silver to sweeten its tone. No one was quite satisfied, but it was put in the tower of the State House anyway.

**National Constitution Center**

The world’s only museum dedicated to the U.S. Constitution. It’s only four pages long, but the U.S. Constitution is among the most influential and important documents in the history of the world.

This 160,000-square-foot complex known as the National Constitution Center explores and explains this amazing document through high-tech exhibits, artifacts, and interactive displays. The Kimmel Theater, a 350-seat star-shaped theater, features “Freedom Rising,” a multimedia production combining film, a live actor and video projection on a 360° screen to tell the stirring story of “We the people.”

Then experience it yourself: wear judicial robes to render your opinion on key Supreme Court cases, then take the Presidential oath of the office. In Signers’ Hall, where life-size bronze figures of the Constitution’s signers and dissenters are displayed, visitors can choose to sign or dissent. One of the rare original public copies of the Constitution is on display.

**Independence Hall**

Birthplace of both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. The Experience of Independence Hall is rooted in our nation’s history. The writers and eventual signers of our Constitution risked everything — “their lives, their fortune and their sacred honor.” During the blistering summer of 1776, 56 courageous men gathered at the Pennsylvania State House and defied the King of England. Eleven years later, representatives from 12 states gathered to shape the U.S. Constitution, finally creating one unified nation.

The guided tour of Independence Hall, led by National Park rangers, begins in the courtroom where lawyers from opposing sides shared tables and law books.

George Washington’s “rising sun” chair dominates the Assembly Room which is arranged as it was during the Constitutional Convention. In the adjacent West Wing, the original inkstand used to sign the Declaration and an original draft of the Constitution are displayed.

**The Franklin Institute**

One of the oldest and most beloved science museums in the country. The Franklin Institute is as clever as its namesake. Man y of the attractions are “touchable” and allow visitors to explore science in disciplines ranging from sports to space.

Highlights include The Sports Challenge, which uses virtual-reality technology to illustrate the physics of sports; The Train Factory’s climb-aboard steam engine; Space Command’s simulated earth-orbit research station; a fully equipped weather station; and exhibits on electricity.

Films like “Everest” and “The Lion King” appear to be larger-than-life on the Tuttleman IMAX Theater’s 80-foot screen;  visitors can witness galaxies forming and deep space exploration in North America’s 2nd oldest planetarium, which was renovated in 2002. As a result, the theatre now boasts some amazing and advanced technology. Go and check out the 3D Theater and the indoor SkyBike.

The History of The Franklin Institute – In 1824, The Franklin Institute opened in Independence Hall to honor Benjamin Franklin and his inventiveness. In 1934, with the construction of the current building and the adjacent Fels Planetarium, it became a hands-on science museum. The IMAX Theater and the Mandell Center were added in 1990. Today, it’s Pennsylvania’s most visited museum. In the museum’s rotunda is the Benjamin Franklin National Memorial, with a 20-foot-tall marble statue of the scientist and Founding Father.

**The Barnes Foundation**

Scheduled to open again in the Spring of 2012, the new location of the Barnes at 20th Street and the Benjamin Franklin Parkway will be open to the public six days a week.

Visitors from around the world make the journey to this destination in Philadelphia to view 181 Renoirs, 69 Cézannes and 59 Matisses, along with works by Manet, Degas, Seurat, Prendergrast, Titian and Picasso.

One important note about the Barnes is with the way the art is displayed – symmetrically arranged according to size, and often paired with artifacts and furniture (think: African sculpture, Pennsylvania Dutch folk art, antique Chinese paintings) organized around themes and formal elements. The scheme is the physical manifestation of the teachings of the man who collected the works, Albert C. Barnes.

**The Philadelphia Museum of Art**

This iconic Philadelphia cultural landmark is located at the end of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. The vast collections of priceless art make it the 3rd largest art museum in the nation.

The Philadelphia Museum has large collections in Renaissance, American, Impressionist and Modern art. Noteworthy pieces include a Rogier van der Weyden altarpiece, a “Bathers” piece by Cezanne, an entire room devoted to Philadelphia’s own Thomas Eakins, and a Marcel Duchamp mixed-media Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors (The Large Glass), exactly as the artist created and placed it.

The museum has over 75 rooms defining the collection of time periods, showcasing art ranging from medieval times to Indian temples. The museum regularly hosts visitors with shows to organize different exhibits, displaying works from Degas to Cezanne and others.

There is an important aspect of the History of the Museum itself… It was founded during the nation’s first centennial in 1876 as a museum of decorative arts, but soon after outgrew the space in the original Fairmount Park Memorial Hall. Once moved into the latest building (opened in 1928), takes the shape of three adjoined Greek temples.

The chief designer Julian Abele was the very first African-American graduate from the University of Pennsylvania’s architecture school. The designer was inspired by temples he visited during a trip throughout Greece.

**Civil War Museum and Library (Underground Railroad)**

Learn about the Civil War at the oldest chartered Civil War institution in America and read the personal stories of the abolitionists and others involved in the Underground Railroad, and the antislavery movement.

**Battleship New Jersey Memorial & Museum**

Tour the Navy’s most decorated warship and visit simulated operations areas spanning five deck levels. It was the second ship of the United States’ Navy to be named in the honor of the US state New Jersey.

**Independence Seaport Museum**

Explore the region’s maritime heritage with interactive exhibits, magnificent ship models and more than 14,000 artifacts. Visit Admiral Dewey’s 1892 cruiser Olympia and the World War II submarine, Becuna.

**National Liberty Museum**

Celebrate American heroes and the ideals of freedom at this museum honoring more than 1,000 outstanding individuals of all ethnic backgrounds. As an independent learning and exhibit center, it is supported by visitors, community leaders and foundation interested in protecting America’s heritage of freedom.

**The African American Museum in Philadelphia**

This remarkable museum is dedicated to collecting, preserving, and interpreting the material and intellectual culture of African Americans. It is famous because it is the first museum funded and built by a municipality to help interpret and exhibit the heritage of African-Americans.

**University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology**

Uncover ancient civilizations including a 12-ton sphinx, Egyptian mummies, artifacts from Alaska and the Great Northwest. It is also known as Penn Museum. It is a famous archaeology and anthropology museum that is a part of University of Pennsylvania.

**College of Physicians of Philadelphia/Mütter Museum**

Learn about issues in heath and the history of medicine, visit a medicinal plant garden and see real specimens at the Mütter Museum with its collection of medical artifacts and pathology. You do not need to be a health and medicine lover to visit it; it will help you no matter who you are and what you do.

**National Museum of American Jewish History**

Judaism is one of the oldest religions in the world. Jewish people have played an important role in the history of the world; especially, in the United States. Learn about Jewish Americans and their place in history at this museum offering changing exhibits.