

WEST PHILADELPHIA

pennttracks

WALKING
TOURS OF
PHILADELPHIA

OVERVIEW:

This tour will take you through beautiful Victorian neighborhoods to great ethnic restaurants and a great park—all near Penn's campus. Welcome to West Philly! West Philadelphia began as the site of summer homes for colonial elites and then became Philadelphia's first suburb in the late 19th century after the creation of the electric streetcar. Lined with Italianate, Victorian and Queen Anne "cottages," the neighborhoods today house faculty and students of Drexel University and the University of Pennsylvania.

WHY YOU SHOULD RETURN:

Go to any of the rooftop lounges in the high-rise College Houses, and you'll see that Penn's neighborhood is a sea of green, thanks to its tree lined streets, small gardens and Clark Park. Part streetcar suburb, part international food court, the collection of architecture and cuisine alone make West Philly worth exploring. This is your new neighborhood so you should take advantage of it!

Walk to the corner of 40th and Spruce Street to start your tour.

1.) **School of Dental Medicine** *40th and Spruce Streets*

The School of Dental Medicine was founded in 1878. The famed gunslinger Doc Holiday was an early graduate. Across the street is Copabanana, where you can get a tasty burger, Nara, a great Japanese restaurant, a CD store, and an arcade.

2.) **St. Andrew's Collegiate Chapel** *42nd and Spruce Streets*

The Philadelphia Divinity School was established in association with Penn in 1857 to educate Episcopal priests. The Chapel, modeled on Oxford's English Gothic style, was built in 1923. The park around the Chapel is now home to the new Sadie Alexander Elementary School, created through a partnership between Penn and the surrounding neighborhood.

3.) **4200 Block of Spruce St.** *4206-18 Spruce Street*

This row of Queen Anne style homes has been called "the most distinguished block of late 19th-century houses in the city." They were built in 1886, about the same time as Penn's Fine Arts Library. Notice the ornate porches (found throughout West Philly), and especially the jutting gables at the corner.

4.) **Clark Park** *43rd and Baltimore Streets*

Clark Park is one of the great public spaces of West Philadelphia. In the warm months it hosts community festivals and a weekly farmer's market. At the southern end of the park is the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia, which contains the oldest school of pharmacy in the Western Hemisphere (founded in 1821). The park contains the world's only life-sized statue of Charles Dickens, a secret community garden, and a fountain that served the Civil War hospital that was on this site.

5.) **Baltimore Avenue** *Baltimore Ave between 45th and 48th Streets*

This street is an old turnpike that went from Philadelphia to Baltimore, and is one of the major arteries through West Philadelphia. The trolleys that still run down the street are what made this neighborhood the most desirable suburb of Philadelphia in the decades after the Civil War because the streetcars provided easy access to jobs in Center City.

6.) **Dahlak Restaurant in Cedar Park** *4708 Baltimore Avenue*

Many recent African emigrants have settled in West Philly, and the neighborhood restaurants reflect their presence. Dahlak serves delicious Ethiopian and Eritrean cuisine, which you eat with your hands using the injera bread as a scoop. If you want to try West African food, Le Dakar is a great Senegalese restaurant at 4527 Baltimore. For great Thai and Laotian food try the Vientiane Café right next door to Dahlak.

7.) **Garden Court** *47th looking down Larchwood and Osage Streets*

The Garden Court neighborhood is on the National Register of Historic Places, and is one of the most charming residential areas in all of Philadelphia. The homes on Larchwood and Osage Avenues are simultaneously suburban and urbane, and they provide attractive city living for many Penn faculty and staff. The homes were designed in the 1920's and were among the first housing developments in Philadelphia to take into account the family automobile.

8.) **Rx** *45th and Spruce Streets*

This used to be an apothecary, hence the name. It was reborn as a restaurant by a Penn alum just a few years ago and is flourishing. If it's too crowded, try Marigold Kitchen at the corner of 45th Street and Larchwood Avenue. (Another great restaurant founded by Penn alums is the Bubble House at 3404 Sansom St. with a huge tea menu and fresh Asian fusion food.)

9.) **Koch's Deli** *4309 Locust Street*

People say this is the best deli in the city. However, it's no secret, so expect to wait in line with all the other people who appreciate a great sandwich. Don't worry, there are free samples while you wait!

10.) **St. Mark's Square** *South of Walnut between 42nd and 43rd Streets*

This is another one of West Philly's famous, beautiful blocks. Note the ornate iron fences. A number of Penn professors make their homes here.

11.) **The Fresh Grocer & The Bridge Cinema De Lux** *40th and Walnut St.*

The Fresh Grocer is a great addition to the neighborhood. Besides groceries, they have a wide variety of prepared foods, including pizzas, Chinese food, sushi, sandwiches, and more. The Bridge movie theater opened in the fall of 2002, and has six screens with many of the latest blockbusters. Be sure to try Marathon Grill next door which has amazing brunch, a huge menu, a smoothie bar, and prices you can afford. Metropolitan Bakery just across the street is a cozy bakery with irresistible sweets and strong coffee.

Also of interest:

The Foundation

Located in the Rotunda at 4014 Walnut Street. Live hip hop, rock, jazz, electronic and all-age shows. See www.foundationarts.org.

The Paul Robeson House

A National Historic Landmark. Call for an appointment, Monday through Saturday. Located at 4951 Walnut Street, (215) 747-4675.

See www.ucityphila.org for more information.

Tour developed by Poor Richard's Walking Tours



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