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The Scene: Philadelphia PHLASH Downtown Loop Opening Day

Cal Setar | @Calsfro Mar 21, 2019 0 1 min to read



As the weather temps rise, get cheap rides to different city sites and attractions on the Philadelphia PHLASH. | Image: Visit Philly

Photo by J. Fusco for VISIT PHIL

Philadelphia PHLASH Downtown Loop Opening Day

From Penn's Landing to the Museum of the American Revolution, from Eastern State Penitentiary to the madness of the Mutter, from the National Constitution Center to the The Franklin Institute to the Philadelphia Zoo and everywhere between and beyond, the PHLASH downtown loop has you covered.

Re-opening on Thursday for the first time in 2019 with cheap fares - \$2 for a ride, \$5 for a day

pass - and an every-15-minute service time, there's no better way to get around downtown this summer.

Which is a good thing since, ya know, Philly's amazing and all and, somehow, despite already existing for close to three-plus centuries, despite all the amazing stuff that's been in place since Mr. Franklin first walked these streets, despite the Liberty Bell and the Art Museum and the fact that democracy as we know it (knew it?!) literally sprung out of the cobblestones comprising those streets, still getting better.

Thinking about hitting the Museum of Jewish American History for an afternoon of solemn remembrance and sincere reflection? PHLASH has you covered.

Hoping to hop aboard and speed on over to the Shops at Liberty Place for a quick culinary and/or sartorial slay sesh? PHLASH has you covered.

How about a few pictures of you, pretending to punch the Rocky statue as your wife and kids look on from just out of focus, their faces painted with an alarming mixture of confusion and shame? Sure, PHLASH still has you covered.

And what if you're determined to scar your kids irrevocably with a blindfolded trip to the top of One Liberty Place, where you'll wait until you've reached the perfect place, the very edge of the observation deck, to whisk the blindfold away and shout, "Fly, my children! Fly!"

Technically, yeah, PHLASH has you covered.

Philadelphia PHLASH Downtown Loop Opening Day | March 28. 10am. \$2/ride, \$5/day pass, \$7/two-day pass. Downtown Philadelphia. visitphilly.com

– CAL SETAR | [@CALSFERO](https://twitter.com/CALSFERO)

PHILADELPHIA BUSINESS JOURNAL

Travel & Tourism

Philly Phlash buses are back for a new season



The Independence Visitor Center with the Phlash bus. | PHOTO BY M. EDLOW FOR IVCC



By [Kenneth Hilario](#) – Reporter, Philadelphia Business Journal

The Philly Phlash Downtown Loop public transit service is back for its 25th year in operation. And, along with providing transportation to popular attractions like the Philadelphia Zoo, the service generates millions of dollars into the local economy.

The Phlash season kicked off on Thursday, operating from 10 a.m. through 6 p.m. The buses will stop at 20 stops near top tourist destinations like the Eastern State Penitentiary, Delaware River Waterfront, Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Museum of the American Revolution.

See below to see the 2019 service schedule.

New this year are a text alert system providing updates in real time and an online-only, \$8 two-day pass.

An all-day pass costs \$5, and single rides come in at \$2. Rides are free for children 4 and under, seniors, and those with SEPTA Key, Trailpass, TransPass, one-day Independence Pass or Family one-day Independence Pass.

Tourism driver

The Independence Visitor Center Corp. began managing the Phlash in 2012, and in 2014 selected West Chester-based Krapf's Coaches Inc. to roll out [new vehicles](#).

Ridership has continued to grow — there were 428,628 riders in 2018, a new record that grew 17 percent over 2017, which was itself a record-setting year, according to the corporation.

Over its 25-year history, the Phlash service has "established itself as a valuable component of Philadelphia's tourism infrastructure," reads a 2016 report by [Econsult Solutions](#) Inc.

Phlash generates about \$2.74 million in revenue to the attractions it serves, according to the report, based on 189,000 riders.

That figure, however, is based on the number of visitors delivered by the service to only 10 attraction partners and one-way, direct trips — not the total ridership reported by the Independence Visitor Center Corp., which reflects each time a passenger boards the vehicle.

The \$2.74 million impact in the 2016 report, corporation officials say, is a "conservative estimate" as a result.

Total ridership in 2016 was 316,000, 377,325 in 2017 and 428,628 in 2018, according to the corporation.

Greater Philadelphia in 2017 had a [record 43.3 million](#) domestic visitors, whose spending generated \$11.5 billion in economic impact.

About 83 percent of Phlash riders in 2018 were tourists, and 80 percent visited additional attractions because of the Phlash buses' accessibility, according to responses from surveys conducted by Econsult in 2018.

Phlash helps grow the economy in a number of ways, according to its 2016 report. It helps visitors navigate the region more effectively, "leaving

visitors more time and energy for activity." That increases spending while improving the visitor experience.

The service also benefits the attractions served by the Phlash stops, including the Philadelphia Zoo, which received about 22,000 visitors a year, according to the Econsult report. That makes up nearly 2 percent of the over 1.2 million annual visitors.

"Phlash is one of the important pieces of the public transportation system used by thousands of zoo visitors," [Kenneth Woodson](#), the Zoo's vice president of community and government affairs, told the Business Journal.

"Phlash increases access directly to Center City and the other cultural attractions in West Fairmount Park and along the Parkway," Woodson said.

Most Zoo visitors use private vehicles to get to the zoo, but Woodson encourages the use of public transit.

The Phlash is subsidized through an allotment in the State Transportation Bill and a matched amount through funding partners.

Philly Phlash Downtown Loop 2019 service schedule

March 29 – April 28: Friday, Saturday and Sunday

May 1 – Sept. 2: Daily

September 6 – Nov. 24 Friday, Saturday and Sunday

November 29 – Dec. 30: Daily



FAMILY & PARENTING

Things to do around Philly this weekend



The Phillies host the rival Braves for a three-game set, the Plash downtown route resumes and more to do this weekend.



By Karen Rogers

Thursday, March 28, 2019

Karen Rogers zips around the region highlighting some top weekend activities for all ages.

TAKE A RIDE ON THE PHLASH DOWNTOWN LOOP

Get out and enjoy the spring weather with the Philadelphia PHLASH Downtown Loop. It resumes service for the season on Thursday. The PHLASH makes stops every 15 minutes at landmarks including Penn's Landing, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Eastern State Penitentiary, Reading Terminal Market and the Philadelphia Zoo. Prices are \$2 per person per ride or \$5 for an all-day pass. Service is free all day on opening day Thursday. [Phlash](#)



Philly pays tribute to Marian Anderson's historic Easter performance

Bobbi Booker Tribune Staff Writer Apr 19, 2019



Jillian Patricia Pirtle sings the patriotic medley made famous by Marian Anderson 80 years ago on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. The tribute was hosted by the National Park Service at the Independence Visitor Center in Philadelphia. — Emma Lee/WHYY

On Easter Sunday in 1939, more than 75,000 people gathered at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., to hear the legendary Marian Anderson sing.

Her talent already was remarkable — she began singing at Philadelphia-area Baptist churches at 6 and was called the “Baby Contralto.” But her skin was Black.

Thus, the famed African-American contralto was barred from singing at Constitution Hall in

Washington by the Daughters of the American Revolution, who owned the hall, because of her race.

First lady Eleanor Roosevelt organized the impromptu concert that would go down in history as an important moment for civil rights.

On Friday, the National Marian Anderson Museum & Historical Society teamed with the National Park Service's Independence National Historical Park to host "Marian: A Soul In Song," an 80th anniversary tribute ceremony for over 100 guests at the Independence Visitor Center.

The event was organized by classical vocalist Jillian Patricia Pirtle, who serves as National Marian Anderson Museum CEO and National Marian Anderson Scholar. Pirtle performed several solo selections Anderson was famed for, and was joined by the National Marian Anderson Opera Ensemble.

"Marian Anderson was a great lady from Philadelphia, born on the cobblestone streets of our great city on Feb. 27, 1897," said Pirtle, a protégé of the late Blanche Burton-Lyles, a concert pianist who preserved the legacy of her mentor by founding the National Marian Anderson Museum & Historical Society.

"The life she lived was one of poverty as a child, but she had a dream: She wanted to be a vocalist, a classical artist during a time when people of color, and more importantly, women of color, didn't have the opportunity to sing classical music or even be put on that type of grand stage. But she was just a girl who wanted to sing. She forged forward and she turned to her strength and her faith, to be able to see her through. And with the help of other dynamic Americans, she made a triumphant message very clear, on April 9, 1939, that we are one. We are equal. We all deserve a place in this nation for our dreams to be made real."

Anderson persevered and rose to the pinnacles of her profession. In 1930, she performed at Carnegie Hall, the first Black female to do so.

“Marian Anderson was an incredible talent [admired] all over the world,” remarked Zabeth Teelucksingh, executive director of Global Philadelphia Association. “She was not only a nationally and internationally renowned singer, but also a goodwill ambassador to the United Nations, representing the heights of American artistic achievement, and lifting her listeners up to her level wherever she performed. Marian was a unique combination of a talented singer, an incredible speaker and a woman of strong faith. As a person of color embarking on an international singing career, she broke new ground, opening doors that were too often closed to her community.”

In her time, Anderson earned great honors — the American Medal of Freedom in 1963 from President Lyndon B. Johnson, the National Medal of Arts in 1986 from President Ronald Reagan, a half-ounce gold commemorative medal with her likeness in 1980 from the U.S. Treasury. Her image has been on a U.S. Postal Service stamp, and next year will be on \$5 bills.

“I’m always urging people to use their voice by voting,” Congressman Dwight Evans said. “In this case, she literally used her voice performing at the Lincoln Memorial when she was denied the use of a concert hall because of her race. We each have an opportunity in our own lives to make a difference for the better. Most of the time, those opportunities won’t be on the big stage at Lincoln Memorial, but we can each do things that make a difference. One of the most important things you can do is in the most important role as citizen. Your voice matters. Racism is still a very real problem in America today. We stand together to fight it. Eighty years after that landmark concert, we still remember Marian Anderson not only for her tremendous talent, because she’s stood up against segregation and racism, time and time again.”

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

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MAY 08, 2019

PHOTOS: Philadelphia Zoo's WildWorks ropes course

Children can balance on ropes, climb through obstacles and take a quick zip 34-feet above the ground



BY HUGHE DILLON
PhillyVoice Contributor



HUGHE DILLON/FOR PHILLYVOICE

Guests explore the Philadelphia Zoo's new WildWorks ropes course and zip line, May 7, 2019.

There's a new way to explore the Philadelphia Zoo.

It involves an obstacle course.

The Philadelphia Zoo opened their latest exhibit, the WildWorks ropes course, on Tuesday, May 7. Guests cross bridges, balance on ropes, climb through obstacles, and can take a quick zip 34-feet above the ground, all while safely hitched to a climbing harness. There's also the WildWorks tykes system which enables children under 48 inches to explore and mimic the system used by bigger kids and adults.

Hours for WildWorks, which is being sponsored by Independence Blue Cross, are 10:00am to 4:00pm. Ticket prices vary from \$4.00 to \$10.00 and doesn't include admission to the zoo. An unlimited attractions day pass is offered from \$18.00 to \$20.00 per person and includes access to all of the attractions at the zoo

Here is a photo gallery of Tuesday's opening.



HUGHE DILLON/FOR PHILLYVOICE

James J. Cuorato, president and CEO of the Independence Visitor Center Corp. speaks at the Philadelphia Zoo's new WildWorks ropes course and zip line, May 7, 2019.



Wawa Welcome America unveils festival plans: 53 events, 6 days, all free



HADAS KUZNITS

MAY 16, 2019 - 3:31 PM



PHILADELPHIA (KYW Newsradio) — It might be the middle of May but Fourth of July excitement was building today as Welcome America unveiled some their upcoming plans at the Independence Visitor's Center.

"Six days, 53 programs, three fireworks (shows), eight tons of hoagies, 100% free," said Wawa Welcome America president and CEO Michael Delbene.

New at this year's six day Wawa Welcome America celebration, culminating on the Fourth of July is a day of service.



"I think it's really important that we as a festival recognize the contribution that is made when you roll up your sleeves and get to work," Delbene said.

He says there will be three fireworks displays this year.

"We have a fireworks display on Saturday, Monday and then Thursday the 4th (of July)," he said.

The festival takes place June 29 through July 4.

"There really is one marquee event every day," he said. "One of the things that I really love is the block party on Sunday, Gospel on Independence on Sunday night. We've got the United States Army Field Band coming on Monday, Wawa hoagie day, the concert on Thursday."



Welcome America will end with a free party on the Ben Franklin Parkway, featuring Jennifer Hudson and Meghan Trainor.

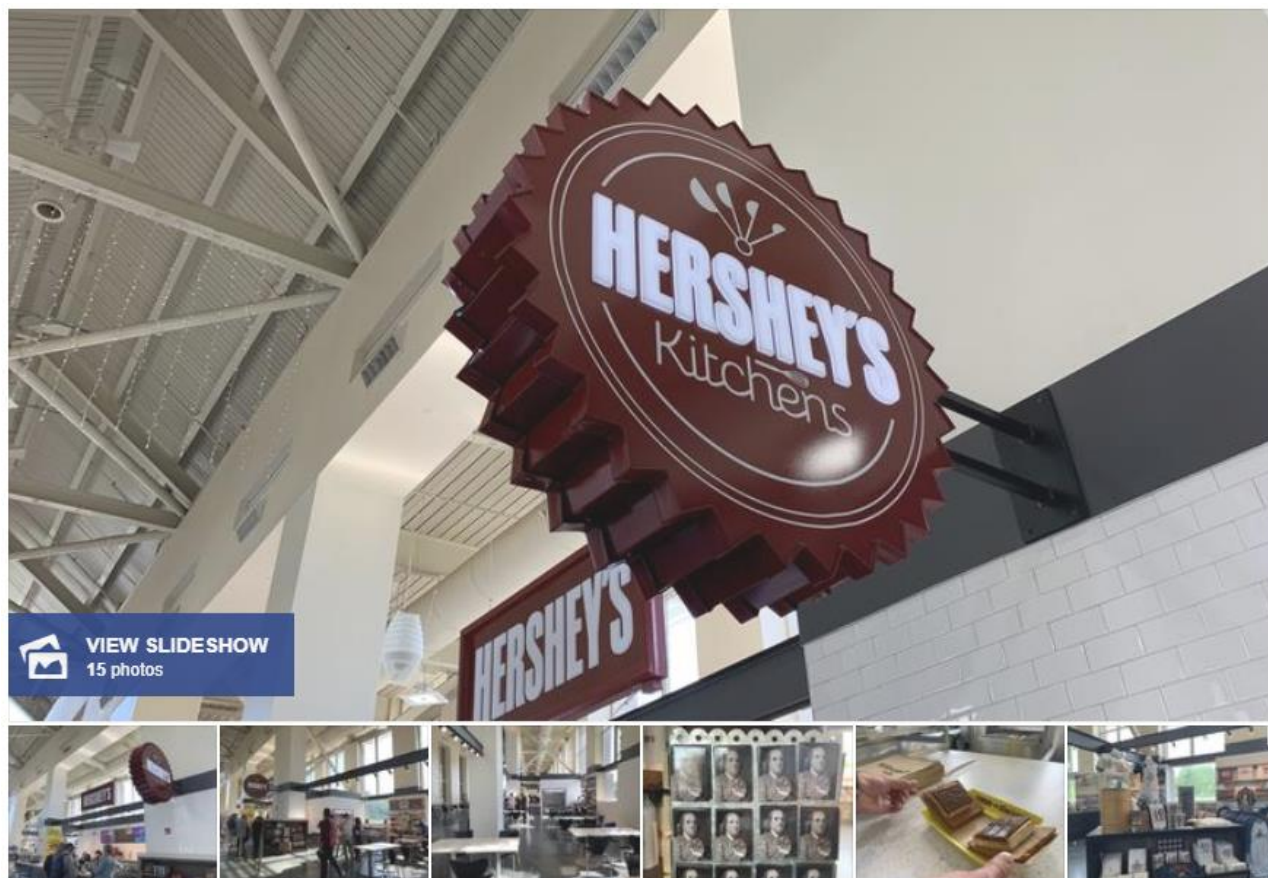
"Jennifer Hudson is [performing](#) with the Philadelphia Pops Big Band, which we're really excited about," Delbene said.

You can find the complete list of event's on WelcomeAmerica.com.

PHILADELPHIA
BUSINESS JOURNAL

Travel & Tourism

Hershey's 1st café is a sweet topping to \$15M Independence Visitor Center refresh



By [Kenneth Hilario](#) –
Reporter, Philadelphia Business Journal

The [Hershey Company's](#) first-ever café concept is the end to the Independence Visitor Center's multimillion-dollar refresh — and promises to make guests' experiences even sweeter. The Independence Visitor Center

Corp. for the past three years has been carrying out a [\\$15 million renovation](#), which included:

- a second-floor wrap-around terrace;
- [the gift shop expansion](#) and relocated restrooms;
- two new theaters, new interactive exhibit experiences and digital screens.

The Visitor Experience Improvement Project is now complete, book-ended with a new café called Hershey's Kitchens — developed in a partnership with the chocolate maker and gift shop operator Event Network.

This is Hershey's first café concept. It operates Hershey's Chocolate World in Las Vegas, Niagara Falls, New York, Singapore and Pennsylvania, but these are larger attractions that don't offer menu items available at the Visitor Center. The café menu includes:

- brownies with filling, cookies and soft pretzels with chocolate dip;
- La Colombe coffee, milkshakes, hot chocolate and Jolly Rancher slushies;
- salads, sandwiches and snacks with ingredients sourced from local companies, including Dietz & Watzon and Turkey Hill.

Hershey's top-selling candy is also available. The café has seating and retail areas with Hershey- and Philadelphia-branded items and a permanent, made-to-order s'mores-making station, originally designed for New York Chocolate World.

"It encapsulates the genius of Hershey in the footprint of a Starbucks," said [Matthew Green](#), café director for Event Network, which previously worked for Hershey.

The new concept has the potential to be a prototype for Hershey (NYSE: HSY) to replicate.

One of the goals is to change people's association with chocolate, Green said. The menu includes healthy options one may not expect from a giant candy maker, with possible menu inclusions like cocoa dry rub.

It's the "most exciting" part of the Visitor Center's \$15 million upgrade, said [James J. Cuorato](#), president and CEO of the Independence Visitor Center Corp.

"They could have put it anywhere, but they chose us," he said. "The name is known all over the world."

The Hershey café and the 42-foot bank of digital displays are both "gamechangers," Cuorato said. "The corporation is trying to work toward self-sustainability."

The gift shop was the center's top money-maker. Revenue from the now-expanded shop, which took on a lifestyle retail format, increased 40% in its first year of operation compared to the last comparable year.

The new increased revenue is now "the norm," said Cuorato, who added "we expect to net at least three times [more] just from the [Hershey] café including retail."

Over 2.5 million people visited the Visitor Center in 2018, representing the fourth-highest number of visitors since it opened in 2001. More than 2.7 million people visited in 2017.

Visitation generates between \$200 million and \$400 million in economic impact, according to data from the visitor center corporation.

With nearly 4.8 million visitors, the Independence National Historical Park is the [top tourist attraction](#) in Greater Philadelphia, based on visitors in 2017.

Hershey has a market cap near \$27 billion. Net sales were nearly \$7.8 billion last year, according to its 2018 annual report.

The chocolate maker has 1,400 local employees and 16,500 around the world, and produces 2.8 billion Hershey bars every year. It was first produced in 1900.

Hershey redesigned the bars for the first time in 125 years, available this summer for a limited time. The new bars will feature six different emoji designs.

1 OF 15 THUMBNAILS



The Independence Visitor Center Corp. partnered with Hershey for its new cafe.

KENNETH HILARIO/PHILADELPHIA BUSINESS JOURNAL

2 OF 15 THUMBNAILS



The Independence Visitor Center Corp. partnered with Hershey for its new cafe.

KENNETH HILARIO/PHILADELPHIA BUSINESS JOURNAL

3 OF 15 THUMBNAILS



The Independence Visitor Center Corp. partnered with Hershey for its new cafe.

KENNETH HILARIO/PHILADELPHIA BUSINESS JOURNAL

4 OF 15 THUMBNAILS



The Independence Visitor Center Corp. partnered with Hershey for its new cafe.

KENNETH HILARIO/PHILADELPHIA BUSINESS JOURNAL

IVCC Press Clips, March – June 2019

5 OF 15 THUMBNAILS



If Benjamin Franklin lived long enough for the Hershey bar's 1900 debut, he may have enjoyed it, too.

KENNETH HILARIO/PHILADELPHIA BUSINESS JOURNAL

6 OF 15 THUMBNAILS



There will be a s'mores-making station.

KENNETH HILARIO/PHILADELPHIA BUSINESS JOURNAL

7 OF 15 THUMBNAILS



Philadelphia-themed Hershey merchandise will be available.

KENNETH HILARIO/PHILADELPHIA BUSINESS JOURNAL

8 OF 15 THUMBNAILS



Philadelphia-themed Hershey merchandise will be available.

KENNETH HILARIO/PHILADELPHIA BUSINESS JOURNAL

9 OF 15 THUMBNAILS



Philadelphia-themed Hershey merchandise will be available.

KENNETH HILARIO/PHILADELPHIA BUSINESS JOURNAL

10 OF 15 THUMBNAILS



What if the Liberty Bell was made of chocolate?

KENNETH HILARIO/PHILADELPHIA BUSINESS JOURNAL

12 OF 15 THUMBNAILS



Philadelphia-themed Hershey merchandise will be available.

KENNETH HILARIO/PHILADELPHIA BUSINESS JOURNAL

11 OF 15 THUMBNAILS



Philadelphia-themed Hershey merchandise will be available.

KENNETH HILARIO/PHILADELPHIA BUSINESS JOURNAL

13 OF 15 THUMBNAILS



Philadelphia-themed Hershey merchandise will be available.

KENNETH HILARIO/PHILADELPHIA BUSINESS JOURNAL

14 OF 15 THUMBNAILS



Who said this?

KENNETH HILARIO/PHILADELPHIA BUSINESS JOURNAL

15 OF 15 THUMBNAILS



The Hershey's Kitchens is the first of its kind for The Hershey Company.

KENNETH HILARIO/PHILADELPHIA BUSINESS JOURNAL

The Philadelphia Inquirer

The best restrooms in Philadelphia that you can use without buying anything

by Anna Orso, Updated: May 25, 2019



Exploring Philadelphia in the summertime would be a lot easier if Google Maps had one more feature: locating the closest restroom you can use without buying something.

Today, [every Starbucks restroom would appear](#). But there are more — and better ones. So until Google rolls out my dream app, I have found for you the city's greatest semi-public restrooms. Before heading out on my journey, though, [I asked Twitter for some help](#). Some of you had great ideas; others led me astray.

To the person who told me the upstairs restroom at Di Bruno Bros. on Chestnut is great: [It's temporarily closed](#). To the woman who told me the food court bathrooms at Liberty Place are worth entering: No, they are not. To the guy who said the toilets across from the grilled cheese place at 30th Street Station are “clean,” you lie.

Below is a list of the 10 nicest (women's and gender-neutral) restrooms I entered without having to buy anything — or in many cases, talk to anyone.

A disclaimer: These are not all public, per se, so I'm not suggesting you won't be asked any questions.

10. Comcast Center concourse level 1701 John F. Kennedy Blvd.

Please never use the bathrooms in Suburban Station. Instead, walk through the concourse level to the food court-type area under the Comcast Center and treat yourself to cleanliness, decent smells, and marble counters.

9. Reading Terminal Market 51 N. 12th St.

This bathroom is way cleaner than you'd think. It's in the back of the building — follow the green signs — and has a long line of shiny stalls (no wait time, even at lunch), plus automatic sinks and powerful hand dryers.

(Where's the photo, you ask? When I was there — and in two of the other Top 10 — a bunch of people were populating the bathroom, and invading people's privacy was not part of my mission.)

8. Independence Visitor Center 599 Market St.

The bathrooms in the heart of Philadelphia's biggest tourist trap center are enormous and very clean. They have a unique sink setup that's sort of trough-like, and the hand dryers are all built into the spigots. But there's a big negative. At any given time, this place is packed with children on field trips and family vacations. Prayers for you.

7. The basement of Nordstrom Rack 1700 Chestnut St.

The best thing about this bathroom is that you feel like you're doing something illegal. That elevator to the basement may feel like it's for employees only, but it's for you. The women's room has stainless steel stalls and a dual-sink situation. Enjoy your personal space.

6. Sugarhouse Casino 1001 N. Delaware Ave.

To get to the bathrooms, walk in through the main entrance — you'll need to show ID — past the slots and the table games. You'll encounter modern-style bathrooms with so much faux gold, you'll think you stepped into Trump Tower. Generally clean, with floor-to-ceiling stalls, and everything is automatic. The restroom is also one of the only places in the casino that doesn't smell like old cigarettes.

5. The Ritz-Carlton Hotel 10 Avenue of the Arts

Enter the building on the City Hall side and take an immediate right. (Don't accidentally walk straight and get lost in a sea of fancy women wearing animal print.) The stall walls in the ladies room are marble, and there are very nice paper towels. You can definitely use the bathrooms without speaking to anyone, and may I also recommend slowly putting on your sunglasses as you leave the hotel? You'll feel like a rock star.

4. Free Library of Philadelphia - Parkway Central 1901 Vine St.

The first-floor bathrooms are sleek, and the best part was the powerful, stainless steel hand dryers that are [known for making your hands bone-dry](#) in seconds. I would testify in court on their behalf.

3. Sofitel Philadelphia at Rittenhouse Square 120 S. 17th St.

I said, “Jackpot” out loud when I entered this second-floor bathroom. Like you would at any other hotel you’re using solely for the restroom, enter the main entrance as though you own the place. Never mind the Maserati at the valet stand. Don’t worry about the people sipping afternoon martinis in the bar. Walk past the front desk, down the hallway, and up the stairs on the right. Take a quick left and you’ve reached the promised land: a beautiful, clean bathroom with floor-to-ceiling stall doors. There are even baskets of those disposable, clothlike paper towels.

2. Barnes Museum 2025 Benjamin Franklin Pkwy.

It is possible to use the incredible restrooms at the Barnes Museum without paying admission, but you may be asked some questions by security people and ticket-sellers. They’re in the lower level near the gift shop, so you could tell them you’re there for some merch. (Or you could awkwardly tell them you’re “waiting for a friend” and then, when you leave without going into the museum, tell them your “friend” is actually “at the other art museum.”)

The bathroom is glorious. I felt like a queen using the super-private stalls, each of which is equipped with its own sink. And the toilets flush with fancy metal buttons on the wall.

1. The 33rd floor of the Loews Hotel 1200 Market St.

This bathroom, the undisputed king of all Philadelphia bathrooms, is not for people afraid of heights, and it’s definitely not for someone who has to go right now. I waltzed into the hotel lobby on a weekday afternoon — during a conference for patent lawyers — and was stuck in the elevator with a guy in an expensive suit who had five of those ribbons on his name tag that indicate he’s important. “Here for the conference?” he asked. “Yes,” I responded while wearing a jean jacket and dirty sneakers.

My new friend and I rode up to the 33rd floor, which is labeled “the boardroom.” Very exclusive.

The bathroom isn’t as bougie as at the Ritz, but it was spotless and featured private stalls with doors that go up to the ceiling. It smelled like lavender.

But the reason this bathroom is my No. 1? When you’re done doing your business, you exit the room to this:



ANNA ORSO
The view outside the window on the 33rd floor of the Loews Hotel.



Independence Visitor Center Corporation Opens New Café by Hershey's Kitchens

Café is final element of \$15 million Visitor Experience Improvement Project

This month, Independence Visitor Center Corporation (IVCC) has a sweet surprise in store for Philadelphia visitors and resi-

Independence Visitor Center Corporation (IVCC) has a sweet surprise in store for Philadelphia visitors and residents: the opening of a new café experience by Hershey's Kitchens, May 29.

dents: the opening of a new café experience by Hershey's Kitchens.

The café is the final element of the Visitor Experience Improvement Project, a multi-phase renovation of Independence Visitor Center, which welcomes an average of 2.5 million visitors annually.

"For the final phase of our renovations, we are thrilled to introduce a fantastic new café concept," said James J. Cuorato, President and CEO, IVCC. "By working with the world-renowned Hershey Company and our longtime partner, Event Network, we have developed another great attraction for the Visitor Center. It's fun, it's family-friendly, and it partners with a great Pennsylvania company."

The first Hershey's Kitchens café will offer indulgent treats by the historic brand; locally-sourced savory menu items and coffee beverages; and themed retail products. The stunning eatery transforms the space and invites visitors to relax and recharge while enjoying lunch or a snack, with expanded seating that extends from the café to a dedicated "itinerary planning" area.

Some exciting features and experiences offered by the new Hershey's Kitchens café include:

- Hershey's Signature S'mores: Permanent s'mores-making station that creates Hershey's one-of-a-kind recipe using 4x4 in.

graham crackers, custom marshmallow, and an entire milk chocolate bar. Guests can also customize their s'more with other Hershey's and Reese's favorites.

- Warm Baked Goods: Filled brownies, cookies & soft pretzels with melted chocolate dipping sauce.

- Indulgent Beverages: Signature Milkshakes, hot chocolate & Jolly Rancher Slushies.

- La Colombe Coffee: Brewed, iced, and draft lattes by the Philadelphia-based coffee roaster.

- Healthy Lunch Items: Freshly prepared salads & sandwiches with ingredients from local companies.



• Custom Souvenirs: Apparel & home accessories featuring Hershey's brand and Philly icons.

Event Network, Inc., which oversees retail management and operations of the IVCC's Independence Gift Shop, has been integral in the café's development and will continue to manage its operations after opening.

Event Network's conservation initiatives are evident in its choices of local companies for sourcing non-Hershey ingredients (Dietz & Watson, La Colombe, Turkey Hill); and use of sustainable or compostable materials for cutlery, containers, paper straws, napkins, and bags.

"This is an incredibly exciting partnership between The Hershey Company, Event Network, and the Independence Visitor Center Corporation. To bring to life a café anchored by such an iconic Pennsylvania company – Hershey's – in this historic place is a very unique collaboration. For the millions of visitors who will get the opportunity to enjoy a warm, fresh s'more – among other savory and tasty treats – while planning their time in Philadelphia, their stop by Hershey's Kitchens café will help to further commemorate their special experience. We are thrilled to be a part of delivering that experience," said Jerry Gilbert, Principal and Chief Marketing Officer, Event Network.

For its grand opening, the first Hershey's Kitchens café will host an official "plume" cutting (an oversized version of the beloved ribbon on a Hershey's Kiss) on Wednesday, May 29, 10:30 a.m., right in time for visitors to enjoy at the start of the busy tourist season.

"We are thrilled to open our first Hershey's Kitchens location and share the goodness of Hershey's with visitors to Philadelphia," said Suzanne Jones, Vice President, The Hershey Experience. "Hershey has a rich history of creating experiences for consumers to make memories at our Hershey's Chocolate World locations, and we've packaged up the fun for the new Hershey's Kitchens café with IVCC at the Visitor Center."

Hershey's Kitchens café is located at 599 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106. It will be open daily, 8:30 a.m. - 7 p.m.

The Independence Visitor Center Corporation (IVCC) is a Pennsylvania nonprofit, 501(c)3 organization, which operates in cooperation with the National Park Service, Visit Philadelphia, Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau, the City of Philadelphia, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Visit www.phlvisitorcenter.com for information.



3 To Go

May 29, 2019 at 6:59 a.m.



THERE WILL BE A RIBBON CUTTING AT HERSHEY'S KITCHEN CAFE IN THE INDEPENDENCE VISITOR CENTER, THE FINAL ELEMENT IN THE 15 MILLION DOLLAR RENOVATION OF THE CENTER.

The Philadelphia Inquirer

Hershey's Kitchens café opens at Philly's Independence Visitor Center

by **Stephanie Farr**, Updated: May 29, 2019



Hershey's Kitchens is the company's first full, stand-alone café. **STEPHANIE FARR**

Even hardened Philly locals now have a sweet reason to visit [Independence Visitor Center](#) — Hershey's first stand-alone café.

Hershey's Kitchens, which opened Wednesday at the visitor center, serves s'mores made of full-size Hershey bars, custom marshmallows with hints of smoke and vanilla, and 4-by-4-inch graham crackers. Those are all smooshed together and put through a conveyor belt oven so the marshmallows melt evenly.

Market East and Old City, meet your new "I-had-a-bad-day, I-deserve-all-the-things" lunch.

Aside from s'mores, the café also serves Hershey's milkshakes, warm baked goods drizzled with even more gooey goodness, and La Colombe coffee. Grab-and-go salads and sandwiches are also available.



STEPHANIE FARR Hershey on top of Hershey in the baked goods case.

Plenty of souvenirs that speciously blend Hershey products with Philly and U.S. history are also available. It's a bit bittersweet to see Ben Franklin munching on a chocolate bar that didn't exist in his day, but this is the man who said, "Wish not so much to live long as to live well" — and living well does mean eating a lot of chocolate.

There's also a "sweet land of liberty" shirt where the Liberty Bell is portrayed as a piece of chocolate under a thin gold foil wrapper. We see the plot for *National Treasure 3* taking shape.

Suzanne Jones, vice president of the Hershey Experience (yes, that's her actual awesome job title), said Hershey has wanted to do a café for some time. Since Hershey is located in Pennsylvania and Milton Hershey started his first business [in Philadelphia](#), the company thought setting up shop at the visitor center, which sees 2.5 million visitors a year, was "a perfect marriage."

While Hershey has "tiny versions" of the café concept at Hershey Park and in its New York City store, this is Hershey's first stand-alone café, Jones said.



STEPHANIE FARR | A few of the souvenirs available at Hershey's Kitchens.

James Cuorato, president and chief executive office of the visitor center, said the center's old café, which debuted when the building opened in 2001, was sorely in need of an upgrade. Hershey's Kitchens was brought in as part of a recent \$15 million renovation to the center.

"This is a Hershey experience that's unique to Philly," Cuorato said.

Event Network, which operates "cultural attraction stores" across the United States and runs the souvenir store at the visitor center, helped connect the folks at Hershey with the people at the visitor center.

"We now have the coolest café in the city, the coolest gift shop, and we made the [10 best bathrooms list](#), too!" Cuorato said. "So we have everything covered."



STEPHANIE FARR | Some of the goods for sale at the new Hershey Kitchens.



STEPHANIE FARR | What about death by chocolate?



Alex Around Town: Hershey's Kitchens



Alex stopped by the Independence Visitor Center for a bite to eat!

By Alex Holley | Posted June 5