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7 Reasons to Visit Philadelphia with Your Kids, Even In Cold Weather

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This historic city offers plenty for families to warm up to.

By [Judy Koutsky](#) March 27, 2018

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Philadelphia, only two hours from New York City, is a great place for families, especially those traveling with young kids and grandparents. Multi-generational travel has seen big hikes in the last several years and Philly serves that market well. Here, top reasons to visit Philly now—even if the weather is still chilly. A great way to really see the city is through CityPass which offers tickets to a variety of attractions, including the Aquarium.

Family-friendly hotels

We stayed at the Sheraton Society Hill Hotel (<http://www.sheratonsocietyhillhotel.com/>) which has a terrific location in the heart of the historic district. It's a great home-base because many of Philly's top attractions—Independence Hall, the Liberty Bell, the National Constitution Center, and Penn's Landing—are a short walk away (ideal when traveling with older grandparents or young kids). If you're traveling with a large family, booking a suite with a connecting double room is the way to go. It allows for plenty of sleeping options (there's a king bed, two doubles, and a pull-out sofa), plus you'll get two bathrooms, and a living area to spread out. If you stay on the club floor, a hot breakfast—think eggs, sausage, oatmeal, and a variety of bagels—is a nice way to start the day and the convenience of eating steps away from your room (we often ate in our PJs), was awesome.

Franklin Institute

This was my kids' favorite museum, hands-down. From the IMAX theater and special exhibits (we saw the Terra Cotta Soldiers and movie on China) to the SportsZone center (my boys loved “racing” against their favorite sports heroes), we spent six hours at this museum. Other must-see exhibits include the giant walk-through heart; the climb-aboard steam train engine, and planetarium. If you can only hit one museum while in Philly, this is the one.

Liberty One Observation Deck

Few places offer the views of Philly that the Observation Deck does. The floor-to-ceiling panoramic windows offer stellar views of all the big Philadelphia landmarks, plus the interactive kiosks not only tell you where you are, but give you back info on the sights.

Great Places to Eat

Philly has a lively dining scene, ranging from inexpensive family-hangouts to high-end multi-gen spots. A must is stopping at Reading Terminal Market for some of the best Philly Cheesesteaks. Of course, this giant indoor market sells everything from pickles to cheese and plenty of delicious desserts.



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For an upscale treat be sure to check out The Moshulu (moshulu.com), the world's oldest and largest square-rigged sailing vessel still afloat, berthed on Penn's Landing. Fan favorites include the tuna tartare, crab cakes, and swordfish for adults and the penne and burgers for kids. Nonna has traditional Italian food that appeals to both kids and adults. At this old-school fan favorite not only is the food super tasty, but the friendly staff and cozy dining room make for a lovely warm spot on a cold winter's night.

Liberty Bell and Independence Hall

It's free to see the world's most famous cracked bell, but it's best viewed at the very beginning or end of the day when the lines are the shortest. The bell has become a symbol to abolitionists, suffragists, and other freedom-seekers around the world. Independence Hall offers free, timed tickets. Go to the Independence Visitors Center early to get your same-day tickets. It's best to get there by 8:45 as these tickets go fast. This is where the 13 colonies declared their independence; be sure to check out the U.S. Constitution in the adjacent West Wing.

Betsy Ross House

This little museum is well worth a visit, since a re-enacted Betsy Ross explains how George Washington came to visit her 18th century upholstery shop and asked her to sew the United States' very first flag. The kids can ask any questions and Betsy has an answer. While in this area, be sure to wander around Elfreth's Alley, America's oldest continuously inhabited street. The cobblestone makes it a really picturesque and quaint spot.

Museum of the American Revolution

This is one of Philly's newest—and most popular—museums. It has plenty of interactive displays to keep the attention of young kids, plus there is a lot of in-depth history for adults including short films and Revolutionary-era weapons and personal stories.

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Judy Koutsky is an award-winning writer and editor and her work has appeared in over 30 publications, including Conde Nast Traveler, Travel + Leisure, Redbook, Parents, Scholastic, and Prevention. She writes often about travel, parenting, health, and lifestyle. Follow her @JudyKoutsky or visit her website JudyKoutsky.com.

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