

PENN TRACKS

CHINATOWN

Overview:

This tour takes you through the Asian cultural center of Philadelphia. Chinatown offers a variety of amazing cuisines including Japanese, Thai, Cambodian, Burmese, Laotian, Malaysian, and Vietnamese. Churches, temples, artwork, and a concert hall are also highlights.

Transportation:

To get to Chinatown: Take the Green Line trolley to 13th Street or the Market-Frankford Line to 11th Street.

To return to Penn: Take the take the Green Line trolley from 13th Street to 37th Street or the Market-Frankford Line from 11th Street to 34th or 40th streets.

1 Friendship Gate 10th and Arch streets

Built as an exchange between Philadelphia and its sister city in China, Tianjin, this ornate gate was dedicated on January 31, 1984. It is the first authentic Chinese gate built in America by artisans from China. The graphic patterns, based on mythical creatures from the Ming and Qing dynasties, include a phoenix, which symbolizes good luck and long life, as well as a dragon, which has the power to keep water in its mouth and protect the community from fire.

2 Fire Station 10th & Cherry streets

Originally established on July 4, 1791 as part of the Diligent Volunteer Fire Company, it was located on the south side of Market near 8th Street. After moving several times, it settled on June 5, 1956 in its present location. The station is nicknamed the "House of Dragons."

3 Chinese Christian Church and Center 225 N. 10th Street

Beginning in the late 1800s, Philadelphia saw an increase in religious participation that eventually led to the establishment of CCC&C in 1941. The center continues to serve as a place for cultural and religious activity, and is inextricably linked to Chinatown's history. An additional campus stands on 11th and Vine streets.

4 History of Chinatown Mural 10th & Winter streets

Commissioned for Chinatown's 125th anniversary, this mural by artist Arturo Ho traces the history of the community, from the arrival of the early laundrymen to the fight against urban renewal in the 1960s/70s. The mural stands opposite the Vine Street Expressway, for which parts of historic Chinatown were demolished in order to make way for construction.

5 Race Street Between 11th & 9th streets

The culinary heart of Chinatown, Race Street offers some of Philadelphia's best food. Enjoy dim sum at Ocean Harbor or Dim Sum Garden, traditional noodles at Nan Zhou, late-night eats at David's Mai Lai Wah, and karaoke at Red Kings and Ken's. Nearby, find desserts at Mango Mango and A La Mousse.

6 Franklin Square 200 N. 6th Street

One of Philadelphia's five original squares, Franklin Square features a variety of park attractions, including a carousel and a mini golf course. Each spring, the square hosts Chinatown's celebration of the Chinese Lantern Festival, which includes performances, food, and countless handcrafted lantern designs and displays illuminating the park.

7 The Pennsylvania Convention Center Arch between 11th & 13th streets

The Pennsylvania Convention Center houses exhibitions, conferences, and conventions ranging from Wizard World Comic Convention to The 14th Congress of the International Headache Society. It is comprised of four main halls and the grand hall, which is part of the former Reading Railroad terminal elevated train shed.

8 Reading Terminal Market 12th & Arch streets

This is part of the Reading Railroad that you know from the Monopoly game. Though the trains no longer rumble overhead, the old train shed is now the century-old Reading Terminal Market, an unrivaled testament to the rich flavors of the city's ethnic neighborhoods. Treasured by locals and tourists alike, the market brings together a variety of food cuisines under one roof: Amish pretzels, steaks, and hoagies—all Philly originals!

Of Additional Interest

A The Rail Park Callowhill Street between 11th & 12th streets

The first quarter mile of a planned 3-mile long project, the Rail Park is a revitalization of unused rail lines. The initial stretch of the park features walking trails, swings, artwork, and occasional performances.

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The Rail Park



Chinese Christian Church and Center



History of Chinatown Mural



Franklin Square



Fire Station



The Pennsylvania Convention Center



Reading Terminal Market



Friendship Gate



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FUN FACTS

NSOAI Events Planning Track '24

The Reading Terminal Market is home to more than 80 merchants, two of whom are descendants of the original stand holders from a century before.

The Chinatown neighborhood traces its origins to 1870, when Chinese immigrant Lee Fong established a laundromat at 913 Race Street.

Following World War II, relaxed immigration policies towards Chinese immigrants reshaped Chinatown into a family-centered community. This led to the establishment of churches, businesses, and cultural organizations aimed at enhancing neighborhood life, preserving Chinese culture, and meeting the needs of a growing immigrant population.



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