

Washington Avenue Pier

25 BUS

Stop: Columbus Blvd & Washington Ave

MISSION: TEST THE TIDE

The Atlantic Ocean is nearly 100 miles away, yet it still exerts a tidal influence right here on the Delaware River. Twice a day, as far north as Trenton, NJ, you can witness high and low tides on the river!

Walk around the pier—what can you find that might help you figure out the current state of the tide? Make observations in the beach area, on the boardwalk, and at the top of the sculpture at the tip of the pier.

Current water depth measurement: _____

Mudflats and pier base:

- exposed
- visible underwater
- not visible

Direction of current:

- flowing downstream
- flowing upstream
- too windy to tell

Now, make an educated guess: is it closer to high tide or low tide? Do you think the tide is rising or falling right now?

Find out by [clicking here](#) or scanning! Under the NJ/PA boundary menu, choose “Philadelphia, US Coast Guard Station, Pa” for your location.



You may be wondering: is the Delaware River salty? In Philly, it’s usually fresh, but during droughts, saltwater can push upstream from where it usually ends (Wilmington). In 1960, brackish water reached the Ben Franklin Bridge!

Nature Nook

This pier is critical for migrating and resident birds due to its abundant plant and insect food sources. Can you find any birds here that you’ve never seen before? Some, like the warbling vireo, are easiest to identify by their song. [Listen here!](#)



Warbling Vireo



History Corner

Once called “Philadelphia’s Ellis Island,” the immigration station on this pier admitted more than a million European immigrants from 1873–1915. Rubble from the station is repurposed in the benches here, and Jody Pinto’s “Land Buoy” (the spiral staircase sculpture), honors this history with a blue “beacon” at its tip. Pinto’s father and grandparents entered Philly at this pier.

Spruce Street Harbor Park

25 BUS

Stop: Columbus Blvd & Spruce St

MISSION: SEEK A SEAT

Spruce Street Harbor Park is built for relaxing. Whether you’re unwinding after a long workday or having a weekend picnic, there are tons of different places to sit down and just... be. Below is a kid-friendly scavenger hunt that will lead you to relaxing spots throughout the park. **Can you find seating that...**

- is accompanied by a round table
- is stacked in rows
- is made of wicker
- is perfect for picnicking
- suspends you over the river
- is next to a series of ancient carved stones
- swings in the breeze
- is perfect for a [big] photo op
- originates from the Adirondacks
- is inside a tiny red house
- is near a non-existent sphere (this one’s tough!)

How many did you find? Which had the best view? Which is your favorite? Where do you think the sphere went?

Nature Nook

The grove of native sweet gum trees here provides food for many birds and hosts the larva of the beautiful luna moth. The floating gardens, which host native plants growing in a recycled plastic matrix, were designed to capture pollutants, like a natural wetland, while providing habitat for native birds, insects, and fish. Are there any floating flowers blooming today?

History Corner

In 1976, this land became the International Sculpture Garden. That same year, the WWII-era Submarine Becuna opened to visitors as part of the Independence Seaport Museum. Next to her sits Cruiser Olympia, the oldest still-floating steel ship, and you can tour both!

Becuna



Race Street Pier

25 BUS

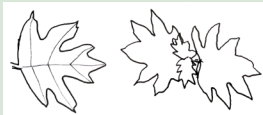
Stops: Columbus Blvd & Race St/Columbus Blvd & Vine St

MISSION: MEDITATE A MINUTE

Sit comfortably on a bench, the grass, or the ground. With a partner, slowly read aloud to each other in turn: Close your eyes. Feel the surface beneath you. Is it warmer or colder than your body? Feel your clothing on your skin. Is a breeze moving it, even slightly? Feel the warmth of the sunlight or the coolness of the shade. Now turn your attention to your ears, and notice the rich soundscape around you. One by one, focus on each of these sounds, letting them wash over you for ten seconds: traffic on the bridge; boats on the river; people moving about on the pier; insects buzzing or birds calling; water lapping at the pier. Now focus on your nose, and what you can smell in your environment. As you continue to relax and your mind settles, notice any faint scents that previously went undetected. Focus on the sensation of smelling and how it feels. Open your eyes and look straight ahead. Notice the distant sights and their structures, colors, and textures. Now pay attention to your peripheral vision and the objects you can see without looking at them. Shift your focus to nearby surroundings, noticing light and shadow, bright colors and muted ones, and movement or stillness. Focus on what's right in front of you or near you, observing its details and texture. Finally, breathe in deeply through your nose and let all your senses work together in tandem. What are they telling you about your environment? Take several more deep breaths as you focus on the world around you.

Nature Nook

River birches in the central raised bed attract tons of good insects. Oakleaf hydrangeas and swamp white oaks that line the recycled plastic decking round out a great selection of native plants. Animals (and humans!) can also find edible serviceberries and black chokeberries here.



oak vs. oakleaf hydrangea

History Corner

The bi-level design of this pier is a nod to its history! On the original pier built here in 1896, the lower level was used by Chester Freight Company, which made twice-daily trips to Chester, PA, and the upper level was used for recreation. A 1910 map of the city actually labels it "Recreation Pier." [Click here](#) or scan to see historical photos of Race Street Pier!



Penn Treaty Park

25 BUS

Stops: Frankford Ave & Richmond St/Frankford Ave & Delaware Ave

MISSION: HUNT FOR HISTORY

Penn Treaty Park is named after the 1682 Treaty of Shackamaxon between William Penn and Tamenend, a chief of the Lenni Lenape indigenous peoples. We can't be 100% sure this treaty was actually made, but as legend has it, Penn and the Lenape forged a peace agreement under a huge elm tree on this site, which became a living symbol of peace.

When the Great Elm blew down in a storm in 1810, it was 283 years old and eight feet in diameter. But that wasn't the end of its story! **As you explore the park, see if you can find these remnants of this ancient tree:**

- the oldest public monument in Philadelphia, which marks the original location of the Great Elm
- the former location of a direct descendant of the Great Elm, which was planted on Arbor Day in 1993
- the great great grandchild of the Great Elm, which was planted in 2010 and is still alive and well

There's other history to hunt for here:

- a statue of William Penn himself
- the Delaware Station, a coal-fired PECO power plant built in 1920 that's become an adaptive reuse project
- Fairman's Mansion, a former residence of William Penn's (but all that remains today is a plaque)

Nature Nook

Friends of Penn Treaty Park have planted a pollinator garden here. Pollinators include bees, beetles, moths, butterflies, wasps, and hummingbirds—and they need our help! Many are endangered due to habitat loss and pesticide use, yet we rely on them to pollinate crops. See how many different flowers you can find, then look closely to see all the tiny pollinators visiting them!

History Corner

All the parks in this guide are part of *Lenapehoking*, the land of the Lenni Lenape indigenous peoples. They called the river *Lenapewihittuk*, and the areas of Fishtown, Kensington, and Port Richmond *Shackamaxon*, or "place of the council." The area was also an important fishing spot.



striped bass