

susquehanna
Style

Destination: Doylestown

A prison-turned-museum, a castle and more to explore

BY STEPHANIE KALINA-METZGER



Located just 27 miles north of Philadelphia, the small borough of Doylestown is worthy of consideration, especially for the weekend explorer. The easy-to-navigate town contains many interesting destinations, from historical sites to a world-class museum, an array of restaurants, galleries, specialty shops and more.

Stay & Go

Historic Lodging:

Guests who check in at the Doylestown Inn will notice the unique details from the moment that they step into the lobby—from the wall of vintage suitcases to the old phone booth located nearby. The building dates back to 1902, is within easy walking distance of most shops and destinations, and touts 11 guest rooms, complete with fireplaces.

History buffs may also enjoy staying at the Hargrave House, which dates back to 1813 and is located close to the Doylestown Historical Society. Innkeeper Lorna Woodson is always happy to provide guests with details of the building's rich history. The seven-room B&B offers oversize suites featuring jetted tubs, perfect for soothing the muscles after hours of exploring.

The Doylestown Inn

hatterydoylestown.com

Hargrave House Bed and Breakfast

hargravehouse.net

Learn about an Early American “Picker”:

A trip to Doylestown isn't complete without learning more about Doylestown native Henry Chapman Mercer—a noted tilemaker, archeologist, historian and artifact collector.

Those who visit the Mercer Museum will learn more about Mercer's penchant for collecting. The six-story-high concrete structure contains more than 50,000 artifacts that tell the story of American progress and craftsmanship through tool displays. Mercer first indulged his passion for collecting by attending auctions and rummaging through barns, attics and junk dealers' yards. You could say he was the original “American picker.” Eventually, the word spread and he developed an elaborate collectors' network.

More than 60 Early American trades are represented—from blacksmithing to butchering, tanning and fishing—in a series of rooms and alcoves. Large artifacts, like sleighs and whaling boats, hang from the ceiling of the central atrium.



Tour Mercer's Castle:

The industrious, sometimes quirky Mercer constructed his castle, also known as Fonthill, out of concrete. Upon its completion in the early 1900s, he christened it with a rooftop bonfire to demonstrate that the structure was fireproof. This caused a bit of a stir among the townsfolk.

The imposing abode contains 44 rooms, which includes 10 bathrooms, five bedrooms and 18 fireplaces.

Guests who book a tour will learn more about the story of the life-long bachelor, his enthusiasm for entertaining, his boundless energy, his irrepressible creativity and his insatiable curiosity. The prolific tilemaker's handiwork is everywhere. Tiles are embedded on ceilings, stairs, walls and numerous other surfaces. His motto “plus ultra,” meaning “more beyond,” is seen in various places throughout the home.

Mercer is also known for creating the tiles that decorate the floor of the Pennsylvania State Capitol, which represent 254 scenes ranging from artifacts to birds, insects, animals and industries.

The Mercer Museum and Fonthill Castle

mercermuseum.org/about/fonthill-castle

Sip & Savor

Grab a Bite:

Fans of Italian food are flocking to a cozy restaurant located across from the historic County Theatre. Open for brunch, lunch and dinner, Genevieve's Kitchen focuses on organic and naturally grown foods procured locally. The BYO offers a little something for everyone—from salads to homemade pasta, short ribs, duck and chicken—and has been receiving rave reviews since it opened in 2014.

Genevieve's Kitchen

genevieveskitchen.com



Learn about the Art and Cultural Heritage of Bucks County:

Located across the street from the Mercer Museum is the Michener Art Museum, named after Doylestown's native son, prolific Pulitzer-prize-winning author, art collector and philanthropist James Michener.

Once the site of the Bucks County Prison, the historic property that dates back to 1884 still contains some of the original prison walls, and the main entrance has been incorporated into the architectural design of the museum.

Known as a center for the study of Pennsylvania impressionism, the James Michener Art Museum houses a world-class group of paintings. The permanent collection contains more than 2,800 objects that represent the region's artistic and culture heritage. Artists like Daniel Garber, Edward W. Redfield and William Langston Lathrop all settled in Bucks County and captured the beauty of the landscape.

Schedule a guided tour and you'll learn more about the collection and a very special story about the Wooded Watershed lunette mural that was almost lost to history.

The Michener Art Museum

michenerartmuseum.org



Oenophiles Rejoice

Bucks County touts itself as one of the premier grape-growing regions of the East Coast and offers a downloadable map to assist you in your self-directed tour.

buckscountywinetrail.com/about-us/before-you-go

Meet the makers, learn more about what inspires them and, most of all, be ready to enjoy the delicious fruits of their labor.

Crossing Vineyards & Winery
Newtown, PA
crossingvineyards.com

Buckingham Valley Vineyards
Buckingham, PA
pawines.com

Sand Castle Winery
Erwinna, PA
sandcastlewinery.com

Peace Valley Winery
Chalfont, PA
peacevalleywinery.com

New Hope Winery
New Hope, PA
newhopewinery.com

Rose Bank Winery
Newtown, PA
rosebankwinery.com

Wycombe Vineyards
Furlong, PA
wycombevineyards.com

Unami Ridge Winery
Quakertown, PA
unamiridge.com

Rushland Ridge Vineyards
Rushland, PA
rushlandridge.com