



# Frequently Asked Questions from Teachers

## Do you have any school programs for specific grade levels that I can reserve before I arrive with my class?

Yes! A menu of school programs organized by grade level and curriculum goals is available. We are currently taking reservations for these hands-on, interactive education programs. To get a program menu or to reserve a program for your group please call (215) 597-2760 or visit [www.nps.gov/inde](http://www.nps.gov/inde) and select "For Teachers."

## Is there an admission fee to get into the park?

No. Admission to all park buildings is free. There is a fee for our curriculum-based educational programs.

## How many adults do we need for each student?

We ask that you bring at least one chaperone for every 8 students. This ratio is for the safety of the students as well as park resources.

## Where are the bus drop-offs?

The Independence Transportation Center located just off 5<sup>th</sup> Street at the National Constitution Center has 11 spots for loading and unloading, with an additional three spots around the corner on Race Street. In addition to the Independence Transportation Center, there are five bus drop-off and pick-up locations provided throughout the historic district. These locations are on the east side of Third Street, between Walnut and Chestnut Streets (in front of the Independence Living History Center); in front of Christ Church on Second Street, between Arch and Market Streets; in front of the Betsy Ross House on Arch Street, between Second and Third Streets; and in front of City Tavern, just North of Second and Walnut Streets; and a location for seniors and handicapped only on Fifth Street between Ranstead and Chestnut Streets.

## Do I need tickets for an Independence Hall tour?

Yes. To improve the visitor experience at Independence National Historical Park, a timed and dated ticket system is in place for tours of Independence Hall. Tickets are not needed to visit any of the other sites in the park, including the Liberty Bell. All visitors need a free ticket for the Independence Hall tour.

## Can I schedule an Independence Hall tour before I come?

Yes. In fact, it is recommended that you reserve tickets in advance if you are planning on coming with a large group. Visitors can reserve tickets as early as twelve months before their visit through the National Park Reservation system. Call 1-877-444-6777 from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. daily (EST) or you can use the web site: <http://recreation.gov> to reserve tickets. The tickets are free, but there is a \$1.50 per ticket handling fee when reserved in advance. Tickets are available from the ticket counter at the Independence Visitor Center on a first come, first served basis if you do not have reservations.

During the months of January and February, no tickets are needed for Independence Hall tours. This is an ideal time for school groups to visit.

## Can I get my tickets mailed to me before the trip?

No. If you make ticket reservations you will need to pick them up from the "Will Call" section of the NPS ticket counter at the Independence Visitor Center no later than 60 minutes before the scheduled tour time.

## How long does the tour take?

The tour of Independence Hall is approximately 30 minutes. There are no restrooms available while you are on your tour.

## How should I prepare my group to go through security?

In order to enter the Liberty Bell Center and the sites on Independence Square, you will be asked to open all bags for a visual search. The Liberty Bell Center entrance is located on Sixth Street between Market and Chestnut Streets and opens at 9:00 a.m. daily. The Independence Square entrance is located on the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> and Chestnut Streets and opens at 8:30 a.m. The last visitors will be screened at 4:45 p.m. at both locations.

Be prepared to open all bags for a visual search. **Weapons including pocket knives and laser pointers are not allowed through security.** You can help your group to move through security in a timely manner by limiting the size and number of items brought into the park. **Please arrive at the Independence Square entrance 30-45 minutes prior to the time printed on your Independence Hall tour ticket to allow time for your group to pass through this security screening.**

## Are there restrooms within the park?

There are several restroom facilities within the park. They are located at the Independence Visitor Center, the Underground Museum, Franklin Courtyard, the Military Museum, the Independence Living History Center, and the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> and Chestnut Streets. **There are no restrooms in the Liberty Bell Center or Independence Square!** Please plan for this and have your students and chaperones use the restrooms before entering these areas.

## Will my school have a tour guide while they are in the park?

Groups registered for an Independence Park Institute program will have a guide leading that program. In addition, the Independence Hall tour is also a guided program. The rest of the park is completely self-guided although there are rangers in every building to answer any questions your group may have.

## What resources are available to help me lead my group around the park?

We offer a variety of hands-on, curriculum-based programs through the Independence Park Institute. We offer programs on the topics of "Daily Life in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century," "Archeology: History Found In Pieces," "Benjamin Franklin," "Quest For Freedom, the Underground Railroad in Philadelphia," and "The Liberty Bell: A Symbol for We The People." You need to reserve these programs in advance. Detailed information about these programs, as well as lesson plans, can be found on our website [www.nps.gov/inde](http://www.nps.gov/inde) in the "For Teachers' section. You may reserve a program by calling 215-597-2760.

If you wish to guide your own tour, we offer drop-in packets for teachers and chaperones at the Independence Visitor Center desk, and online at our website. These packets provide a self-guided, thematic walking tour of park sites for teachers and parents to use with student groups.

Packets are available on the topics of Benjamin Franklin, "Following in Franklin's Footsteps," Thomas Jefferson, "Jefferson's Homework: The Declaration of Independence," "Daily Life and Diversity in 18<sup>th</sup> Century Philadelphia," and "Historic Preservation."

## What kind of behavior is expected when my students are visiting the park?

Teachers and chaperones are responsible for ensuring that students are supervised and well-behaved at all times. We ask that you bring at least one chaperone for every 8 students. Students are to be instructed not to talk during the ranger presentations except to ask or answer questions. There are frequently large crowds visiting these sites and good listening skills are essential so that everyone can enjoy learning about Independence National Historical Park.

## What time of year is best to bring my students to the park?

Whenever possible, try to arrange your visit to the park during the months of September through March. The park has fewer visitors during these months, and the absence of crowds will make your visit more enjoyable and more educational. Weekdays (especially Fridays) in April, May and early June from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. are traditionally times of the heaviest visitation by school groups. Consider scheduling your class visit for other seasons to avoid the crowds. During January and February, visitation decreases dramatically and your class will be able to experience the park's resources more fully while receiving individualized attention from park staff.

## Are there lunch facilities or somewhere to eat if we bring bag lunches?

There are numerous dining establishments located adjacent to the park. The Bourse has a food court and is located on 5<sup>th</sup> Street between Market and Chestnut Streets. There is also a food court in the Gallery Mall which is at 10<sup>th</sup> and Market Streets. The National Constitution Center (NCC) has a cafeteria available for school groups who visit the NCC. Picnicking is permitted in the park, provided that care is taken to discard trash in the receptacles provided. Please remember that open containers of food and drink are not permitted in any of the park buildings.

## Is there somewhere to buy souvenirs?

### **The Independence Visitor Center Museum Shop**

This store has a large selection of books and objects relating to Historic Philadelphia and the Philadelphia region. Located in the Independence Visitor Center at Sixth and Market Streets.

### **America's National Parks Museum Shop** (*offers 15% teacher discount with ID*)

This store carries the largest selection of books and objects related to Independence National Historical Park. Located on Chestnut Street, between Third and Fourth Streets.

### **Franklin Court Museum Shop** (*offers 15% teacher discount with ID*)

This store carries items related to Benjamin Franklin. Located at 314 Market Street.

### **The Franklin Court Printing Office**

This site has items for sale that were printed on the reproduction printing press. Located at 320 Market Street.

### **The Franklin Court Underground Museum** (*offers 15% teacher discount with ID*)

This store carries a small selection of items related to Benjamin Franklin. Located in the rear of the Underground Museum.

### **Independence Living History Center**

This store carries books and souvenirs related to sites within historic Philadelphia. Located in the lobby of the Independence Living History Center at the corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> and Chestnut Streets.

## Do you have a website with more information?

Yes! We invite you to visit our website at: [www.nps.gov/inde](http://www.nps.gov/inde) and click on "For Teachers" for the latest information.

