

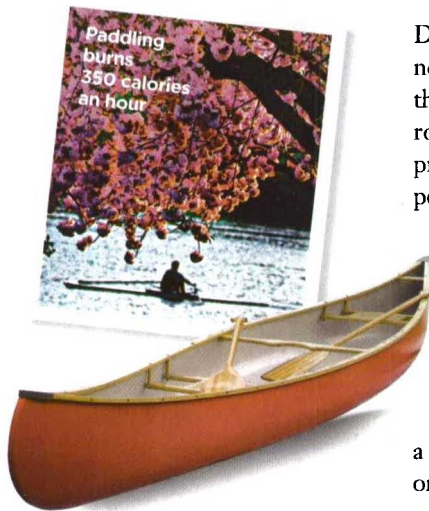
shape your weekend



Philly's Fairmount Park is "recreation central." Many athletic events start here, and car-free weekends make it safer to get around.

We love a city that makes it easy to get outside and exercise. In addition to the 300 miles of bike paths in and around Philadelphia, you'll also find running trails, water sports, athletic groups, and a hot restaurant scene (so you can fuel up before and after). Just be sure to pack your bike shorts, helmet, and running shoes—they'll get plenty of use on this three-day getaway.





FRIDAY

Get the lay of the land with a bike ride on the Schuylkill River Trail. Rent wheels at the **Breakaway Bikes** shed next to Lloyd Hall (\$10 per hour or \$30 for a full day, including helmet and lock; 1 Boathouse Row on Kelly

Drive), then follow the trail north past famed boathouses that are still used by local rowing groups. (If you prefer to ride with other people, go to *phillybikeclub.org*, one of many biking clubs in the area, to find local outings for all levels.) A few miles out, you'll pass the Falls Bridge; continue on Kelly for slightly less than a mile. Make a sharp left onto Ridge Avenue, cross over Ridge to the right, and take the trail down into the **Wissahickon Valley**, part of 9,200-acre Fairmount Park. (The other trail takes you to Valley Forge National Historical Park, a 44-mile trip if you do the entire out-and-back ride).

Follow the path five miles to the **Valley Green Inn**, a

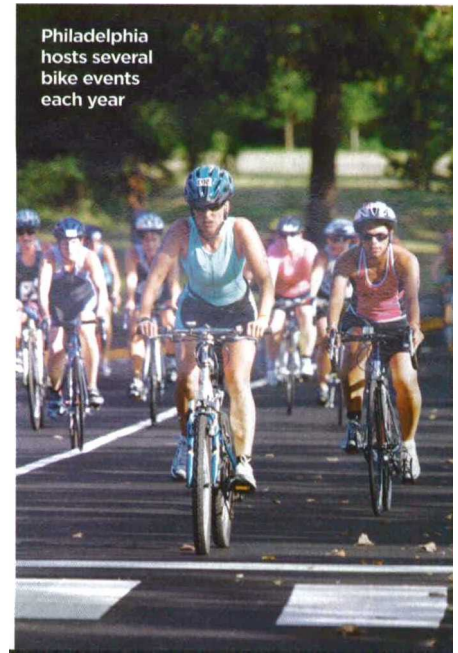
historic former hotel that's now a popular wedding and weekend brunch spot. You can stop here to hydrate or fuel up, then plot your next move: Keep going, explore the many side trails for some more challenging biking, or turn around and head back.

The shaded path is a real boon on hot days, so you may just want to take your time and enjoy the views.

On your way back into Center City (the heart of Philly), either ride or return your bike to Breakaway and walk the one and a half miles over to **Rittenhouse Square**.

This famous park is surrounded by

upscale hotels, 19th-century churches, restaurants, and shops. Grab a sandwich at **Tuscany Café** (222 W. Rittenhouse Square), then sit outside and people-watch for a while. If your feet could use a little TLC after your morning ride, hoof it over



to the **Adolph Biecker Spa/Salon** at the famous **Rittenhouse Hotel** (210 W. Rittenhouse Square) and ask about the Caribbean Pedicure (\$75 for 75 minutes). The decadent treatment includes a ginger scrub, seaweed mask, and massage.

SATURDAY

Wake up with a yoga class at **Yoga Sutra Philadelphia** (\$17 for drop-ins; 1401 Walnut St.). This beautiful studio, only a year old, offers classes all day long—choose from four before midday on Saturdays! When you've worked out the kinks, go for brunch at the hip **Continental Mid-Town** (1801 Chestnut St.; 215-567-1800). Unassuming on the outside, on the

inside it's a fun, sleek, packed hangout where your meal can be decadent (order the lobster mac 'n' cheese) or healthy (opt for the yummy tofu skillet seasoned with basil and curry).

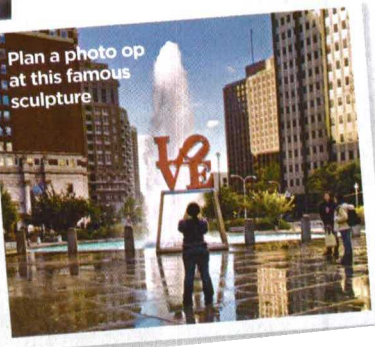
Once you've fueled up, walk west on Chestnut to the river and go south on the path a few blocks to the Schuylkill Banks recreation kiosk. Almost every other weekend between late May and mid-October, you can take guided kayaking tours with the group **Hidden River Outfitters**. The outings depart two or three times a day (\$40 for a 90-minute trip, including 30 minutes of instruction).

You can take your chances on snagging a spot (they host 14 people per tour), but it's best to sign up ahead of time by calling 215-222-6030, extension 100. The group also offers longer outings (\$75) and full-moon trips (\$50), currently slated for June 6 and August 1. Go to hiddenriveroutfitters.com for details. (Seeing the Philly skyline from the water is always a treat.)

SUNDAY

It's hard to tell whether Philadelphians are more excited about running or biking. Either way, the city's crisscrossing trails make it easy to pound the pavement while sightseeing. For an eight-mile loop, begin your run at the **Philadelphia Museum of Art** (you decide whether you want to do the famous run up the stairs à la Rocky Balboa). Head northwest on Kelly Drive to the Falls Bridge, then return on Martin Luther King Drive. The

city actually closes the latter to traffic on Saturdays and Sundays between April and October—just for runners! For a shorter jaunt, take the same route but turn around at the Playing Angels statue. Post-run, make your way to the **Italian Market** on Ninth Street between Fitzwater and Wharton streets (it's open from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sundays). One of the largest open-air markets in the U.S., this is a wonderful place to search for artisanal cheeses, fresh bread, Italian ices, and more. Pick up lunch and end your weekend with a picnic in nearby **Passyunk Square Park**.

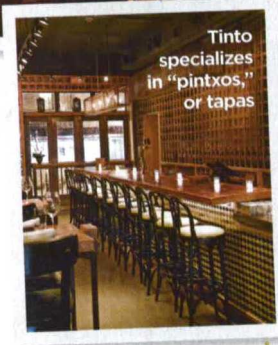


Around town

✓ **WHERE TO STAY** To be within walking distance of many museums, trails, and restaurants, book a hotel in Center City. **The**

Independent (rooms from \$129; *theindependenthotel.com*) is housed in a Georgian Revival building that's straight out of a period piece, but the boutique property's 24 rooms are modern and luxurious.

✓ **WHERE TO EAT** For Basque-style tapas and fun wines in a cozy atmosphere, check out **Tinto Wine Bar** (114 S. 20th St.; *tintorestaurant.com*), helmed by chef Jose Garces. Go on a warm day and dine outdoors. If you prefer



food with a Northern Italian influence, try **James** (824 S. Eighth St.; *jameson8th.com*), near the open-air Italian Market. Chef Jim Burke's menus favor wild seafood and local ingredients.