

NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

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TOP 10 THINGS TO DO THIS SUMMER AT THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

*Take the Presidential Oath of Office, shake Benjamin Franklin's hand,
view rare historic documents, and more!*

Philadelphia, PA (June 10, 2010) – Whether you are planning a family vacation, a romantic getaway, or a cultural excursion, Historic Philadelphia is a must-see stop on any Philadelphia trip this summer. With so much to see and do on Independence Mall, the National Constitution Center is making it easy for visitors to make the most of their time in the heart of the historic district with a list of the **Top 10 Things To Do** at the Center from Independence Day to Labor Day.

1. Experience “Freedom Rising”

“Freedom Rising” is an award-winning, state-of-the-art multimedia theater experience designed to connect visitors – in a direct, engaging, and unforgettable way – with the story of the U.S. Constitution from its inception to today. This 350-seat theater-in-the-round production incorporates one actor, 360° projection, surprise scenic elements, theatrical lighting, and a dynamic surround soundtrack. The 17-minute production creates a stirring environment in which visitors come to see themselves as a force in the life of the Constitution, and the Constitution as an on-going force in our lives.

2. Discover buried treasure

During construction of the National Constitution Center, over one million archaeological artifacts were unearthed on the site between 2000 and 2003, making it the richest find of colonial artifacts in an urban area in America. Preserved by the National Park Service,

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ADD ONE/TOP TEN

several artifacts are on display in cases surrounding the Center's Kimmel Theater, where "Freedom Rising" is performed. From toys to bowls and buttons to pitchers, these objects offer insight into the everyday lives of colonial Philadelphians.

3. Get a "kick" out of Gouverneur Morris' peg leg

The wooden leg of Revolutionary statesman Gouverneur Morris will be on display inside the Center's core exhibition, *The Story of We the People*, through Labor Day. Morris lost his leg in a carriage accident as a young man. It didn't slow him down, though. He went on to become one of the leading delegates at the Constitutional Convention. In fact, he is widely known as the writer of the final draft of the Constitution.

4. Reflect on the Emancipation Proclamation

A rare printing of the Emancipation Proclamation, signed by Abraham Lincoln, is located in the Center's core exhibition. The war-time printing, known as the Leland-Boker Authorized Edition of the Emancipation Proclamation, contains the entire text of the historic declaration. Printed in June 1864 in a run of only 48 copies, the folio broadsides were signed by President Lincoln and Secretary of State William Seward and intended for sale at the Philadelphia Great Central Sanitary Fair of 1864 to raise money for sick and wounded soldiers. Only half of these original copies are thought to have survived, and they are in the collections of museums, libraries, and historical societies, and those of a few private collectors.

5. Be sworn in as President of the United States

Do you solemnly swear to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution? The interactive Oath of Office exhibit in the Center's core exhibition is one of the most popular stops at the museum. Standing behind a podium, complete with the presidential seal, visitors can recite the Presidential Oath along with a computerized Chief Justice, while their image is projected above on a large screen.

ADD TWO/TOP TEN

6. Shake Ben Franklin's hand

Signers' Hall is a stylized evocation of the Assembly Room in the Pennsylvania State House (today called Independence Hall) where the signers of the Constitution met on September 17, 1787. The room is occupied by life-sized bronze statues of 42 men: the 39 delegates who signed, as well as the three who dissented. Visitors can walk through *Signers' Hall* to find Benjamin Franklin. Visibly the most popular delegate in the room, his bronze cast has been worn away with every rub of his hand and forehead.

7. Take a closer look at a rare copy of the *Pennsylvania Packet*

An alcove adjacent to *Signers' Hall* houses a rare first public printing of the Constitution, the *Pennsylvania Packet* Constitution, which was published on September 19, 1787, just two days after the Constitution was signed in Independence Hall. There are fewer than 20 known copies of this document in the world. It is particularly appropriate that this copy is on view at the National Constitution Center, because this was how "We the People" first learned about the new form of government.

8. Admire the view from the Grand Hall Overlook

The Center's Grand Hall Overlook, located on the second floor, features floor-to-ceiling windows for an unparalleled view of Independence Hall against the breathtaking backdrop of Historic Philadelphia. Hanging from the 60-foot-high ceiling is a special U.S. flag that traveled around the country and flew over every state and territory capitol. The flag was hung at the Center by Muhammad Ali in a special Flag Day ceremony on June 14, 2003. Along the balcony, 56 smaller flags represent each state and territory of the United States.

9. Engage with the *Being "We the People"* Civic Photography Exhibition

Students from Marefat High School in Kabul, Afghanistan and Constitution High School in Philadelphia, PA collaborated on an unprecedented civic photography exhibition, *Being "We the People": Afghanistan, America and the Minority Imprint*, which is on display in the Center's Posterity Hall. The photographs portray images of freedom, religious expression, protest, and other civic themes to explore how minorities in different democracies perceive themselves as citizens and how they define citizenship.

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ADD THREE/TOP TEN

The students selected pairs – one image from each country – that showcase both the striking differences and startling similarities between Afghanistan and the United States. Visitors can join the dialogue through electronic touch-screens to peruse photo pairings and recommend those that resonate with them most. Through internet connectivity, users will see how their recommendations compare with those made by other visitors to the Center and to the National Museum of Afghanistan, where the exhibition is also on display.

10. Indulge in a cheesesteak in Delegates' Café

Treat your taste buds to Philadelphia's signature sandwich, the cheesesteak, without leaving the Center. Delegates' Café, a 225-seat, glass-enclosed restaurant overlooking Independence Mall, is open daily, serving breakfast, lunch and light snacks throughout the day.

The National Constitution Center, located at 525 Arch St. on Philadelphia's Independence Mall, is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing public understanding of the U.S. Constitution and the ideas and values it represents. The Center serves as a museum, an education center, and a forum for debate on constitutional issues. The museum dramatically tells the story of the Constitution from Revolutionary times to the present through more than 100 interactive, multimedia exhibits, film, photographs, text, sculpture and artifacts, and features a powerful, award-winning theatrical performance, "Freedom Rising." The Center also houses the Annenberg Center for Education and Outreach, which serves as the hub for national constitutional education. Also, as a nonpartisan forum for constitutional discourse, the Center presents – without endorsement – programs that contain diverse viewpoints on a broad range of issues. For more information, call 215.409.6700 or visit www.constitutioncenter.org.

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