

THE CIRCUIT TRAILS

WISSAHICKON TRAIL

Schuylkill River to Morris Arboretum

Wissahickon Valley, Fairmount Park, Philadelphia PA

ACCESS

Public Transit:

SEPTA Rail:
Manayunk-Norristown Regional Rail Line to Wissahickon Station.

Chestnut Hill West Line to St. Martins Station. Follow Springfield Ave and Valley Green Road into the gorge to connect with the trail.

Chestnut Hill West Line to Highland Station. Follow Seminole Avenue and then Rex Avenue down in to the gorge to connect with the Trail.

SEPTA Bus:
Routes 1, 9, 27, 35, 38, 61, 124, 125, and R to Wissahickon Transfer Center

Route 27 to Wise's Mill Road

Routes L and 97 to Northwestern Avenue

Bicycle

At its southern end, the Wissahickon Trail meets the Schuylkill River Trail at the mouth of the Wissahickon Creek at Ridge Avenue. Refer to the Circuit Trails website (circuittrails.org) for recommended on-road bicycle routes linking with the Trail.

Vehicle Parking

Northwestern Avenue: 40.084494, -75.231971

Bells Mill Road 40.079619, -75.225301

Valley Green Road 40.054883, -75.218041

Lincoln Drive 40.027569, -75.192825

OVERVIEW

History and Future

The trails in Wissahickon Valley Park are old roads from when the park was populated by logging mills in the late 18th century. Fairmount Park acquired 1,800 acres of the Wissahickon Valley in 1868 in order to preserve the purity of the City's water supply. Mills and taverns were demolished, and in 1920, the wide road paralleling the creek was closed to vehicular traffic and became Forbidden Drive.

Today, Friends of the Wissahickon work to restore historic structures, eliminate invasive plants, fix watershed issues, and restore trails.



General Characteristics:

- Trail length: 7.3 miles
- Surface: Crushed stone on Forbidden Drive Asphalt on Lincoln Drive trail
- Forbidden Drive is off-limits to motor vehicles, but cyclists, equestrians, and pedestrians are welcome at all times.
- Follows the Wissahickon Creek between the Schuylkill River and Montgomery County.
- Short on-road segments connect Forbidden Drive with the 20-mile multi-use Wissahickon Trail to the north and the Schuylkill River Trail to the south.
- The Wissahickon has been recognized as a National Natural Landmark for its extraordinary natural beauty, including dense forests, steep topography, fast running streams, and numerous waterfalls.
- Food, drinking fountains, and restrooms are available at most trailheads.

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SPECIAL AMENITIES

Eating

- Valley Green Inn: the last remaining example of the roadhouses and taverns that flourished in the 19th century.
- Cedars House Cafe: intersection of Northwestern Ave and Forbidden Drive, offers food, an art gallery, and massages.
- Restaurants are plentiful near the Cheltenham Avenue and Wissahickon Regional Rail stations.

There are numerous historic sites and buildings near the Lincoln Drive trailhead including Historic Rittenhouse Town, the birthplace of paper in America and a National Historic Landmark.

There are three public stables in the Wissahickon. Though trail rides are not offered, horses can be boarded and arrangements made to take lessons.

Works of art dot the Wissahickon Valley such as artist Jody Pinto's Finger Span, a steel footbridge that resembles a human finger. Find it on the Creshiem Valley Trail at the end of Livezey Lane.

The Wissahickon Gorge is a National Audubon Society designated "Important Birding Area."

The beautiful Morris Arboretum to the north of the trail is the official arboretum of Pennsylvania and offers programs that integrate science, art and the humanities (www.morrisarboretum.org).

The Wissahickon Environmental Center offers maple sugaring, moon walks, birding hikes, bug walks and other activities on most weekends



TRIP IDEAS

Forbidden Circuit

Begin at the Northwestern Avenue Trailhead. Head south on Forbidden Drive.

At the end of Forbidden Drive, turn right toward the Wissahickon Transportation Center.

At the Transportation Center, take SETPA Route 27 toward Plymouth Meeting Mall and descend at Ridge and Northwestern Avenues.

Follow Northwestern Avenue back to the trailhead, passing through the Wissahickon Environmental Center trail.

Tour length - 6.6 miles active

Biking - 43 minutes + 42 minutes in transit

Walking - 2.25 hours + 42 minutes in transit

Historic Gorge Tour

Begin the trip at the historic Tulpehocken Train Station, built in 1878.

Follow the bike lanes on Walnut Lane and Wissahickon Avenue to visit colonial Historic Rittenhouse Town.

Continue to Forbidden Drive, then head north on the trail through the Wissahickon Gorge.

Stop for a bite at the Valley Green Inn, a traditional roadside inn built in 1850.

Continue north to the Morris Arboretum to see the garden and buildings that date back to 1887.

Return to the start by trail or train.

Tour length - 7 miles

Biking - 47 minutes active

Walking - 2.5 hours active

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TRAIL MAP

