

Luxe

Layovers: PHL

By Susan Lanier-Graham



PHL Terminal A West at night.
Photo courtesy Philadelphia
International Airport

Remember the days when the thought of an airport layover brought shudders and a sense of dread? Today's airports are breaking out of that mold — and breaking all the old rules — to offer bespoke services to modern travelers. From luxury lounges, modern spas and art museums, to wine bars, gourmet restaurants and markets filled with fresh produce, airports around the world are revolutionizing the travel experience. Discover a new place each month for your next luxe layover.

Philadelphia International Airport: PHL

PHL—Philadelphia International Airport—opened in 1940 as Philadelphia Municipal Airport with just four carriers. Today, PHL is owned and operated by the city of Philadelphia and services not only the country's sixth largest metropolitan area, but the entire country along with most of Europe and the Middle East.

There are now 27 carriers at PHL with service to 130 domestic and international destinations. PHL is only about 7 miles outside the city center. During your layover at PHL, you can find just about anything you need or want. There are 170 food, beverage and retail outlets. There is also free wi-fi and nearly 1000 power charging outlets located across the five terminals. Travelers at PHL have access to The Virtual Library when they connect via the public wi-fi. This free collection of more than 27,000 ebooks is provided by the Free Library of Philadelphia.

The Airport Layout

There are five terminals at PHL. You can easily walk between Terminals A, B, C, D and E via a series of moving sidewalks. If you need to connect via Terminal F, which houses US Airways Express (now American Airlines), there is a continuous free shuttle from Gates C16 and A1 to the hub at Gate F14. You can also walk from Terminal F to Terminal E, but you will go out of security. There is an interactive terminal map online here.

If you have a longer layover and want to explore the city a bit, there are several options. You can rent a taxi or hire a car service at the airport. Follow the signs to ground transportation. If you want a hassle-free way to see the city, you can hop on SEPTA Airport Regional Rail, which is accessible via walkways between the terminals and baggage claims at Terminals A-East,

B, C, D and E (if you arrive at Terminal F, walk to Terminal E to get the train).

SEPTA's Airport Regional Rail runs every 30 minutes from the airport to the city center from 5:09am to 12:09am with return trips from the city center between 4:25am and 11:25pm. The trip is \$8 cash each way. You can also purchase an Individual Independence Pass for \$12 or a Family Independence Pass (good for up to five people) for \$29. Both passes, which you can get on the train from the conductor, provide unlimited travel for a day on SEPTA buses, trolleys, subway and Regional Rail.

Airport Clubs & Lounges

There are a number of lounges located at PHL, although some of them are only open during the times that international flights are boarding. The lounges include:

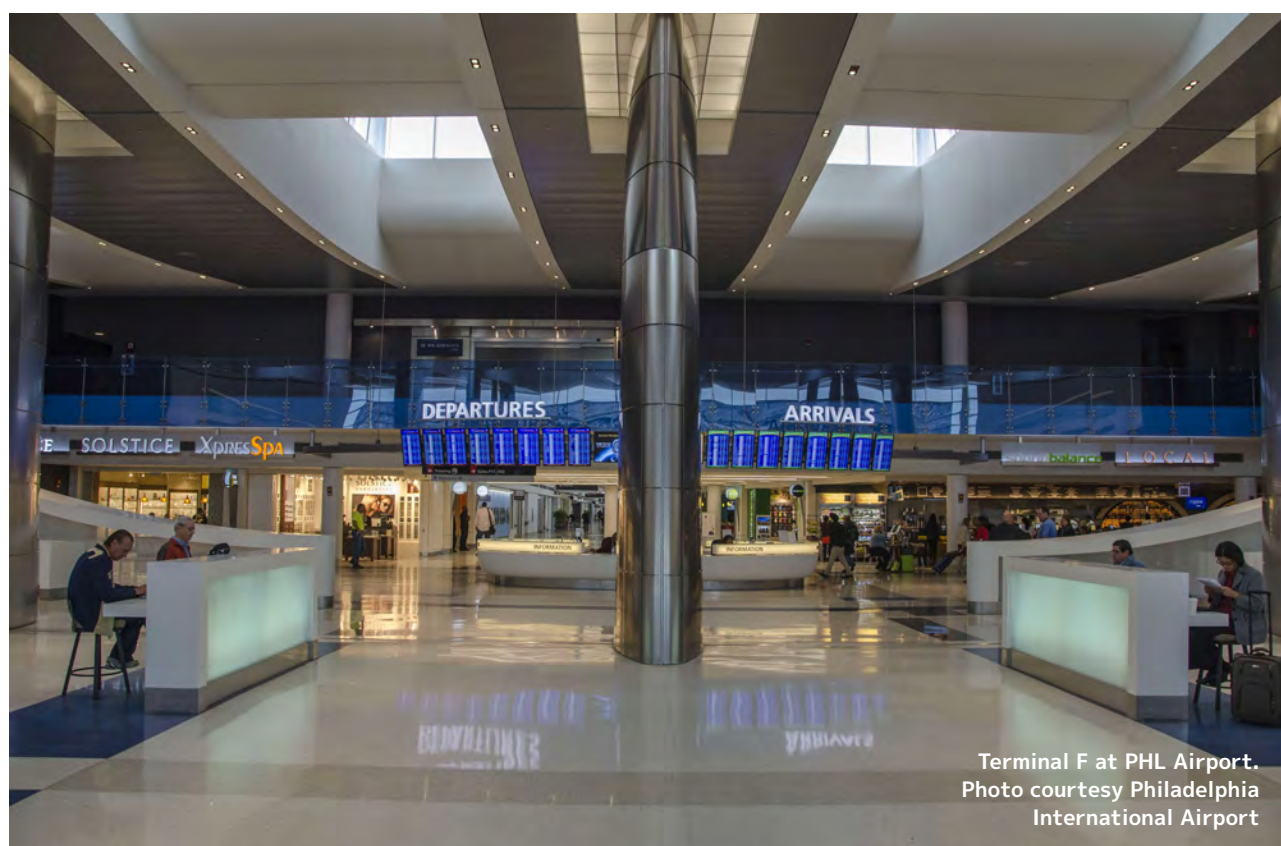
- American Airlines Admirals Club in the B/C connector; accessible via elevator near Gate B2 and escalator in the B/C connector; open 5:30am to 10pm
- American Airlines Admirals Club in the Terminal F hub (upstairs); open 5:30am to 10pm
- American Airlines Admirals Club near Gate A15, accessible via elevator; open 5:30am to 9:30pm
- American Airlines Admirals Club near Gate A4; open 5am to 7pm
- British Airways Galleries Lounge near Gate A14; open 3 to 7pm
- Delta Sky Club, Terminal D; open



5am to 7pm

- Qatar Airways Privilege Club near Gate A14; open 8am to 10:30am
- United Club in the C/D connector; open 5am to 7:30pm.

Several of the clubs offer single day admission. You can get free beverages, snacks, reading material, internet connection in all lounges. The American Airlines Admirals



Terminal F at PHL Airport. Photo courtesy Philadelphia International Airport



Aerial overview of PHL at night

Club also offer meals for purchase and premium alcohol for purchase in addition to the complimentary snacks and house liquors.



Food and Drink

There is a wide variety of foods available at PHL, from sit-down dining to grab-and-go sandwiches and snacks. My favorites include Sky Asian Bistro, Legal Sea Foods, Cibo Bistro & Wine Bar and Vino Volo.

- Sky Asian Bistro serves more than 30 wines by the glass along with a selection of Asian beers and teas. You can select from the full menu offering sushi, sashimi, rolls and Asian cuisine. Sky Asian Bistro is located near Gate C17.
- Cibo Bistro & Wine Bar serves up Italian meals and a selection of

wines, beer and spirits. The sit-down restaurant is located near Gate B4.

- Legal Sea Foods, located in the B/C Connector, serves a full menu of seafood specialties from raw bar to chowders, scallops, shrimp, salmon, lobster rolls and some pretty incredible desserts.

- Vino Volo is an upscale wine bar and bistro offering a nice selection of wine, beer and spirits along with artisanal cheeses and cured meats. You can also do a wine tasting with a wine flight here during your layover. There are Vino Volo locations near Gate A17, Gate B9 and in the B/C food court.
- Local in Terminal F, featuring the food of Philly local and Iron Chef Jose Garces. The menu is locally sourced and paired with custom cocktails or local beers.
- La Tapenade is an all-day café that serves international dishes. Located in the International Terminal A-West, it starts the day with pastries and coffee, then continues serving lunch and dinner featuring homemade chutneys, Tzatziki sauces, roasted vegetables, sandwiches and fine cheeses.

Shopping

PHL offers a variety of shopping opportunities. Most retail shops open at 7am and remain open until

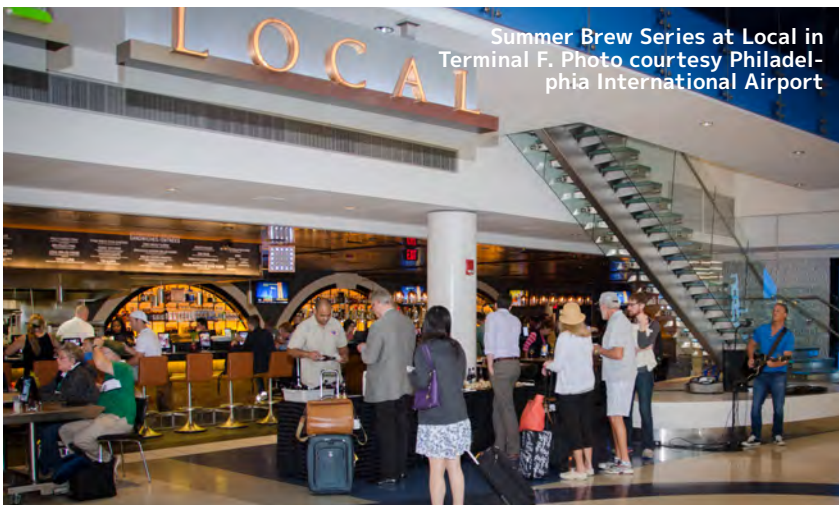
10pm, although shops in Terminals D and E close earlier, at 8:30 or 9:30pm.

You can find everything from Brooks Brothers clothing to Pandora jewelry, Tumi luggage and Swarovski crystal. There are international and duty free shops in Terminal A-West (the International terminal). For a complete listing of shops, check online at philamarketplace.com or check out one of the directories in the airport.

For Fun, Relaxation and Pampering

There are several ways to relax at PHL, from pampering yourself at the spa to resting in your own private suite or checking out the amazing artwork on display throughout the airport.

If you are looking to relax, head to one of the three XpresSpa locations. There are three PHL locations—one near Gate C18, one in the D concourse and a third near Gate F25. You can get manicures, pedicures, facials, foot massages, hand and arm massages or even full body massages. You can book as few as 15 minutes or as much as 90 minutes. The spa near Gate C18 is open from 7am to 10pm daily; the concourse D location



Summer Brew Series at Local in Terminal F. Photo courtesy Philadelphia International Airport

Outside view of PHL terminal. Photo courtesy Philadelphia International Airport



is open from 7am to 8pm; the spa near Gate F25 is open 7am to 10pm.

There is usually some type of entertainment in the terminals. During the winter, there is a program of live music, artist's demonstrations, caricature painting and free bags of popcorn as part of the "Oh, Say It Ain't Snow!! Weather the Winter Blues at PHL" campaign. During the summer months, the customer appreciation program Just Plane Fun runs June through August with daily live entertainment. One of the popular events is the Summer Brew Series, which takes place throughout the airport where travelers get a chance to sample local beers and food to a backdrop of local musicians entertaining the crowds.

In 1998, PHL established its Exhibition Program to bring art to the airport through a series of rotating exhibits located throughout the airport. You will also find several permanent art pieces on display. You can go to maps.phl.org/phl/ to view the interactive map that lets you create a customized Healthy HeART



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Walk to explore the art while you get moving during your layover. There is a variety of artwork for both adults and children, ranging from historical displays to glasswork, paintings, and sculptures.

Some of the not-to-miss permanent exhibits include:

- Cloudsphere by Mei-ling Hom in the Hammerhead Rotunda of Terminal E. You can read more about the artist's work at www.meilinghom.com/portfolio/public-art.
- YOU ARE HERE by Ellen Harvey and Jan Baracz in the Terminal F Hub. Read more about this beautiful glass wall at www.broadwayworld.com/.

Rest Your Head

If you're looking for a quick rest between flights, you can head to the Minute Suites in the A/B Connector. These private suites each include a sofa bed, pillow, blanket, 32" HDTV with computer capabilities, keyboard, mouse, DirecTV, free WiFi, sound system with NAP26Tm audio program for power napping, alarm clock, desk and office chair. Rooms are available for \$38 per hour with \$9.50 per 15 minutes for the first

two hours or \$7 per 15 minutes after two hours. If you have a longer stay, you can book 5 hours for \$120, 8 hours for \$150 or, if want to stay overnight inside the terminal, you can book an overnight 8 hours at the flat rate of \$130.

If you prefer to rest your head in a comfy bed with full hotel amenities, head to the Philadelphia Airport Marriott, connected to Terminal B via a direct skywalk passage. The hotel has one-bedroom suites and a concierge level with two queens or a king. There are day rates available in addition to regular overnight rates. The rooms are soundproofed, so you never know you're sitting alongside the active runways while you snooze in comfort. The hotel includes the Aviation Grill, which is open 6am to 12:30am daily, serving breakfast, lunch, dinner, drinks and snacks.

Philadelphia International Airport is ever evolving and working to improve the visitor experience, so be sure to check online at www.phl.org for the latest updates before setting out on your trip.

