

Insider Information

PHILADELPHIA ZOO

3400 West Girard Avenue ■ Philadelphia, PA 19104-1196
philadelphiazoo.org

Dear Chaperone –

Thank you for spending the day with your child's group at the Philadelphia Zoo! Chaperones are an integral part of a successful field trip. It is an important responsibility, but it also gives you a great opportunity to share knowledge with your group and ensure that they have a fun and engaging visit. We want you to be fully prepared for a great trip. Please refer to the following topics to find answers and solutions to many questions and situations that may arise during your visit.

Bathrooms

We highly recommend offering to stop at each bathroom opportunity.

Bathrooms can be found in the following locations:

North Gate (main entrance)

KidZooU (both behind the pigeon coop and inside the Education Center)

Trading Post (just past PECO Primate Reserve, behind the gift shop)

Big Cat Falls (between Tiger Pavilion and Americas Pavilion, in Buck Base Camp)

McNeil Avian Center (in the Atrium, as soon as you enter the building)

Eagles Roost (across from Bald Eagle exhibit)

South End (across from Colobus Monkeys)

Bear Country (near Asiatic Black Bears, in rock wall)

Please refer to your map or the Zoo app for more details regarding these locations.

Food

During your visit, you may either need to purchase food or simply sit down to eat your packed lunches. Use this chart to decide where your needs will be best met.

Location	Nearest exhibit	Seating available?	Capacity	Food for purchase?	Indoor/Outdoor
Impala Cafe	Rare Animal Conservation Center	Yes	175	Yes(seasonal)	Outdoor
Wolcott Plaza	PECO Primate Reserve	Yes	60	Yes(seasonal)	Outdoor
PECO Mezzanine	PECO Primate Reserve	Yes(floor)	40	No	Indoor
Tiger Terrace	Big Cat Falls	Yes	10	Yes	Indoor
Bird Lake Plaza	Bird Lake(seating to right of plaza)	Yes	140	Yes(seasonal)	Outdoor
Picnic Grove	Bald Eagles	Yes	200+	Yes(seasonal)	Outdoor
Impala Lawn	Small Mammal House	Yes(ground)	200+	No	Outdoor

For small groups, you will also see individual tables scattered throughout the Zoo.

Food is NOT permitted in the following locations: Big Cat Falls, McNeil Avian Center, and the Treehouse.

Please refer to your map or the Zoo app for details regarding all locations.

Animals

The Philadelphia Zoo is home to over 1,300 animals from around the world, many of them threatened with extinction. Feel free to share the following 'Animal Superlatives' with your students throughout your trip:

Animal Superlatives

Heaviest: Southern White Rhino

Name: Tony	Location: African Plains	Fun Fact: White rhinos can weigh up to 6,000 pounds, but they are herbivores and are quite gentle.
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Tallest: Reticulated Giraffe

Name: Gus, Abbey, and Stella	Location: African Plains	Fun Fact: Giraffes can grow up to 20 feet tall. Their heart is 2 feet in length, and their tongue is 18 inches long.
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Longest: Green Anaconda

Name: Angus and Amanda	Location: Reptiles and Amphibians House	Fun Fact: These snakes can grow up to 20 feet long and weigh over 200 pounds.
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Fastest: Cheetah

Name: Amani and Kalima	Location: Cheetah Run (south end of Zoo)	Fun Fact: Cheetahs can reach up to 70MPH in short bursts of running, but cannot maintain that speed for long.
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Most Touchable: Goats

Name: Lots! See a staff member.	Location: KidZooU (Barnyard)	Fun Fact: Goats are extremely intelligent and social animals. They are sometimes used as therapy animals in hospitals.
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Biggest Sleeper: Lions

Name: Makini, Tajiri, Kataba, Mali, Msinga, and Sabi	Location: Big Cat Falls	Fun Fact: Lions sleep over 20 hours per day. They need to spend lots of time resting during the hot day in order to have enough energy to hunt their prey at night.
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Loudest: Rhinoceros Hornbills

Name: Bob and Nancy	Location: McNeil Avian Center	Fun Fact: These birds have a hollow piece of their beak, called a casque, which amplifies their calls.
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Best Sense of Smell: Polar Bears

Name: Coldilocks	Location: Bear Country	Fun Fact: Polar bears can smell a seal (their favorite food) through ice that is over 2 feet thick.
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Fluffiest: Red Panda

Name: Khumbie and Spark	Location: Carnivore Kingdom	Fun Fact: Red pandas have two layers of fur to keep warm. They use their tail like a scarf in very cold weather.
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Smartest: Orangutan

Name: Tua, Sugi, and Batu	Location: PECO Primate Reserve	Fun Fact: Our orangutans are trained to trade things they find outside (like rocks) for treats.
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Some other general questions you may be asked:

Where do our animals come from? A vast majority of our animals comes from other Zoos. We never take animals from the wild unless they are very close to extinction. For example, the Micronesian Kingfisher nearly went extinct in 1983 when there were only 25 birds left. We brought them to the Zoo and now there are over 400 birds in Zoos around the country.

Why do animals live in zoos? Most animals live in zoos because they face threats in their wild homes that are causing their populations to decline. These animals are threatened with extinction, and some of them are what we call Critically Endangered, which means they are likely to go extinct if strong actions are not taken right now to protect them. Animals live in zoos to act as ambassadors for their species, help people understand why wildlife is important, and serve as a safety net for their species if they go extinct in the wild.

History

The Philadelphia Zoo is America's First Zoo. We were chartered in 1859, but did not open to the public until 1874 (we were a bit delayed due to the Civil War). While travelling through the Zoo, look out for these points of interest:

The Solitude: The Solitude is a small white house near the Small Mammal House. This house was built in 1784 by John Penn, grandson of William Penn (the founder of Pennsylvania). This house has been on Zoo grounds since our chartering and has been used as an exhibit space, living quarters for the Zoo President, and is currently a meeting space and is open for scheduled tours. It is rumored to be haunted by a ghost named Leticia and has appeared on Ghost Hunters.

Film Connections: Movie buffs will recall the scene from Rocky II where Rocky asks Adrian to marry him. That scene was filmed at the Philadelphia Zoo in the location that is now Big Cat Falls. At the time of filming, it was called the Carnivore House and looked a bit different than it does now. Another famous movie star, Leo, the MGM lion, also spent time at the Zoo. After a long and productive career in film Leo retired in Philadelphia.

Architecture: Many of the buildings throughout the Zoo are very old and date back many decades. This includes the North Gatehouses (1876), The Treehouse (1877), McNeil Avian Center (1916), and the Education Center at KidZooU (1941). These buildings have changed functions over the years, but are primarily still original and intact.

Zoo Firsts: The Philadelphia Zoo is proud to have a long list of 'firsts' to our name. This includes the first animal health center in a zoo (1901), the first successful birth of an orangutan in a zoo (1928), the first scientifically controlled animal diets (1935), the first children's zoo in the western hemisphere (1938), and the first cheetah cubs born in a zoo (1956). These are just a few examples of the many things we have accomplished.

Souvenirs

Many of our guests like to remember their visit with a souvenir from the Zoo. There are three gift shops here:

The ZooShop: This large gift shop is located at the main entrance of the Zoo. It has our widest selection of souvenirs and is open year-round. Because of its proximity to the bus pick-up zone, it can be very crowded during peak exit time (12:30-1:30). If you are planning a visit to this shop, we recommend trying to avoid visiting during that time if at all possible to ensure you have a pleasant visit.

Trading Post: Located just outside PECO Primate Reserve, this gift shop is right in the middle of the action. It is open year-round and offers some of our most popular souvenirs. This shop tends to be most crowded around lunch time (11:00-12:30) due to its proximity to our largest eatery, Tiger Terrace.

The Grove Shop: This small gift shop is located in a quiet space near the Bald Eagle exhibit. It offers a number of specialty items and a few guest favorites. It is open seasonally and may be closed during the winter months.

Please keep in mind that children must be accompanied by an adult at all times when in a gift shop.

Contact

If you need to get in touch with the Zoo for any reason, including requesting first aid or reporting an emergency, call **215-243-1100**.