



Benjamin Franklin Museum Franklin Court Independence National Historical Park

At the Benjamin Franklin Museum in Independence National Historical Park, visitors of all ages will be able to immerse themselves in the 18th century life of the passionate, industrious and rebellious Benjamin Franklin.

Museum Exhibits

ARDENT & DUTIFUL: “Man is a sociable being.” Naturally charming and witty, Franklin drew people to him wherever he lived. He was dutiful and affectionate toward his family but it was his close friends both here and in Europe to whom he expressed his most ardent devotion.

AMBITIOUS & REBELLIOUS: “Be frugal and industrious, and you will be free.” Although Franklin’s ambition and rebelliousness were judged as negative traits, he rose quickly through the social and political ranks of 18th c. society. His natural intelligence, hard work and restless energy won him many friends.

MOTIVATED TO IMPROVE: “What good have I done today?” Franklin believed in bettering himself and the world around him. This room explores his many contributions to society such as improved street lamp designs, and the creation of the Franklin stove and bifocals

CURIOUS & FULL OF WONDER: “A thirst for knowledge.” From the time he was a boy to his very last days, Franklin delighted in learning new things. He closely observed the natural world around him, frequently sharing his findings and sense of discovery with others. His curiosity and scientific explorations mirrored the ideals of the Enlightenment.

STRATEGIC & PERSUASIVE: “Life is a kind of chess.” Franklin’s passion for playing chess also cultivated important personal traits such as strategic thinking and patience that helped him become an effective negotiator and diplomat. Visitors will learn about Franklin’s role in securing French support for the American Revolution and his skill at political problem solving.

As visitors leave the exhibit area, in FRANKLIN’S LIBRARY AND LEGACY, they will have the opportunity to reflect, along with Benjamin Franklin himself, on his life and accomplishments. By way of computer animation, visitors can eavesdrop on Franklin in a room intended to be a recreation of his library, as he sits at his desk writing his autobiography and hear five stories that were included in the final version.

Benjamin Franklin Museum Fast Facts

With 9500 square-feet of exhibit space, the Benjamin Franklin Museum includes:

Artifacts:

- 45 historical artifacts, mostly 18th-century (with a few 19th & early-20th-century exceptions)
- **Oldest artifact: Mastodon tooth fossil**
Fossilized stone / Independence National Historical Park / This tooth, found at Franklin Court in 1959, likely was among a group of fossils sent to Franklin in London in 1767. Franklin found the fossils “extremely curious.” Discovered near the Ohio River, they came from a mastodon, an **ancient**, elephant-like creature.
- **Largest artifact: Sedan chair** (French or Italian), ca. 1750–1780
Wood, metal / Chester County Historical Society / Franklin was the oldest member of the Constitutional Convention in 1787. Ill and suffering excruciating pain, he was sometimes transported in a sedan chair by prisoners from the nearby Walnut Street jail. Sedan chairs were popular in Europe in the 18th century.
- **Smallest artifact: [One of the pieces from the] Chess set** (French), 1750–1780
Pearwood / American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia / Originally owned by Benjamin Franklin / Franklin loved chess, and played friendly yet competitive matches with numerous opponents throughout his life. The grandson of a friend in Paris wrote that Franklin’s “passion for late-night games was checked only by his supply of candles.”
- **Most electrifying artifact: Electrical Apparatus** (American), 1742-1747
Walnut and iron / Library Company of Philadelphia / Originally owned by Benjamin Franklin/ Designed by Franklin and made by Philadelphia-area craftsmen, including the Wistarburgh Glassworks, N.J., Franklin and his fellow gentleman scientists used this to generate electricity for use in their many electrical experiments.

Interactives:

- 30 computer interactives and/or animations
- 11 hands-on and/or mechanical interactives (including touch objects)
- 5 hands-on, matching game interactives
- 4 flipbooks (with annotated excerpts of primary sources)

Designers:

- **Exhibit design: Casson Mann** (London)
- **Graphic design: Nick Bell Design** (London)
- **Interactive design:**
 - **Memory Collective** (Plymouth, MA)
 - **Bluecadet** (Philadelphia)

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The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

- Curation: **Remer & Talbott (Philadelphia)**

Visiting:

- Location: The Benjamin Franklin Museum, part of Independence National Historical Park, is located in Franklin Court. Entrance to the courtyard is from Market or Chestnut Streets, between 3rd and 4th Streets.
- Hours: Open daily from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
The museum will be closed: Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day
- Fees: Admission fees are \$5 for adults, \$2 for children sixteen and under, and children 3 and under are free.
- Ticketing: Timed entry tickets are available at the door and must be purchased on the day of your visit. There are a limited number of tickets available each day. Plan to allow at least one hour for your visit. Last entrance to the museum will be at 4:15 p.m. The America the Beautiful Annual Pass, Senior Pass and Access Pass do not apply at the Benjamin Franklin Museum.
- School Groups: Grades K-12 are free, including one adult chaperone for every 10 students. To be eligible, teachers must bring a signed letter, on school letterhead requesting the fee waiver. The letter must state how the visit connects to the students' classroom. Reservation information for school groups will be available soon. Please check park website for updated information.
- Multi-purpose Room: The Benjamin Franklin Museum includes a 950 sq. ft. multi-purpose room in which the park can host ranger-led programs, show films, and host lectures.
- For Kids and Family: The exhibit includes a family guide where children can look for "Skuggs," Franklin's "pet squirrel" who will help families with children to explore the museum. Visitors can follow Skuggs on Twitter @SkuggsFranklin.
- Accessibility: The Benjamin Franklin Museum is fully accessible for visitors with mobility impairments. An elevator allows visitors to access the museum. There are also accessible restrooms located on the lower level. An audio described tour of the museum will be available later in the fall. Tactile objects are located throughout the exhibit area.
- Museum Store: Operated by **Eastern National**, with 750 sq .ft. of retail space, the **Benjamin Franklin Museum Store** offers a wide variety of commemorative items, apparel, books, and other merchandise related to Benjamin Franklin and 18th-century Philadelphia.

Franklin by the Numbers:

- In 1706 Benjamin Franklin was born in Boston, and would be one of 17 children fathered by his father Josiah Franklin.
- Circa 1717, at the age of 14 Franklin created his first invention, swim flippers!
- In 1718, at the age of 12, Benjamin Franklin was apprenticed to his brother James to work in James' printing house.
- In 1722, at the age of 16, Benjamin Franklin's "Silence Doogood" letters were published in his brother's newspaper, Boston's *New England Courant*.
- In 1723 Benjamin Franklin arrived in Philadelphia, a 17 year old runaway apprentice from Boston.
- In 1728, at the age of 22 Franklin co-owned his own printing office, and owned his own newspaper, the *Pennsylvania Gazette*.
- In 1730, at the age of 24 Franklin entered into common-law marriage with his wife Deborah Reed.
- In 1732, at the age of 26 Franklin published the first German language newspaper in America, the *Philadelphische Zeitung*, as well as *Poor Richard's Almanack*.
- By 1740, at the age of 34 Franklin became the official government printer for Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey, and Maryland.
- In 1748, believing that he had made enough money, and not knowing how much longer he would live, Franklin retired from full-time printing at the age of 42 in order to further pursue his electrical experiments.
- Beginning in 1757, at the age of 51, Franklin will spend 16 of the next 18 years living in England.
- In 1763, at the age of 57, Franklin stopped renting and began building his own house at Franklin Court.
- In 1771, at the age of 65, Benjamin Franklin began writing his *Autobiography*. He worked on it periodically for the next 18 years.
- In 1775, at the age of 69, Benjamin Franklin is selected as a delegate to the Continental Congress.
- In 1776, at the age of 70, Benjamin Franklin signed the Declaration of Independence and left for Paris, France to secure an alliance with the French.
- In 1778, at the age of 72, Benjamin Franklin secured an alliance with France.
- In 1783, at the age of 77, Benjamin Franklin signs the Treaty of Paris ending the War for Independence.
- In 1785, at the age of 79, after serving diplomatically in France for 9 years, Franklin returns home to Philadelphia and is elected governor of Pennsylvania.
- In 1787, at the age of 81, Benjamin Franklin is selected as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention.
- In 1790, Benjamin Franklin died in his home at Franklin Court at the age of 84. An estimated 20,000 mourners attended his funeral.
- In 1791, Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography* is published in French. It will not be published in English until 1793. Still in print, the *Autobiography* has been translated in up to 28 languages.