

Its spring and love is in the air... or is that BBQ?

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With spring finally here, it's time to shake off some of the winter blues and do a little bit of traveling. With the weather once again beginning to cooperate, and the snow finally melted, gas up the car and hit the open road. Some of the best road tripping can be done in the spring, when the attractions start to open for the season, but the crowds have yet to arrive.

Destination: Philly



Philadelphia, the "City of Brotherly Love" is a historic gem. This city was once the second largest city in the British Empire, a center of revolutionary political thinking, home to Benjamin Franklin, birthplace of both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, and has been the capitol of the United States of America.

Philly is now home to a stunning array of museums, both historic and not, guaranteeing the visitor enough material to fill days upon days. Benjamin Franklin Parkway, known locally as Museum Row, is a good place to start. The Philadelphia Museum of Art ("Yo, Adrian!") houses collections of renaissance Dutch and French art, as well as works from the impressionist period and shaker furniture. The museum has live classical or jazz on Wednesday evenings. For art buffs, the Rodin Museum a few blocks away houses a number of works by the sculptor, including some of his most famous such as *The Thinker*, *The Burghers of Calais* and *The Gates of Hell*. For the more left-brained, the nearby Franklin Institute Science Museum houses a massive planetarium, while travelers with little ones will surely enjoy the Please Touch Museum, specifically designed for the kids and kids-at-heart.

One museum that should not be missed is the Mutter Museum   at the College of Physicians of Philadelphia. The museum houses instruments and specimens related to the history of the medical profession. Originally meant to be a reference for medical students and visiting physicians, the museum now receives the majority of its visitors from the general public. In the museum's 20,000+ item collection are medical instruments dating back to 1750 and anatomical oddities such as exhibit showcasing the famous conjoined twins Chang and Eng Bunker, a tumor secretly removed from President Grover Cleveland, and a collection of items, such as fishbooks and coins, that have all been removed from the throats and stomachs of people stupid or unlucky enough to have swallowed them.

The Natural Wonders of Ausable Chasm ✓📄🔍

Ausable Chasm, located 12 miles south of Plattsburgh, NY on US Route 9, claims to be the oldest natural attraction in the USA. The attraction was established 1870, and has been continuously operated since that date under the same ownership. Ausable Chasm can be best described as a miniature Grand Canyon crossed with a miniature Niagara Falls. The Ausable River has cut a 200 foot deep gash through the stone as it moves from the Adirondack Mountains to Lake Champlain, punctuated by the spectacle of 75 foot high Rainbow Falls.



The best time to visit is in spring, right when the park opens for the season. The river swells with the melted snow from the mountains, making the falls and rapids a spectacular sight to witness.

There are numerous walking trails to navigate the chasm and river area (as well as a number of onimous cliff walks and less-than-assuring bridges over the river). The park also offer rafting, kayaking, and tubing on the river during the summer months; although during our springtime visit, the river rapids were a bit too aggressive for tubing.

Memphis in May - Music, Fun and... BBQ!



Memphis in May is made up of three separate events: the Beale Street Music Festival, the World Championship Barbecue Cooking Contest and the Sunset Symphony. All together, the event is a month-long party celebrating everything Memphis is known for.

The Beale Street Music Festival stretches over three days. Four stages of musical acts in a park of 33 acres overlooking the Mississippi river. More than sixty musical acts will perform blues, rock, gospel, R&B, alternative, and soul. The festival has garnered worldwide media coverage, and is a sell-out every year.



The World Championship Barbecue Cooking Contest has been called the "Super Bowl of Swine"; as it is the largest pork barbecue cooking contest in the world. All of Memphis smells of hickory. For three days contestants have cooked, and visitors have eaten, more pork than they care to admit, in trying for more than \$60,000 in prizes. To paraphrase another Memphis favorite, 90,000 pork fans can't be wrong.

And don't forget the Ms. Piggie competition where grown men in don plastic pig snouts and tutus!

At the Sunset Symphony, the grand finale of the festival, the Memphis Symphony Orchestra performs at the edge of the mighty Mississippi River under a sky ablaze with fireworks. It's the perfect way to end the festival for another year.

More information on Memphis in May can be found at <http://www.memphisinmay.org>