

OUR EXPERTS MAKE IT EASY: 4 UNFORGETTABLE CITY WEEKENDS

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## SOUTH STREET

# Headhouse 24/7

## A week's worth of entertainment in South Street's melting pot

By Jake Lemkowitz for USA TODAY

The South Street Headhouse District overflows with fantastic food, boozy night-life, and four generations of counterculture community. This neighborhood constantly redefines itself, yet it remains an offbeat melting pot. Where else can you find a busker playing a melodica, a group of urban historians, a New Age puppet show, a mob of cheesesteak connoisseurs, and a family taking a stroll, all on the same block?

Something special is going on in the Headhouse seven days a week. You'll find great deals, too. You just need to know where to look.

### MONDAY

The moment you step into Percy Street Barbecue's salvaged-wood dining room, the aroma of slow-smoked meats sends your appetite into overdrive. That's a good thing because every Monday night, Percy Street offers all-you-can-eat baby back ribs, pinto beans, collard greens, and jalapeño-cheddar cornbread for just \$23. Wash it down with a top-notch craft beer, and save room for Percy Street's mean pecan pie.

>> 900 South St.; 215-625-8510; [percystreet.com](http://percystreet.com)

Burn off that last rack of ribs with some rock 'n' roll at the Theater of the Living Arts. Back in the '70s, the TLA was a cultural focal point for artists and urban trailblazers who transformed South Street into a thriving neighborhood. Once an avant-garde performance space, then a single-screen movie theater, now the TLA is one of Philadelphia's best music venues, attracting big-name bands and DJs. Some of the headliners for this winter include Das Racist, Drive-By Truckers, Matisyahu, and Steve Aoki.

>> 334 South St.; 215-922-1011; [tlaphilly.com](http://tlaphilly.com)

### TUESDAY

Tattooed Mom is a watering hole with a split personality. The ground floor is a homey, well-lit parlor. Upstairs, you'll find a punk rock bar where the walls are plastered



Photo by J. Smith for GPTMC

**Snack time:** The pizza slices at Lorenzo & Sons are grease-dripping, thin-crust behemoths.

with show flyers and retrofitted go-carts provide seating. Whether you're an upstairs or downstairs kind of person, Tattooed Mom is a universal destination for its weekly Taco Tuesday, an extravaganza of \$1 tacos (beef or veggie) and cheap beer. It begins at noon and lasts until the tacos are all gone.

>> 530 South St.; 215-238-9880; [facebook.com/tattooedmomphilly](http://facebook.com/tattooedmomphilly)

South Street's underground music scene may be a thing of the past, but the

Headhouse remains a bonanza for record collectors. No digital equivalent exists for the immersive experience of album-hunting in Philadelphia Record Exchange. Used recordings fill the shop's three floors, floor-to-ceiling. Amid the pleasantly haphazard bins are vinyl gems like a Velvet Underground live-show bootleg and an original pressing of Miles Davis' *Sketches of Spain*, just waiting to be found.

>> 618 South 5th St.; 215-925-7892; [philarecx.com](http://philarecx.com)

### WEDNESDAY

Whether you're a literary snob or you can't remember finishing a novel, Brickbat Books is your store. It keeps a meticulously curated selection, so everything Brickbat sells feels like a personal recommendation from a cool older sister. Graphic novels, pulp fiction, vintage art books, and the odd Japanese psych record make for an eclectic collection.

>> 709 South 4th St.; 215-592-1207; [brickbatbooks.com](http://brickbatbooks.com)

Hot Diggity serves gourmet hot dogs that are part kitsch, part haute cuisine, like the Vietnamese banh mi-inspired Saigon Fusion. Every other Wednesday night at 9:30 p.m., the Headhouse's foremost BYOB wiener destination hosts Bad Movie Night, screening the world's greatest bad flicks. Classic so-bad-they're-awesome films like *Troll 2* and *Samurai Cop* are supplemented with bizarre retro educational videos and food that is specially catered to each screening.

>> 630 South St.; 267-886-9253; [thehotdiggity.com](http://thehotdiggity.com)

### THURSDAY

The Headhouse's hippie roots still show at Blackbird Pizzeria. Everything it serves is 100 percent vegan, but the slices are so good that even meat eaters line up to order cruelty-free creations like Blackbird's fungi, a white pizza with mushrooms and truffle oil. Blackbird's pizza hits all the right notes: gooey, crunchy, and delicious. Vegetarians everywhere owe it to themselves to try Blackbird's seitan cheesesteak.

>> 507 South 6th St.; 215-625-6660; [blackbirdpizzeria.com](http://blackbirdpizzeria.com)

Nothing helps vegan pizza digest like a book about the healing power of crystals, so head to Garland of Letters. Breathe the incense and browse the shelves of holistic medicines, wind chimes, tarot cards, gongs, and all sorts of New Age literature. Whether you take it seriously or not, this esoteric bookstore is one of the neighborhood's beacons of independent business.

>> 527 South St.; 215-923-5946

### FRIDAY

The neighborhood's eponymous Headhouse Square, also known as the Shambles, is a cobblestone plaza. George Washington shopped for vegetables here. Now the square is home to some thoroughly modern bars and restaurants. The standout is the hip, nouveau-Mexican Xochitl. It's an ideal place



## SOUTH STREET



Photo by R. Kennedy for GPTMC

**Reach out:** Isaiah Zagar's mosaics at Philadelphia's Magic Gardens feature mirrors, paintings, bottles, wooden idols, china, bicycle parts, and other repurposed materials.

to celebrate the end of the workweek, with a happy hour from 5 to 7 p.m. featuring the best margaritas in town for \$5 a pop.  
**>> 408 South 2nd St.; 215-238-7280; xochitlphilly.com**

The first Friday of every month, Philadelphia's galleries and independent boutiques open their doors for a citywide art party. Check out the First Friday scene at Moon & Arrow, one of the newest stores on the stretch of 4th Street known as Fabric Row. Chelsea Pearce, Moon & Arrow's owner, crafts most of the store's jewelry herself. Check out the selection of terrariums, vintage clothing, furniture, and fun goods.  
**>> 727 South 4th St.; 215-200-1617; moonandarrow.com**

### SATURDAY

Plenty of places in Philadelphia serve beer with breakfast, but there's only one where you can drink it out of a giant boot-shaped glass while surrounded by screaming soccer fanatics. That place is Brauhaus Schmitz. The bar and restaurant opens at 9 a.m. every Saturday for broadcasts of German Bundesliga matches and offers a breakfast of Bavarian sausage, pretzel, and beer.  
**>> 718 South St.; 267-909-8814; brauhausschmitz.com**

On any weekend, the line around Jim's Steaks bends around the block. The art deco corner shop is one of Philly's cheesesteak temples, and the smell of fried onions lures innocent bystanders from miles away.

**>> 400 South St.; 215-928-1911; jimssteaks.com**

Across the street from Jim's is Lorenzo & Sons, another South Street institution.

### THE PHILADELPHIA TACO

**PRO TIP:** For a truly groundbreaking late-night-food experience, fold a slice of Lorenzo & Son's pizza around a Jim's cheesesteak. Voila! You hold in your hands the artery-hardening masterpiece known alternatively as South Street Sushi and the Philadelphia Taco.

They don't do toppings, and they serve the biggest slice of pizza you've ever seen, a grease-dripping, thin-crust behemoth that happens to be the perfect late night meal.  
**>> 305 South St.; 215-627-4110; lorenzoandsons.com**

### SUNDAY

Philadelphia's Magic Gardens, local legend Isaiah Zagar's masterpiece, is a labyrinthine sculpture garden of mosaic tiles, mirrors, paintings, bottles, china, bicycle parts, and other repurposed materials. Isaiah and Julia Zagar came to South Street in 1968, and you'll see Isaiah's handiwork the facades of buildings throughout the neighborhood.  
**>> 1020 South St.; 215-733-0390; phillymagicgardens.org**