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Visit Philadelphia Announces Inaugural Philadelphia Hospitality Symposium to Elevate City's Visitor Experience

The free, one-day event features expert-led workshops for boosting customer service and sharpening marketing techniques as the city looks to welcome more travelers.

PHILADELPHIA, October 23, 2024 – Visit Philadelphia is thrilled to announce its first-ever Philadelphia Hospitality Symposium, a free, one-day event featuring expert-led workshops aimed at equipping the city's hospitality industry with the knowledge and tools it needs to welcome an influx of visitors in the years ahead.

Taking place on Nov. 4 from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Rivers Casino Philadelphia, the symposium offers programming within two distinct tracks: marketing and customer service. The symposium is geared toward hotel staff of all ranks, restaurant owners and employees, tour guides, small business owners and anyone else providing visitor services in Philadelphia.

“The Philadelphia Hospitality Symposium is a continuation of the work Visit Philadelphia has done recently to help local businesses ready themselves to host residents and visitors from all over the world in the coming years, such as with our [Destination Optimization Program](#),” said **Angela Val, president and CEO at Visit Philadelphia**. “Tools and resources like these are imperative so that our hospitality industry is not only prepared, but thriving as we welcome more travelers, including in 2026 for the FIFA World Cup matches, Major League Baseball All-Star Game and 250th anniversary of the nation's founding.”

Val and Alba Martinez, commerce director for the City of Philadelphia, will open the day with welcome remarks. Dylan Thuras, co-founder of Atlas Obscura, will then deliver a keynote speech focused on the wonders and appeal of Philadelphia as a top travel destination.

“The Philadelphia Hospitality Symposium will provide the tools and framework needed to continue building Philadelphia's reputation as a welcoming and accessible global destination, elevating our city's hospitality industry to new heights,” said **Jessica Calter, senior vice president of advancement and external affairs at Visit Philadelphia**. “Attendees will have a chance to gain practical skills from industry leaders to enhance their customer service and hospitality expertise; learn from experts in marketing, customer service and destination education; and network with other hospitality professionals.”

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The symposium's marketing track includes four sessions:

- **The Power of Social: Strategies to Engage, Influence, and Grow Your Audience** featuring Philadelphia content creator Brandon Edelman (@bran_flakezz) and speakers from Visit Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Tourism and Cantina La Martina
- **Behind the Scenes: Mastering the Art of Hosting Media & Influencers** featuring Regan Stevens, travel writer and co-founder of Saltete; content creators; and speakers from Anthropologie and the Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau
- **AI-Powered Travel and Tourism Marketing** featuring Cord Silverstein, CEO at Integrate AI
- **Philly's Next Chapter: A 2025 Preview** featuring several speakers including Jonathan Stiles, director of marketing at the Museum of the American Revolution

The symposium's customer service track includes three sessions:

- **Hospitality from the Heart: De-escalation Skills for a More Inclusive Philadelphia** featuring speakers from Broad Street Love
- **Hospitality Without Borders: Enhancing the Guest Experience Through Cultural Sensitivity** featuring speakers from the World Affairs Council
- **Elevated Hospitality Workshop by Temple University** featuring Assistant Professor Lindsey Lee, Associate Professors Laurie Wu and Michael Ok

Philadelphia Hospitality Symposium will conclude with a marquee fireside chat, moderated by Emmy Award-Winning television host and food writer **Kae Lai Palmisano** of Philadelphia magazine. It will explore the impact that quality hospitality experiences in Philadelphia have on the overall visitor and resident experience, and the importance of the work done by hospitality industry frontline staff. Participants include **Ellen Yin**, founder and co-owner of High Street Hospitality Group; **Jeannine Cook**, owner of Harriett's Bookshop; and **Emily Seltzer**, regional director of marketing at HHM Hotels. More information will be available soon.

To register to attend this free event and learn more about the day's programming, please visit visitphilly.com/symposium.

About Visit Philadelphia:

VISIT PHILADELPHIA® is our name and our mission. As the region's official tourism marketing agency, we build Greater Philadelphia's image, drive visitation and boost the economy. On Greater Philadelphia's official visitor website, visitphilly.com, visitors can explore things to do, upcoming events, themed itineraries and hotel packages.

Compelling photography and videos, interactive maps and detailed visitor information make the site an effective trip-planning tool. Visitors can also find loads of inspiration on Visit Philly's social media Channels.

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Note to Editors: For high-resolution photos and high-definition B-roll of Greater Philadelphia, visit the Photos & Video section of visitphilly.com/mediacenter.