



Pittsburgh

If thoughts of Pittsburgh evoke visions of a gritty, industrial steel town covered in ash and soot, then it's time to see the City of Bridges. Within the last three decades, this "big little city" has undergone a dramatic transformation that turned it into one of the cleanest, most environmentally friendly destinations in the country, and it's recently been named one of the most livable cities in the U.S. and a top 10 city for green-certified building spaces. Visit Pittsburgh and you'll find a warm, friendly destination with stunning architecture, a bustling art and culture scene, and a dynamic meetings location with world-class hotels, meetings venues and cultural attractions. —Lisa Plummer

PHILIP SCALIA



1. TWO CERTIFICATIONS IN ONE

Once ranked the first and largest LEED Gold-certified convention center in the country, the David L. Lawrence Convention Center is now also the greenest convention facility in the U.S. It recently achieved LEED Platinum certification (the highest level) under the Existing Buildings: Operations and Maintenance rating system (the hardest to achieve) through the U.S. Green Building Council, making it the first U.S. convention center with both New Construction and Existing Building certifications. The center has 53 meeting rooms, 313,400 square feet of exhibit space, a 31,610-sq.-ft. ballroom, spacious interiors flooded with natural light, expansive terraces and balconies, and a new 20,000-sq.-ft. green roof. The high-tech facility certainly embodies its tagline: If you want to have a green meeting, all you have to do is show up.

2. ODE TO THE KING OF POP ART

As one of the largest single-artist museums in the world, the Andy Warhol Museum is a vibrant, eclectic gallery celebrating the life and art of one of Pop Art's most well-known founding fathers. With an extensive collection covering the entire range of Warhol's work from all periods—including 900 paintings, 100 sculptures, 2,000 works on paper, 4,000 photographs, 60 feature films and more than 4,000 videos—this exhibition is not your typical, hush-hush art museum. And with its fun variety of diverse function and event spaces, including a state-of-the-art film and video theater, it's also a setting for off-site meetings, lectures, banquets and cocktail receptions.

3. EARTH'S GREENEST BUILDING

The Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens has taken sustainability to the extreme with the recent unveiling of its Center for Sustainable Landscapes (pictured), an elegant, 24,350-sq.-ft. research, education and administration complex designed to be one of the world's best examples of green building technology. This net-zero energy "living building" includes a lush green roof, sprawling solar panel array, constructed wetlands and lagoon system. It meets the country's three highest green building standards: Living Building Challenge, LEED Platinum certification and the SITES landscape rating system. The Phipps campus also features several meeting and event spaces, including the ultra-green, 12,000-sq.-ft. Tropical Forest Conservatory and the Special Events Hall that can accommodate up to 350 people.

4. NOSHING IN THE 'BURGH

Foodies will think they've gone to gastronomic heaven on a 'Burgh Bits and Bites Food Tour, where groups can experience the city's melting pot of culinary options in several of its historic neighborhoods. Check out the popular Strip District Market tour, which features a behind-the-counter look at a variety of eateries in the city's historic market district (pictured), including ethnic cafes, bakeries, specialty shops, local produce and sidewalk vendors. For groups who don't mind a little late-in-the-day buzz, the company also offers a TGIF late afternoon tour with wine tasting.