CHESTER COUNTY'S
COVERED BRIDGES

HISTORY • BEAUTY • ARCHITECTURE • CHARM

CHESTER COUNTY'S
BRANDYWINE
VALLEY

Capture the essence of Chester County's Brandywine Valley.

Celebrate and enjoy the history, beauty, architecture, and charm of the region's many covered bridges — an intrinsic part of Chester County's landscape and heritage. With structures standing from as early as 1850 to those rebuilt with love and attention to details as recently as 2002, these unique architectural landmarks stand for our past and will be preserved for the future.

For a picturesque tour of the region, hop in the car, put the windows down, and follow this trail of bridges through every corner of Chester County. Discover the varied characteristics of Brandywine Valley's covered bridges, such as the "Burr" truss, step portals, and how bridges were named. Search for Chester County's three white covered bridges, the "two-span" bridge, the oldest, and the most photographed. Revel in the magic that unfolds throughout Chester County's beautiful countryside.

A Quick History…

So what exactly is a covered bridge?

By definition, it's a bridge in which the trusses, sides, and roofs are all wood, creating an almost-complete enclosure across the water. While keeping you dry is a benefit, covered bridges were built that way to protect the structural integrity of the bridge — left exposed, a wood bridge may only last 10-15 years.

Covered bridges were built all around the world throughout the 19th century. Philadelphia lays claim to the first in the United States — a bridge built in the early 1800s that once spanned the Schuylkill River by 30th Street.

At their peak as many as 12,000 covered bridges existed in the U.S., but once more affordable and durable materials came into fashion, the number dropped, and quickly; there were less than 1,500 by the 1950s. Here in Pennsylvania 219 remain, the most of any state.

1. **The Rudolph and Arthur Bridge** | New London, PA

   The bridge was originally built in 1880 near the site of a paper firm owned by the Rudolph and Arthur families, hence the name. The bridge crosses over Big Elk Creek, and is still open to vehicle traffic today. The bridge is one of Chester County's three white bridges.

   GPS: N39 44 73, W75 52 93

2. **Linton Stephens Bridge** | New London, PA

   The Linton Stephens Bridge was built in 1886 by J. Denithorne & Son as a small footbridge. The bridge is named in honor of Linton Stephens, the then postmaster of the town of Hickory Hill.

   GPS: N39 45 39, W75 54 74

3. **Pine Grove Bridge** | Oxford, PA

   After two earlier bridges were destroyed by weather, the bridge standing today was built in 1884 by Elias McMellen and was a primary route between New York and Washington in the late 19th century. This bridge is the longest in Chester County, and is named after a nearby grove of pine trees.

   GPS: N39 47 61, W76 02 66

4. **Glen Hope Bridge** | West Grove, PA

   The structure was built in 1889 by Menander Wood and George E. Jones and spans Little Elk Creek. In 7987 the structure was destroyed by a fire, but has since been reconstructed. The bridge can be found between Glen Hope Road and Blake Road.

   GPS: N39 43 62, W75 54 45

5. **Smith Bridge** | Winterthur, DE

   Arsoned in 7961 and replaced with an open span, Smith was a "lost treasure" for 40 years. The new Smith Bridge was rebuilt in 2002. When searching for Smith Bridge, be sure to use the nearby First State National Historic Park as an indicator that you're getting close.

   GPS: N39 83 77, W75 58 66

6. **Mercers Mill Bridge** | Christiana, PA

   The Mercers Mill Bridge was built in 1880 and spans Chester and Lancaster counties. It was named for Captain John Mercer, a farmer and mill owner on the Lancaster side of the bridge.

   GPS: N39 5 5 89, W75 58 89

7. **Speakman Bridge #1** | Coatesville, PA

   Originally constructed in 7881, the bridge at one time served the Jonathan Speakman gristmill, thus the name. It is 75 feet long and a Burr-arch truss design. Speakman Bridge #1 is open to vehicle traffic.

   GPS: N39 55 46, W75 49 23

8. **Harmony Hill Bridge** | West Chester, PA

   The bridge, built in 1872 by Edward Hal and Thomas Schull, is also known as Gibson's Bridge. It is a 78-footlong Burr truss bridge and crosses over the east branch of the Brandywine Creek.

   GPS: N39 97 63, W75 68 13

9. **Bartram Bridge** | Newtown Square, PA

   This bridge spans the county line between Delaware and Chester Counties over Crum Creek. Built in 7860 and restored in 1970, Bartram Bridge has unique slanted plank portals, the only bridge in Pennsylvania with this unusual design.* Limited accessibility.

   GPS: N39 59 19, W75 68 13

10. **Knox Covered Bridge** | Malvern, PA

    Built in 1851 with a span of SO feet. This bridge is named after Philander C Knox (1855-1921), U.S. Senator from PA, and General Henry Knox (1750-1806), an officer quartered at Valley Forge during the winter of 1777-1778. It is 65 feet long and crosses Valley Creek.

    GPS: N40 0 5 233, W75 27 383

11. **Larkin Bridge (Thomson Bridge)** | Eagle, PA

    The original structure was built in 1854 by Menander and Ferdinand Wood, and was later rebuilt in 1881. The bridge is named for Jesse Larkin, owner of a grist mill not far from the bridge. The bridge was relocated in April of 2006 and is now a pedestrian-only bridge accessible only via a walking path.

    GPS: N4O 04 95, W75 41 13

12. **Rapps Dam Bridge** | Phoenixville, PA

    This bridge was named for George A. Rapp and his sons, who operated a saw mil l and a gristmil l just south of the bridge. The structure was built in 1866 by Benjamin F. Hartman and spans French Creek.

    GPS: N40 08 29, W75 33 17

13. **Kennedy Bridge** | Kimberton, PA

    The original bridge was built in 1856 by Alex and Jesse King. However, a plaque inside the bridge reads "Built in 1856 by Len Kennedy and Jesse King… Refurbished in 1979… Destroyed by fire on May 10, 7986… Refurbished in 7987." When rebuilding, the constructors used bongossi, a non-flammable wood from Africa.

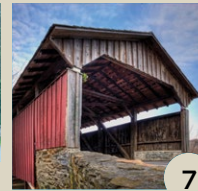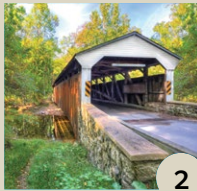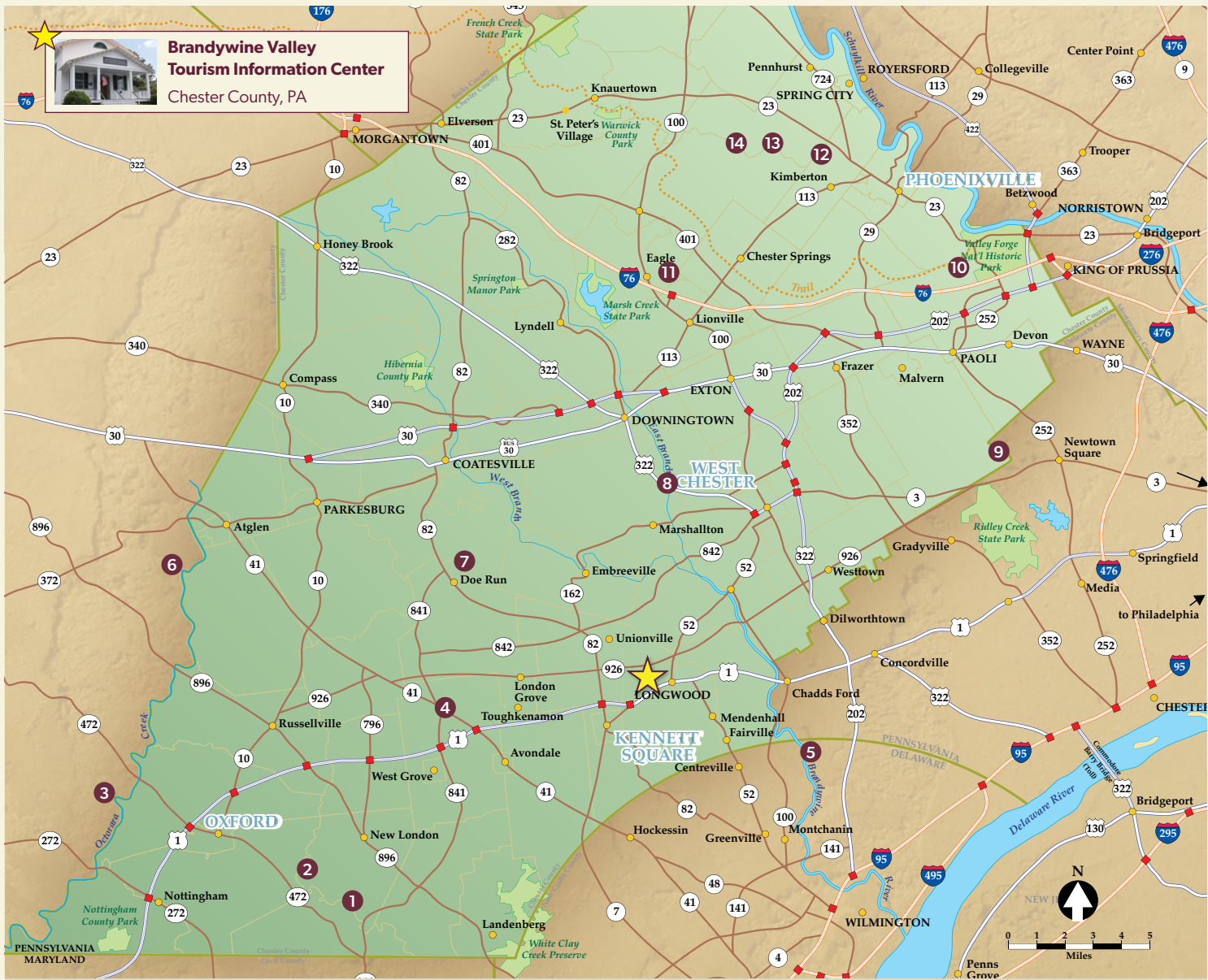   GPS: N40 08 52, W75 34 58 (*No parking available*)

14. **Sheeder Hal l Bridge** | Chester Springs, PA

    The bridge was built in 1850 by Robert Russell and Jacob Fox, and is the oldest covered bridge in Chester County. It was named for the well-known families that lived nearby. The bridge is easily recognizable as it runs across French Creek and has distinctive "step" portals.

    GPS: N40 04 86, W75 37 24

Map Labels

176
French Creek State Park
545
Pennhurst
724
ROYERSFORD
113
Collegeville
Center Point
363
9
476
Knauertown
SPRING CITY
23
14
13
12
Trooper
363
Elverson
23
St. Peter's Village
Warwick County Park
100
Kimberton
PHOENIXVILLE
Betzwood
NORRISTOWN
202
MORGANTOWN
401
113
23
Bridgeport
322
23
10
82
282
401
Chester Springs
29
422
276
KING OF PRUSSIA
Honey Brook
322
Eagle
11
76
Valley Forge Nat'l Historic Park
10
76
Springton Manor Park
Marsh Creek State Park
Lionville
100
202
252
Devon
WAYNE
340
Lyndell
113
Frazer
PAOLI
30
82
Hibernia County Park
322
30
EXTON
202
Malvern
Compass
340
DOWNINGTOWN
352
10
30
322
Newtown Square
252
COATESVILLE
WEST CHESTER
8
9
3
PARKESBURG
Marshallton
842
Gradyville
Ridley Creek State Park
1
Springfield
896
Atglen
7
Westtown
926
Media
476
41
Doe Run
Embreeville
52
322
372
10
162
352
252
841
52
Dilworthtown
95
Unionville
82
52
1
Concordville
CHESTER
896
842
926
Longwood
1
322
4
London Grove
Mendenhall
Bridgeport
Russellville
796
Toughkenamon
Fairville
202
PENNSYLVANIA DELAWARE
322
472
926
KENNETT SQUARE
5
130
10
Avondale
Centreville
295
3
841
82
Delaware River
OXFORD
New London
41
100
96
Hockessin
Greenville
Montchanin
141
272
Nottingham
472
2
896
82
Nottingham County Park
272
1
48
PENNSYLVANIA MARYLAND
Landenberg
7
41
141
WILMINGTON
White Clay Creek Preserve
4
Penns Grove

N
0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

There's so much more!

Turn your leisurely drive through the scenic Brandywine Valley into a day or weekend to remember by adding some of these area favorites to your itinerary:

Longwood Gardens

Longwood Gardens is the world's premier horticultural display garden, boasting renowned seasonal displays, a breathtaking conservatory and acres of outdoor gardens to roam. Longwood is home to the most significant fountain collection in the United States.

Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library

Winterthur is the premier museum of American decorative arts with over 90,000 objects displayed in a 175-room mansion. The museum's 60-acre naturalistic garden is one of the nation's best.

Brandywine River Museum of Art

Brandywine River Museum of Art is known for its unparalleled collection of works by three generations of the famed Wyeth family and an outstanding collection of American illustration, still life, and landscape paintings.

Chester County Cheers

Sip and savor the creations of the award-winning brewers, wine-makers, and distillers of the Brandywine Valley. Visit CountyCheers.com to map your crawl.

Downtown Phoenixville, West Chester & Kennett Square

These bustling yet still quaint neighborhoods are the perfect place to stretch your legs, grab a bite, and enjoy the eclectic and independent boutiques and galleries Chester County is loved for.

Learn more and plan your stay at
BrandywineValley.com

or visit us at 300 Greenwood Road, Kennett Square, PA 19348