

THE SEATING CHART

Fairmount Park

Whatever performance you happen to be seeing, just being inside this crown jewel of South Broad (built in 1857) is an experience. That ceiling! The 5,000-pound chandelier! Here, Crystal Brewe, audience experience officer for the Philly Orchestra and Ensemble Arts, spotlights some of the special seats.

North Georges Hill Picnic Area ▶ This is a popular **picnic-party spot** for a reason: It sits on a natural rise above the Mann Center, so the views are stellar, and there's no need to even bother with a blanket in the grass, because it's outfitted with benches, tables, and a shady pavilion.

Concourse Lake ▶ This highly underrated destination right off Belmont Avenue is a storm-water reservoir amidst 14 wooded acres. Bring your blanket and a book, and **you might not see another soul** for hours. Also prime bird-watching during migration season.



Shofuso Japanese Cultural Center ▶ Want to **get lost in nature**? Sit by the koi pond, watch the tiered waterfall, and drink in the greenery on the grounds of this breathtaking walled garden. Adult admission is \$14.

The old train platform on the Trolley Trail ▶ "You have to trek about a mile in from the trailhead. It's an old raised concrete platform bed," McCarthy says—and it's the **perfect place for a (small) picnic**. "If you don't mind carrying your picnic basket, that's a great place to go. It's pretty peaceful. You don't feel like you're in the city."

Belmont Plateau ▶ Truth: You're not a real Philadelphian until you've lounged on this wide-open vista overlooking the skyline. **Sit here at sunrise** for peak post-card views.

Furness Gateway ▶ A relic from the 1876 Centennial Exposition, this brownstone arch named for its architect, Frank Furness, marks a stone pathway along Kelly Drive and offers a pretty, private perch. And it's west-facing, so you can **watch the sun set over the Schuylkill River**.

Glendinning Rock Garden ▶ This 1930s rock garden just off Kelly Drive offers quiet, shaded hanging space that's fun to explore, with graffitied stone steps, natural rock formations, a mini-waterfall, a pond and a creek. **Highly Instagrammable**.

Ellen Phillips Samuel Memorial sculpture garden ▶ This leafy stretch northwest of Boat-house Row spans three terraces and contains 18 sculptures by various mid-century artists. Sit on a fountain edge, a bench, the statues themselves ... you name it: Everywhere, you're **surrounded by art and have the people-watching of Kelly Drive, to boot**. "It's great when it's really hot because it's right on the water and pretty shady most of the time," McCarthy says.

The Schuylkill River Grandstand ▶ **Watch the geese float by**, have lunch on the bleachers, or just sit and relax in the shade by the river.

SHOFUSO JAPANESE CULTURAL CENTER

SMITH MEMORIAL ARCH

GLENDINNING ROCK GARDEN

ELLEN PHILLIPS SAMUEL SCULPTURE GARDEN

Pavilion in the Trees ▶ "It's like a pergola built on stilts," McCarthy says of this tranquil lookout with views of the surrounding treetops and watershed below. Designed by artist Martin Puryear in 1992, the pavilion is just as **romantic** as the gazebos at Lemon Hill and Water Works but a bit more off the beaten path.

The whispering benches at the Smith Memorial Arch ▶ **Kids love this spot** not far from the Please Touch Museum, and no wonder: Those sitting at one end can whisper into the wall behind them and be heard clearly at the other end. Stop by to eat a snack if you're at the museum or the nearby playing fields.

Kelly Drive Boulder Landing ▶ Feel like fishin'? Any spot along the Schuylkill will do, but this stretch just south of the bouldering wall on Kelly Drive is **where the dedicated anglers flock** in good weather.

If sitting by the water isn't cutting it, try **sitting on the water**: Schuylkill Banks—not part of Fairmount Park, but just south of its western half—offers riverboat cruises and kayak tours. Check schuylkillbanks.org for schedules.