

# Garden State downtowns

Need a reason to cross the Delaware River? We've got four. Meet the indie-minded burgs of Collingswood, Haddonfield, Moorestown, and Mullica Hill.

By Jen A. Miller for USA TODAY

Philly's downtown is not the only relevant downtown around. Across the Delaware River in the suburbs of southern New Jersey reside a handful of small communities that have vibrant central areas with retro charm.

Whether you want to eat (and eat and eat) or finish your holiday shopping at independent shops, these downtowns have what you're looking for.

## COLLINGSWOOD, N.J.

**Main street:** Haddon Avenue  
**Known for:** Food

More than a dozen independent restaurants line Haddon Avenue, aka Restaurant Row, along with an eclectic mix of shops.

Locals Connie and Bill Fisher opened **The Pop Shop** (729 Haddon Ave.; 856-869-0111; [thepopshopusa.com](http://thepopshopusa.com)) because there wasn't a place in town where they could take their kids to dinner. The Pop Shop is much more than that now. It's a destination for kids and parents too.

Here, American dining staples grow up. The menu has 30 different types of grilled cheeses, as well as PB&J pancakes with Oreos. Grab a seat at the counter. The owners salvaged and restored a classic diner counter to give the shop a true retro feel.

At **Tortilla Press** (703 Haddon Ave.; 856-869-3345; [thetortilla-press.com](http://thetortilla-press.com)), chef Mark Smith has taken the standard dishes of Mexican cuisine and given them a twist with items like the peanut BBQ pork platter, the honey lime scallops, and the sweet potato burritos. The ceviche salad is also a standout.

The Tortilla Press also offers gluten free and vegan options. If



Borough of Collingswood

**Shop and dine:** Collingswood, N.J., has a variety of specialty shops, from consignment stores to high-fashion boutiques, but the restaurants take the cake.

you're bringing a group—or you're really, really hungry, get the family-sized fab burrito. At five pounds, this burrito's a whopper.

**Villa Barone** (753 Haddon Ave.; 856-858-2999; [villabaronesite.com](http://villabaronesite.com)) is a comfort food Italian restaurant. Dishes like the ravioli di barone, gnocchi pomodoro, and penn primavera are staples on the menu. The restaurant is also known for its wood-burning brick oven pizzas, which come in seven knockout

varieties.

The environment at Villa Barone is boisterous, but if you're looking for a quieter (or more romantic) experience, ask to be put in the side room.

**Frugal Resale** (740 Haddon Ave.; 856-858-0700; [frugalresale.com](http://frugalresale.com)) is the funkier thrift shop around. This new addition to Haddon Avenue stocks nearly new items. Proceeds go to a different charity each month. Offerings run the gamut,

from costumes to Philadelphia sports team gear to clothes for everyday wear. Frugal Resale has an expansive children's section and also carries items crocheted and embroidered by the owner's mom. You'll find those in Cara's corner.

## MOORESTOWN, N.J.

**Main street:** Main Street  
**Known for:** Local patrons

There's a big mall in Moorestown,

but that's not where you're going. This town has managed to keep its downtown vibrant despite the big box stores nearby. You'll see a lot of locals since places like the town shoe store, coffee shops, and other businesses all share Main Street. Of course they won't mind if you visit.

The focus in the charming **Signature Designs Fine Crafts** (5 West Main St.; 856-778-8657) is on American-made products, especially jewelry, which dominates the store.



Borough of Collingswood

**Deal seeker:** Shoppers check out the wares outside a shop in downtown Collingswood. Antiques and consignment shops are popular stops.



Borough of Collingswood

**Retail special:** Collingswood has been recognized by the American Planning Association for melding the past with the present.

The business also stocks handmade vases and bowls, and plenty of items for baby.

**Carl's Shoes** (27 West Main St.; 856-235-6223; [carlsshoes.com](http://carlsshoes.com)) is so busy you need to take a number for service. The staff spends time fitting the right shoes for your feet. With

brands like Ugg, Merrell, and Stride Rite, the store can outfit a family in style. Carl's also sells custom and prescription shoes, and does shoe repairs.

Stop in the **Pie Lady Cafe** (9 East Main St.; 856-778-7437) for something sweet or hearty.

The staff serves up quiches, scones, muffins, and cookies plus plenty of warm drinks on cold days. The cafe has no set menu; dishes change with the season.

On a walk through town, you'll see colorful statues of what appear to be Jack Russell

**Statues of Jack Russell terriers in town honor the founder of RCA, a Moorestown resident.**

terriers. You're not mistaken. In 2005, Moorestown sponsored a public art project that resulted in 30, 5-foot tall fiberglass statues of Nipper, the RCA mascot,

being decorated by local artists.

The reason? To honor Eldridge Johnson, founder of the Victor Talking Machine Company (which became RCA), who was a Moorestown resident. The Nippers were sold at auction but many still live in Moorestown. You'll find one in front of Carl's Shoes.

### MULLICA HILL, N.J.

**Main street: Main Street  
Known for: Antiquing**

Mullica Hill is a quiet south Jersey town nestled among peach tree fields and farms. The downtown has history, and the antiques to go with it.

The **Old Mill Antique Center** (1 South Main St.; 856-478-9810; [## Get there](http://oldmillantiques.zoom-</a></p>
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### NEW JERSEY



If you're headed to Collingswood, Haddonfield, or Moorestown, head over the Ben Franklin Bridge into New Jersey. For Collingswood and Haddonfield, you'll follow Route 70 East; for Moorestown, Route 38 East. Your best bet for Mullica Hill is to take the Walt Whitman Bridge to Route 42 South, then to Route 55 South. You can also get to Collingswood and Haddonfield via the PATCO High Speed Line, which you can pick up at 8th and Market or at 9th, 10th, 12th, 13th, 15th, and 16th and Locust Street in Philadelphia.



All of the towns included here are dry, so if you'd like a drink with your meal, you must BYO. Your best bet is to buy in New Jersey, where you can buy beer and wine in one store (PA stores will only sell beer, or they'll only sell wine and liquor).

*share.com*), a former gristmill, is home to more than 20 antiques dealers who sell everything from vintage linens to china to sports memorabilia to coins.

The building itself is historic, too, built before the Revolutionary War. It became an antiques center in 1967. Head out back where you can still see remnants of a train truss from the post-Civil War era.

**Murphy's Loft—Books, Ephemera, and Magazines** (53 North Main St.; 856-478-4928) is a charmingly cluttered bookshop that has something for everyone. Whether you're looking for a used paperback or a rare first



N.J. Travel and Tourism

**Jurassic statue:** The skeleton of the Hadrosaurus was found in Haddonfield in the 1800s. This replica celebrates the town's dino connection.

edition, you'll find it here.

The shop has more than 50,000 used books. It also sells vintage magazines, sheet music, and postcards. The Loft buys used books, too. If you're looking to clear out your collection, just call ahead.

The **Yellow Garage Antiques Marketplace** (66 South Main St.; 856-478-0300; [yellowgarageantiques.com](http://yellowgarageantiques.com)) is housed in a former bus depot that was built in 1922. The marketplace has 6,500 square feet for 35 antiques dealers. The range covers anything you would want to buy vintage: jewelry, housewares, china, glassware. Some vendors focus in pine furniture, vintage Halloween decorations, and folk art. Plan your visit carefully; the marketplace is closed Mondays and Tuesdays.

There's always a blue plate special at **Blue Plate** (47 S. Main St.; 856-478-2112; [blueplatenj.com](http://blueplatenj.com)), which serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Expect casual fare during the day and a more upscale offerings at night. The food is always good, and always fresh and locally sourced. It's a cozy spot, holding 75 people at the most. Call ahead if you're stopping by for dinner.

## HADDONFIELD, N.J.

**Main street: Kings Highway**  
**Known for: Shopping**



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**Hollywood connection:** Haddonfield, known for its antique shops and the dinosaur bones found in its soil, has another claim to fame: Harry from *When Harry Met Sally* came from here.

Kings Highway was named after a, you guessed it, king. King George III to be exact. The town has been around since Colonial times. Even though it's a dry town, the Indian King Tavern, which was built in 1750, is still

on Kings Highway. The main attraction here is the great mix of eclectic shops.

Any kind of high-end item you could ever want to dress your dining room table can be found at **Polished Plate** (101 Kings Hwy. East;

## By the numbers

# 1.1 million

Acres included in The Pinelands, which is the largest surviving open space on the East Coast. So much for that stereotype of New Jersey being all about factories and smog.

856-428-2696; [thepolishedplate.com](http://thepolishedplate.com)). This corner store with tons of windows is a home-goods shopper's delight. Need new dinnerware? No problem. This store's got you covered with glasses, flatware, linens, and vases. Check out the special line of products for baby. Your kid may not have been born with a silver spoon, but that doesn't mean you can't buy one.

The **Haddonfield Running Company** (121 Kings Highway East; 856-428-1666; [runningco.com](http://runningco.com)) goes beyond running shoes. In fact, the store became so popular that in 2011, it moved across the street and more than doubled in size.

**The town of Haddonfield has a long history. It was here in 1777 that New Jersey declared itself a free and independent state.**

Now the business sells everything a runner could want: clothes, gear, fuel, books, magazines, even comfy clothes to put on after a long, hard run. New to the sport? The staff will fit your shoes and get you started on the path to fitness in style.

**Fuji** (116 Kings Highway East; 856-354-8200; [fujirestaurant.com](http://fujirestaurant.com)), a traditional Japanese restaurant run by the Ito family, has been a hit since it opened in 2007.

Sit at the sushi bar and watch your meal being made. Or, for a big night out, order the Omakase. In Japanese, it means "I'll leave it to you." The chef will prepare a five-course meal. The element of surprise makes it more fun. The Omakase serves a minimum of two people. Call in advance.

Haddonfield's history is always on display, going back even further than its Colonial roots. Smack in the middle of town—at the intersection of Kings Highway and Lantern Lane—is a statue of the Hadrosaurus.

In 1858, a nearly complete skeleton of this dinosaur was found in Haddonfield, hence its name. The skeleton was used as evidence that dinosaurs existed, and not as some lizard-bird hybrid. This life-sized replica will show you what scientists think the Hadrosaurus looked like during its life.