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LIFE IN THE 'Burgh

A Guide for Newcomers



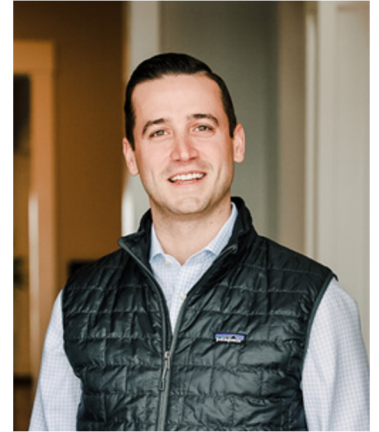
A little about me

Hi! I'm Kevin Schwarz — a Pittsburgh-based Realtor®, father of two, and founder of ReloDoc, a relocation resource built specifically for physicians (and anyone else searching for a better place to call home). My wife and I live in Mt. Lebanon — a walkable suburb just south of the city — and I consider myself a full-time ambassador for all things Pittsburgh.

I wasn't always here. As a former Boston finance guy turned Pittsburgh real estate specialist, I've lived both the big city hustle and the family-friendly charm of the suburbs. Pittsburgh is a unique place where the pace is different, the neighborhoods are rich in history and character, and there is an undeniable sense of community. It doesn't take long to fall in love with this city — and now, I help others do the same.

Whether you're moving here for work, for family, or for a fresh start, this guide is my way of saying: welcome to the 'Burgh.

- Kevin C. Schwarz



Your Resource for All Things Pittsburgh

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Get to know *Pittsburgh*

THE NAME

- Pittsburgh (yes, with an “h”!) is named after British statesman William Pitt

NICKNAMES

- The Steel City
- City of Bridges
- The ‘Burgh
- The 412

CLAIM TO FAME

- Once produced more steel than anywhere else on Earth
- Known for its abundance of bridges (446!)
- Home to Heinz Ketchup, Mister Rogers, and the first Banana Split
- Where the first baseball stadium, Ferris wheel, and movie theater were born

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Nestled at the confluence of three rivers — the Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio — Pittsburgh is a city shaped by water, bridges, and steel. With nearly 90 distinct neighborhoods, you’ll find everything from historic row homes to sleek new builds — often just a few blocks apart.





Kevin's *Go To's*

- ☐ **Mexican Food:** Panaderia Jazmin (birria tacos!)
- ☐ **Date Night Spot:** Fig & Ash
- ☐ **Sushi:** Otaru
- ☐ **Cocktails:** Bridges & Bourbon
- ☐ **Brunch:** Mediterra Cafe
- ☐ **Burgers:** Moonlit Burger
- ☐ **Donuts:** Big Daddy's Donuts (they sell-out fast!)
- ☐ **Ice cream:** Page's
- ☐ **Bakery:** La Gourmandine
- ☐ **Spa:** Fairmont Hotel
- ☐ **Boutique:** No. 14 (women) | David Alan (men)
- ☐ **Pizza:** PaPa J's (not to be confused with Papa John's)

My Favorite *Coffee Shops*



- **Commonplace Coffee** – My go-to when I want good espresso and a quiet moment. Their array of single-origin beans are consistently excellent and the baked goods always tempt me.
- **Redhawk Coffee** – This spot feels like a design studio meets roastery. It's sleek, serious about quality, and perfect for a focused morning. Their cortado might be the best in the city.
- **Biddle's Escape** – A quirky, colorful café tucked into Regent Square, Biddle's is part neighborhood coffee shop, part community gathering space. You'll find excellent espresso, a funky tea collection, and local art on the walls. I love it for the vibe as much as the drinks.
- **Espresso a Mano** – Right on Butler Street in Lawrenceville, Espresso a Mano has a cult following—and for good reason. Their espresso is bold and balanced, and I love grabbing a sidewalk seat when the weather's nice. You'll likely overhear a few startup pitches while sipping your cappuccino.
- **Mechanic Coffee Company** – A newer favorite in Verona and now Bloomfield, Mechanic is clean, modern, and serious about beans. Their lattes are smooth and well-balanced, and the baked goods—especially the pistachio rose croissant—are unexpectedly great. It's worth the detour.



Breakfast & Brunch Restaurants

- **Mediterra Café** – This place feels like the definition of a perfect Pittsburgh brunch: warm bread, sunshine pouring through the windows, and a rotating pastry case that always hits the mark. Both the Mt. Lebanon and Sewickley locations are beautiful, but the Mt. Lebo café has that cozy-neighborhood charm. I always go for the smoked salmon toast—add a golden turmeric latte if you're lingering.
- **Cafe Moulin** – A tucked-away gem in Shadyside where everything feels intentional, from the cozy French decor to the espresso drinks served with love. I usually get the savory avocado toast with feta and tomato, but the berry-filled Nutella crepes are what I recommend to friends visiting for the first time. It's a slow morning kind of place, in the best way.
- **Square Café** – Square is pure East Liberty energy: vibrant, creative, and welcoming to all. Their menu has a lot of range, but the blueberry ricotta pancakes are a non-negotiable for me. Add a lavender latte and grab a window seat for prime people-watching. This spot is great with kids or for casual catch-ups with friends.
- **Waffles, INCaffeinated** – This South Side staple is all about going big. From peanut butter sauce to crab-topped Benedicts, there's no such thing as a boring plate here. The "Breakfast Magic" waffle is savory perfection—waffle, eggs, bacon, cheddar—and it somehow works every time. Expect a wait on weekends, but it moves fast.
- **Gepetto Café** – Slightly off the beaten path, Gepetto's puppet-themed vibe and rich Turkish coffee make it a favorite for a mellow brunch. It's the kind of place where the spinach-feta omelet is served with a smile, and your second cup of coffee is just as good as the first. The Bloomfield location has a loyal following for good reason.

Weekend Bucket List: Local Edition

A playful checklist for newcomers to explore the city like a local:

- **Ride the Duquesne or Monongahela Incline at sunset** – The best \$2 you'll spend for a view that will make you fall in love with the city.
- **Walk or bike the Three Rivers Heritage Trail** – You'll pass stadiums, skyline views, and riverfront neighborhoods in one smooth loop.
- **Visit a new farmers market** – Stock up on local produce, fresh bread, and a little neighborly charm.
- **Find a secret staircase walk** – Pittsburgh has over 700 public staircases—some lead to nowhere, others to stunning city views.
- **Catch a summer concert at Hartwood Acres** – Pack a blanket, bring some snacks, and enjoy live music under the stars.
- **Kayak on the Allegheny** – Rent a kayak at the North Shore and paddle your way under Pittsburgh's famous bridges.
- **Explore Mellon Park's Walled Garden** – A hidden gem in Point Breeze that feels like it belongs in a storybook.
- **Watch fireworks from the West End Overlook** – It's less crowded than the Point, and the skyline view is pure gold.



Local Museums & Attractions

A curated list of culturally rich, family-friendly, and delightfully weird places that show off Pittsburgh's creative side:

- **The Andy Warhol Museum** – Pop art in the city where Andy was born. With seven floors of art, archives, and interactive exhibits, it's a must-visit whether you're into art or just curious about the man behind the soup can.
- **Carnegie Museum of Art & Natural History** – Dinosaurs and Degas in one stop. Wander from ancient fossils to Renaissance portraits without ever leaving Oakland.
- **The Mattress Factory** – Immersive, mind-bending modern art installations that you walk through, crawl into, and get lost inside. Great for creative inspiration—or just a cool Instagram post.
- **Heinz History Center** – Part Smithsonian, part Pittsburgh love letter. Learn how Heinz ketchup, steel, Mister Rogers, and the Pittsburgh Steelers helped shape the city.
- **Randyland** – A kaleidoscope of color and pure joy. This free outdoor art space is run by the ever-smiling Randy Gilson and might just be the happiest place in town.
- **Phipps Conservatory & Botanical Gardens** – A beautiful oasis of flowers, seasonal displays, and rotating glass art exhibits. Especially magical during the winter light show.





Date Night Restaurants

Fig & Ash

North Side cozy meets wood-fired elegance. The food is soulful, cocktails are sharp, and it's easy to lose track of time in the best way.

Palm Palm

A playful East Liberty standout with tropical cocktails and vibrant plates. The leafy vibe and great music make it feel like date night on vacation.

Altius

Perched on Mt. Washington, this skyline-view classic is built for anniversaries and big moments. Elevated food and polished service without the fuss.

Morcilla

Tapas, charcuterie, and a bar that makes every date feel special. Stylish but relaxed—this Lawrenceville spot always hits the mark.

Dish Osteria

A South Side gem with candlelit charm and house-made pasta. Rustic, romantic, and perfect for a bottle of wine and a long conversation.

Pusadee's Garden

Serene Thai dining with a jaw-dropping garden patio. Every dish feels like a celebration—especially the khao soi and papaya salad.



Kid-Friendly Restaurants

Sly Fox at the Highline

Our family favorite. The beer is cold, the food hits the spot, and the courtyard is basically a giant outdoor playground. Our kids love running laps, waving at passing trains, and they even have games to play. Easy, relaxed, and tons of fun.

Federal Galley

This food hall on the North Side is perfect for families with picky eaters. With multiple vendors under one roof, everyone gets what they want. The spacious patio and casual atmosphere make it great for letting kids move around while you enjoy local brews and rotating chef menus.

Shorty's Pins x Pints

Yes, it's a bar—but it's also a bowling alley, arcade, and patio party all rolled into one. Great for kids who like to move while they wait for their food. Go early before it gets too rowdy.

Lawrenceville Hall

A newer addition to Butler Street with a relaxed, indoor-outdoor vibe and room for kids to roam. There's plenty of space for strollers, good food options for little ones, and cocktails for the grown-ups.



Best Pizza Spots (in My Opinion!)

Iron Born Pizza

A Strip District favorite serves up Detroit-style pizza with crispy edges and bold toppings. The dough is airy yet rich, and their signature white pizza with hot honey is reason enough to visit.

Driftwood Oven

Thoughtful, artisan pies made with sourdough crust and seasonal ingredients. From the fermented dough to the house-made sausage. One of my most regular spots for a reason.

Mineo's Pizza House

A Squirrel Hill staple. It's greasy in the best way, the slices are heavy, and the flavor is pure Pittsburgh comfort. Mineo's has been around for decades—and once you taste it, you'll get why.

Fiori's Pizzeria

A no-frills classic. Their crust is thick and chewy, the cheese is generous, and the vibe is totally old-school. It's the kind of pizza that tastes even better after a little league game or late-night drive.

Pizza Lupo

An Upper Lawrenceville shop that nails the Neapolitan style. Expect puffy, blistered crust, fresh mozzarella, and a rotating menu of fun toppings. My son loves watching them make each pie.

Beto's Pizza

A true Pittsburgh original. Beto's bakes the crust and sauce, then adds cold toppings after it comes out of the oven. It's messy, it's nostalgic, and you either love it or you don't.

Pittsburgh *Outdoors*

One thing Pittsburgh gets major credit for? Its easy access to the outdoors. Whether you're chasing views of the city skyline, hiking through wooded trails, or skiing fresh powder in the Laurel Highlands, Pittsburgh offers a surprising variety of outdoor adventures. From riverside bike paths to forested parks just minutes from downtown, nature is never far—and it's one of the city's best-kept secrets.

BEST PARKS FOR THE KIDS

- **Frick Park** – Pittsburgh's largest park, full of wooded trails, nature playgrounds, and a relaxed, wild feel. The Environmental Center is a great stop for families.
- **Schenley Park** – A central gem near Oakland, home to Panther Hollow, Phipps Conservatory, and wide-open green spaces. Popular for picnics, disc golf, and outdoor events.
- **Highland Park** – A quieter park in the East End, known for its walking trails, reservoir views, and shaded playgrounds. It also houses the Pittsburgh Zoo.
- **Riverview Park** – Tucked into the North Side, Riverview has forested trails, city views, and even its own observatory. A little rugged, a little wild, and full of character.

Pittsburgh *Outdoors*

HIKING & TRAILS



- ***Emerald View Trail*** – Stunning views of the Pittsburgh skyline as you weave through the green hills of Mt. Washington. Great for photo ops and quick after-work hikes.
- ***Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve*** – 5 miles of peaceful trails winding through forests, meadows, and wetlands in Fox Chapel. Good for families and bird watchers.
- ***Rachel Carson Trail*** – A rugged, 45-mile challenge for serious hikers, but great for section hikes closer to North Park. Named after the famed environmentalist born just outside the city.
- ***Panther Hollow Trail*** – A hidden gem in Schenley Park, connecting to Phipps and Oakland. Beautiful wooded paths with a gentle stream alongside.
- ***Montour Trail*** – A multi-use trail perfect for walking, running, or biking. It connects to the Great Allegheny Passage and stretches for miles through the suburbs.

SKIING

- ***Seven Springs Mountain Resort*** – The go-to ski destination for Pittsburghers. Just 90 minutes away with trails for all skill levels, plus snow tubing, dining, and mountain views.
- ***Hidden Valley Resort*** – Quieter and more beginner-friendly than Seven Springs, but just as scenic. A great place to learn to ski or escape for a winter weekend.



Pittsburgh *Outdoors*



PITTSBURGH LAKES

- **Lake Arthur (Moraine State Park)** – Just under an hour north of the city, this 3,200-acre lake is a go-to for kayaking, paddleboarding, and pontoon cruising. With two beaches, hiking trails, and boat rentals, it's a summertime favorite.
- **Pymatuning Lake** – One of the largest lakes in Pennsylvania, this expansive body of water on the PA-OH border is perfect for boating, fishing, and wildlife watching. Don't miss the spillway where "the ducks walk on the fish." It's a unique summer day trip or weekend camping destination.



PITTSBURGH RIVERS

Pittsburgh was built at the confluence of three rivers, and they still shape daily life here. Pennsylvania has more miles of rivers and streams than any other state in the lower 48—over 86,000 miles in total.

The **Allegheny**, **Monongahela**, and **Ohio** come together at Point State Park, forming the backdrop for riverwalks, kayaking, biking, and boat cruises. Just outside the city, the Youghiogheny River ("The Yough") offers whitewater rafting, tubing, and fly fishing. Whether you're chasing adrenaline or simply soaking up views, Pittsburgh's rivers deliver.



My Favorite Seasonal Events

FALL - SOERGELS ORCHARDS FALL FESTIVAL

Located just north of the city in Wexford, Soergel's is a fall favorite for a reason. Think hayrides, pumpkin patches, corn mazes, and apple cider everything. It's got the perfect mix of festive energy and family-friendly charm. A great weekend escape to fully embrace autumn.

WINTER - LIGHT UP NIGHT

Downtown Pittsburgh transforms into a winter wonderland each November with the official kickoff to the holiday season. Expect fireworks over the rivers, tree lightings, free concerts, horse-drawn carriage rides, and pop-up markets. Bundle up and grab a hot cocoa—it's the most Pittsburgh way to start the holidays.

SUMMER - TASTE OF PICKLESBURGH

One of the city's quirkiest and most beloved festivals. Held right on the Roberto Clemente Bridge, Picklesburgh celebrates all things pickled—from classic dills to pickle beer and pickle ice cream. Live music, food trucks, and giant crowds come out for this one. It's weird, it's wonderful, it's pure Pittsburgh.

Weekend *Getaways*



DEEP CREEK LAKE, MD

Just under 2.5 hours from Pittsburgh, this mountain lake escape is perfect for year-round adventure. In summer, it's all about boating, kayaking, and lakefront bonfires. Come winter, Wisp Resort offers skiing and snow tubing. Great for families or couples looking for cozy cabin vibes.



LAUREL HIGHLANDS, PA

A close and classic getaway under 90 minutes away. Whether you're hiking through Ohiopyle, touring Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater, or skiing at Seven Springs, the region offers the best of western Pennsylvania's natural beauty. Fall foliage here is unmatched.



FINGER LAKES, NY

If you love wine, water, and charming small towns, the Finger Lakes are worth the 4.5-hour drive. Spend your days sipping along the Seneca or Keuka Lake wine trails, and your nights in a lakeside rental. Perfect for a romantic reset or a group getaway.



NEW RIVER GORGE, WV

About 3.5 hours south, this national park offers epic hikes, whitewater rafting, and jaw-dropping mountain views. The New River Gorge Bridge is iconic, and the area around Fayetteville is full of great food and funky mountain town charm. Adventurous and unforgettable.