

Pennsylvania's Historic Covered Bridges: A Journey Through Time

By Senator Lisa Boscola

PA - Pennsylvania is home to some of the most picturesque and historically significant covered bridges in the United States. These charming structures, often nestled in the lush countryside, are not just architectural marvels; they are also tangible links to the past, offering a glimpse into a time when life moved at a slower pace, and the journey was just as important as the destination.

Did You Know... The concept of covered bridges dates back to ancient times, but it was during the 19th century that these structures became widespread in the United States, particularly in Pennsylvania. The primary reason for covering the bridges was to protect the wooden trusses from the elements, thereby extending the lifespan of the bridge. The roof and sides shielded the structure from rain, snow, and sun, which could cause the wood to rot or deteriorate. This practical design choice inadvertently created the romantic, picturesque image that we associate with covered bridges today.

In Lehigh Valley, seven of the slightly more than 200 covered bridges in Pennsylvania are still standing and welcome visitors. Five of these, which are open for traffic, often are taken for granted when crossed by busy travelers every day. The Lehigh Valley Covered Bridge Tour is approximately 50 miles long. Plan to spend several hours for a leisurely drive, which includes time to snap photos and enjoy the scenic beauty surrounding the bridges. There are plenty of spots to stop for a picnic or hike, or just relax and listen to the running water. The route is marked with red signs on the side of the road.



Notable Covered Bridges in Pennsylvania

The Pine Creek Covered Bridge

Located in Lycoming County, the Pine Creek Covered Bridge is one of Pennsylvania's most iconic covered bridges. Built in 1875, this Burr Arch Truss bridge spans 75 feet across Pine Creek and is a beautiful example of 19th-century engineering. The bridge has been lovingly preserved and remains a popular destination for photographers and history enthusiasts.

The Sachs Covered Bridge

The Sachs Covered Bridge, located in Gettysburg, is not only one of Pennsylvania's most historic covered bridges but also one of the most haunted. Built in 1854, the bridge played a role in the Battle of Gettysburg during the Civil War, serving as a crossing point for both Union and Confederate troops. Today, the bridge is a favorite spot for history buffs and ghost hunters alike, who are drawn by its rich past and eerie reputation.

The Kintner-Miller Covered Bridge

Nestled in Bucks County, the Kintner-Miller Covered Bridge is a charming example of a Queenpost Truss bridge. Built in 1873, the bridge spans Tinicum Creek and is surrounded by the scenic beauty of the Pennsylvania countryside. The bridge is still in use today and is a testament to the enduring craftsmanship of the builders who constructed it nearly 150 years ago.

The McConnell's Mill Covered Bridge

Located in McConnell's Mill State Park, the McConnell's Mill Covered Bridge is a stunning Burr Arch Truss bridge that spans Slippery Rock Creek. Built in 1874, the bridge is part of a picturesque landscape that includes a historic grist mill and a series of hiking trails. Visitors to the park can explore the bridge and enjoy the natural beauty of the surrounding area.

FUN FACTS

Did you know?

Pennsylvania has the most remaining covered bridges in the nation. Pennsylvania also had the first covered bridge, built in 1805 by Timothy Palmer, a carpenter from Massachusetts, that spanned the Schuylkill River in Philadelphia.

