

## **Boardwalk Walking Tour Podcast Script/ Web**

### **Overview**

Welcome to Atlantic City, the East Coast destination that is “Always Turned On.” Our tour runs along the Boardwalk and as we travel you will get a crash course in Atlantic City history and attractions.

This walking tour begins at the north end of the Boardwalk at New Jersey Avenue and is approximately two miles in length. At different times, to help orient you on the tour, we will be referring to one side of the Boardwalk as the ocean side, and the other as the street side. With that said, let’s begin our tour...

In the early 1600’s the entire area we now call Atlantic City was a regular hunting and fishing spot for the Lenni Lenape Indians who made the long journey from Philadelphia and Delaware, to the saltiness of the sea. The Boardwalk itself was developed in 1870 as a temporary structure to keep sand off of the hotel carpets by hotel owner Jacob Keim and railroad conductor Alexander Boardman. Later, in 1890 the “main street” of Atlantic City was made a permanent structure measuring four miles long and 24-feet wide. Today’s Boardwalk is about three times the original size, and features thousands of two-by-fours made out of Bethabara hardwood from Brazil and Longleaf Yellow Southern Pine.

As we travel the Boardwalk you will notice the century-old AC tradition, rolling chairs. These rolling chairs debuted on the Boardwalk in 1887, imported from the Philadelphia Centennial of 1876, and have been the most popular mode of transportation ever since.

With a history rich with firsts and social significance, Atlantic City has always been a Mecca for top-notch entertainment, and as you will see throughout the tour, continues to grow with the changing times.

After you have completed the Boardwalk tour, be sure to check out many of the other areas in Atlantic City located off the Boardwalk. Atlantic City Outlets – The Walk, is located in the heart of town at the base of the Atlantic City expressway featuring more than 100 stores and dining options. The Marina District includes three world-class casinos, including The Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa, Harrah’s Atlantic City and Trump Marina. And, Gardner’s Basin is home to a budding arts district and some of the cities best kept dining secrets.

Thank you and enjoy.

Atlantic City – Always Turned On!

## **Showboat: The Mardi Gras Casino**

On the street side of New Jersey Ave and the Boardwalk you will see Showboat: The Mardi Gras Casino and House of Blues. Owned by Harrah's Entertainment, the Showboat features a festive New Orleans theme and the House of Blues entertainment complex with a southern-inspired restaurant, nightclub, show room, poker and slots.

Also on the street side just north of the Showboat is the future home of a new 2 billion dollar casino. Revel Entertainment Group recently unveiled architectural renderings for two hotel towers containing 1,900 rooms each. The project will also include 150,000 square-feet of casino space and 500,000 square-feet of retail, dining and entertainment attractions. A spa, a 5,000-seat events center and Atlantic City's first Las Vegas-style wedding chapel will be among the non-gaming amenities. The casino is scheduled to open in the second half of 2010.

Just beyond the Showboat on the ocean side is Garden Pier, home to the Atlantic City Historical Museum and the Atlantic City Arts Center. In 1913, the Pier was an open-air theater named for the flower gardens decorating the center of the pier. The museum is open daily from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. There is no admission charge.

A few blocks beyond the museum, at Massachusetts Ave., you'll find the original site of Iron Pier. Opened in 1886, the Iron Pier was later purchased by H.J. Heinz to promote his 57 varieties of pickles and renamed the Heinz Pier. Guests of Heinz Pier received free pickles and lapel pins, today free pickles pins are still available at the Atlantic City Historical Museum.

## **Trump Taj Mahal Casino & Resort and the Steel Pier**

Located on Virginia Avenue and the Boardwalk is the impressive Trump Taj Mahal, one of Donald Trump's three casinos in Atlantic City. The Taj Mahal recently underwent a number of renovations, including upgraded rooms and the new Spice Road featuring shops and dining.

On the ocean side is the world famous Steel Pier. It first opened in 1898, and was the first pier to be built on iron pilings and steel girders. Steel Pier was the home to the famous High Diving Horse that jumped from 40 feet with a young woman on its back into a pool of water. In its heyday, the pier attracted up to one million visitors each season, and at one point required full evening dress and offered 16 hours of continuous entertainment for one admission. Now, Steel Pier is one of Atlantic City's primary family attractions with rides, games, carnival-style foods and more.

## **Resorts Atlantic City**

Pennsylvania Avenue is the former site of Steeplechase Pier. The Pier opened 1904 and rented out clown costumes for tourist to wear on the rides. Additionally, the Pier also featured the largest electric sign in the world at the time. It advertised Chesterfield cigarettes using more than 27,000 light bulbs.

At North Carolina Avenue, sits Atlantic City's first casino hotel, Resorts Atlantic City which opened in 1978. Resorts passed through a number of owners, most notably Merv Griffin, and even Donald Trump for about 6 months. If you look at the main Boardwalk entrance you can see a number of stars on the walls featuring the handprints and signatures of musical legends, including Luciano Pavoratti, Tom Jones, Frank Sinatra, Johnny Carson, Cher and Barry Manilow.

Prior to being Atlantic City's first casino, Resorts was known as the Chalfonte-Haddon Hall, a Quaker-owned hotel that once refused to sell alcoholic drinks on its premises. And, during World War II, Haddon Hall was used as a military hospital.

## **Ripley's Believe It or Not!**

Tennessee Avenue and the Boardwalk used to be home to first successful amusement pier built by James R. Applegate. Opened in 1884, Applegate's Pier was 625-feet long with four decks, including picnic areas, vaudeville concerts and an ice water fountain that used up to 3,000 pounds of ice each day.

On the street side at the corner of New York Avenue and the Boardwalk, is the enticing Ripley's Believe It or Not! Museum. Open all year, the museum features more than 400 exhibits in 13 themed galleries that will amaze and entertain people of all ages.

On the next block, between New York and Kentucky Avenues, is one of Atlantic City's famed James' Salt Water Taffy stores. This location houses the factory where James' and Fralinger's salt-water taffy, fudge and macaroons are made, packaged and sent all over the world. Salt-water taffy is the candy that Atlantic City made famous. No one knows for sure the origin, however a popular version recalls a storm in 1883 that swamped a candy store creating the distinct taste that has entranced visitors ever since.

## **Central Pier**

Central Pier, on the ocean side at Tennessee Ave., was erected in 1913, and was a well known home for commercial exhibits. It is now home to an amusement arcade, shops and go-cart rides. The current owners have intentions to redevelop the Central Pier and the area between St. James Place and South Carolina Avenue for a price tag of between \$70 to \$75 million.

Kentucky Avenue was the old site of the Sands Casino and the first site of a casino implosion in Atlantic City. Pinnacle Entertainment bought the property and is in the process of developing a multi-billion dollar mega-resort that is expected to open in 2011. Making way for the new resort, the Sands was imploded on October 18, 2007 in less than 18 seconds after an elaborate fireworks display.

A few blocks off the boardwalk on Martin Luther King Blvd., is the Civil Rights Garden at Carnegie Library. Open seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., the garden is the only one of its kind in the Northeast. The Civil Rights Garden pays tribute to those who championed civil rights causes, and features a one-of-a-kind sculpture by world-renowned artist Larry Kirkland. The curvilinear brick garden path recalls the journey from slavery to freedom of African Americans and features unfinished columns inscribed with the "passionate voices" of the movement.

## **Bally's Atlantic City, Wild Wild West Casino at Bally's & The Claridge**

Brighton Park, located on the street side of the Boardwalk, is the location of the settlement for the founder of Atlantic City, Jeremiah Leeds and his family.

Today, Brighton Park is the site of the New Jersey State Korean War Memorial which honors New Jerseyans who lost their lives in the Korean War. The memorial includes an upper plaza with a bronze sculpture and a black granite wall of names, and a lower plaza with another sculpture and an eternal flame.

The Claridge was complete in 1930 and at the time was one of the grandest hotels in Atlantic City. During this time, The Claridge Hotel was the only hotel that offered their guests the option of hot and cold running fresh or salt water to their rooms. It was believed that salt water had healing qualities. Additionally, this site is home to the Dennis Hotel and the original Warner Theater which have both been incorporated into the current Wild Wild West structure.

You'll also notice Park Place, one of the many streets made famous by the board game Monopoly. The game was created right here in Atlantic City by Charles B. Darrow in 1929. Mr. Darrow and his wife enjoyed many evenings on their front porch at their summer home that originally sat on this site. Darrow chose Atlantic City because the town was known for its opulence, and he thought it might be a way for people to escape from their financial hardships during The Depression.

Now Park Place is home to Bally's Atlantic City, The Claridge, and the Wild Wild West Casino.

A hundred years ago you would have been standing in front of a hotel known as the Marlborough-Blenheim. The Marlborough-Blenheim was the first hotel in Atlantic City to offer hot and cold running salt water, and the first to have a private bath in each room. The hotel was also one of the first fireproof hotels in Atlantic City, constructed of reinforced concrete – a process that was supervised by its developer, Thomas Edison.

Today, the Marlborough-Blenheim is long gone, but in its place is Bally's Wild Wild West Casino, designed to resemble a western frontier town. If you look closely, you can still see the original Warner Theater and the Dennis Hotel, both Atlantic City landmarks that were incorporated into the current structure.

## **Caesars Atlantic City**

As you continue walking down the boards, you can't help but see the impressive new Million Dollar pier, now home to The Pier Shops at Caesars. The old Million Dollar Pier opened in 1906 and was home to great entertainment, including Harry Houdini. It was a common place to crown many Miss Americas. Now, the pier is a lavish dining, shopping and entertainment complex with stores from Apple to Louis Vuitton, and an impressive menu of restaurants on the third level. The Pier also features a water, light and sound show at the far end of the Pier every hour.

Directly across from The Pier at Caesars at Arkansas Ave, is Caesars Atlantic City. One of Atlantic City's premier resorts with the opulence of ancient Rome at every turn. Imported marble and flowing fountains decorate the four-story atrium, setting a majestic tone that defines every element of the resort.



## **Trump Plaza Hotel & Casino**

The Missouri Avenue beach is also known as Chicken Bone Beach. In the early 1900's, African Americans were socially restricted to this section of the Atlantic City beaches. It attracted many families with their chicken laden picnic baskets, prompting the nickname, "Chicken Bone Beach." Many major African American entertainers who played at any one of Atlantic City's popular nightclubs, including Sammy Davis Jr., and "Moms" Mabley, were often spotted in the crowds. During the summer, the Chicken Bone Beach Historical Foundation hosts free jazz concerts at Kennedy Plaza.

At Mississippi Avenue you'll find Trump Plaza, the second Trump property on the tour. Trump Plaza features the largest Atlantic City beach bar open from Memorial Day through mid-September, with live nightly entertainment. This site also happens to be the site of the first Ferris Wheel built in 1872, which was invented by Isaac Newton Forrester. The Ferris Wheel is incorrectly named for George Ferris who put up a similar wheel in 1894 at the Chicago Exposition.

If you'd like to visit the third Trump property during your stay in Atlantic City, you can find Trump Marina located in the Marina District on the bay side of town.

## **Boardwalk Hall**

Historic Boardwalk Hall is located on the street side at Mississippi Avenue. On the National Registry of Historic Places, Boardwalk Hall was the original convention hall in Atlantic City. Boardwalk Hall was home to many premier events, including Miss America Pageants and Lyndon's Johnson's 1964 presidential nomination during the Democratic National Convention. Today Boardwalk Hall hosts many events and concerts, including the Rolling Stones, Madonna, Barbra Streisand and more.

When it first opened in 1929, Boardwalk Hall was hailed as an engineering and architectural marvel. It was the largest freestanding building in the world. Recently the Hall went through a \$90 million restoration preserving the Roman Revival and Art Deco architecture, updating the seating and upgrading the lighting effects and sound technology. During World War I, Boardwalk Hall was used as the training facility for all of our military personnel commissioned to serve our country.

Boardwalk Hall is also home to the largest pipe organ in the world. The pipe organ was installed between 1929 and 1932 and features more than 33,000 pipes ranging in size from three-sixteenths of an inch to 64 feet in length. The instrument was built by the Midmer-Losh Company of Merrick, Long Island, with designs by New Jersey State Senator Emerson L. Richards, a noted world authority of organ design and construction.

Across from Boardwalk Hall is Kennedy Plaza. Named for former President John F. Kennedy, the Plaza includes a commemorative statue. Kennedy Plaza hosts a number of free outdoor concerts throughout the summer season, and is also home to Atlantic City's miniature golf course.

## **Tropicana Casino & Resort, Home of The Quarter**

Between the avenues of Iowa and Morris in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this area was home to the Ambassador Hotel, an exciting hotspot where people gathered to dance in the ballroom and drink at the bar.

Today, the Tropicana Casino and Hotel encompasses four blocks of land and is home to more than 20 restaurants, more than 25 shops, an array of nightlife options, and an IMAX Theatre.

The Tropicana is home to The Quarter, a Cuban-themed entertainment complex that was completed in November of 2004. The Quarter features world-class dining, including Carmine's, Palm Restaurant, Red Square and more. Impressive national and boutique shopping, an exciting nightlife with live music regularly and a posh nightclub, Providence. The Quarter is also home to a renowned spa, blumercury apothecary and spa. The IMAX Theatre is open daily and shows IMAX 3D movies, in addition to 2D.

## **Atlantic City Hilton**

The Atlantic City Hilton, located on Sovereign Ave, has worn many hats. It was originally built by Steve Wynn as the Golden Nugget. Bally's acquired it several years later and renamed it The Grand. Now, The Atlantic City Hilton is owned by Colony Capital and is the sister property to Resorts Atlantic City. The Atlantic City Hilton is the only Atlantic City casino to be awarded the Four Diamond award from AAA for the past 10 years. The Hilton was the first casino in Atlantic City to open a beach bar, and has reopened their beach bar every summer since, regularly featuring live bands and events.

On an ecological note, the Hilton is also a regular nesting site for area peregrines who lay their eggs there annually.

In the early 1900's, this was the site of the President Hotel. One of the city's largest hotels at the time, where it would have cost you about \$5 for a room!

## **AC Facts & Firsts**

- The average high/low temperature: Spring 60/42; Summer 85/64; Fall 66/48; Winter 45/27.
- The Absecon Lighthouse is the tallest of the New Jersey lights. Visitors can climb its 228 steps for a spectacular view.
- Atlantic City's four miles of white sandy beaches are free.
- The world's first Boardwalk was built in Atlantic City in 1870.
- Salt water taffy originated in 1883 on the Boardwalk after a storm flooded a candy store.
- Steel Pier, once the world's premier amusement pier, opened in 1898.
- Rolling chairs debuted on the Boardwalk in 1887.
- The first paid Beach Patrol debuted in 1892.
- The term "airport" was first used in Atlantic City.
- The first Miss America was crowned in 1921.
- Charles Darrow developed the game of Monopoly in 1929 using the city's streets.
- Atlantic City's first casino, Resorts International (now Resorts Atlantic City), opened May 1978.
- Boardwalk Hall houses the worlds largest pipe organ.