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Moving to Pittsburgh

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Introduction

Alright, you've decided to make the move. You've packed your boxes, said your goodbyes, and you're ready for a new adventure. But this isn't just *any* move. You're headed to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, a city with more quirks, hills, and bridges than you can shake a Terrible Towel at. And, let's be honest, moving within the USA is something you already are clued up on, right?

This book isn't going to waste your time with generic moving advice. We're diving deep into the heart of what makes Pittsburgh... well, *Pittsburgh*. We're talking about navigating neighborhoods that each have their own distinct personality (and parking challenges), figuring out the "Pittsburgh Left," and understanding why "yinz" is a perfectly acceptable way to address a group of people. Consider this your survival guide, your translator, and your insider's look at the Steel City, all rolled into one.

Forget what you *think* you know about Pennsylvania. Pittsburgh is in a world of its own. From the surprisingly vibrant food scene (pierogies are just the beginning) to the die-hard sports culture (prepare to bleed black and gold), this city will challenge your expectations at every turn. And those hills? Let's just say your calves will get a workout just walking to the grocery store. We'll tell you about 'em.

We're also going to keep it real. This book is about the *practicalities* of moving to Pittsburgh. We'll cover the good, the bad, and the slightly confusing (like using a chair to save your parking spot after a snowstorm – yes, it's a thing). And we'll do it with a bit of humor, because, let's face it, moving is stressful enough without a dry, preachy guide.

One crucial disclaimer before we jump in: Laws and regulations are about as predictable as Pittsburgh weather. They change *fast*. So, while we've done our best to provide accurate information, always, *always* double-check with the relevant official sources (government websites, etc.) before making any major decisions. Don't rely solely on this book for the latest legal or procedural details – consider us your starting point, not the final word. We are here to help you.

So, buckle up, future Yinzer. You're in for a wild, wonderful, and uniquely Pittsburgh ride. Get ready to discover a city that's unlike any other, a place where history, innovation, and a whole lot of local pride come together to create something truly special. And remember this advice for the rest of the book and your time in P-burgh, "watch out for the jagger bushes".

CHAPTER ONE: Pittsburgh, The 'Burgh, City of Bridges (and Neighborhoods!)

So, you're thinking about Pittsburgh? Get ready to hear a lot about "the 'Burgh," "City of Bridges," and, of course, "yinz." But before we get to the lingo and the legendary sandwiches (more on *that* in a later chapter), let's talk about the single most important thing to understand about Pittsburgh: it's a city of neighborhoods. We're not talking about vague, sprawling districts; we're talking about distinct, fiercely independent communities, each with its own character, its own quirks, and its own very strong opinions about which is the *best* neighborhood.

Forget the idea of a homogenous city experience. In Pittsburgh, your daily life, your social circle, your favorite coffee shop – even your accent – will likely be shaped by the neighborhood you choose. Choosing the right one which suits you and your desired lifestyle is fundamental. Moving to Squirrel Hill is a vastly different experience than, say, moving to the South Side, and understanding these differences *before* you sign a lease or buy a house is absolutely crucial.

Think of it like this: Pittsburgh is less like a single, unified city and more like a collection of interconnected villages, each with its own main street, its own local haunts, and its own set of unspoken rules. You might find yourself fiercely loyal to *your* neighborhood, playfully (or not-so-playfully) trash-talking other neighborhoods, and developing a deep sense of belonging that transcends the city as a whole.

So, how do you navigate this patchwork of communities? Well, that's what this chapter is all about. We're going to dive deep into some of Pittsburgh's most prominent neighborhoods, giving you the inside scoop on everything from housing costs to parking nightmares to the best places to grab a pierogi. Consider this your neighborhood cheat sheet, your guide to finding the perfect Yinzer nest. Because your move will not be generic, it will be *neighborhood specific*.

Let's start with a few key factors that differentiate Pittsburgh's neighborhoods:

The Terrain: Pittsburgh is *hilly*. Seriously, we're talking San Francisco-level hills in some areas. This isn't just an aesthetic consideration; it directly impacts walkability, bikeability, and even driving. Some neighborhoods are relatively flat and easy to navigate on foot, while others will require serious leg (and lung) power. We'll make sure to note the "hill factor" for each neighborhood.

Parking: Ah, parking. The bane of many a Pittsburgher's existence. In some

neighborhoods, street parking is readily available, while in others, it's a competitive sport that requires nerves of steel and a willingness to circle the block for an eternity. We'll give you the honest truth about parking in each area, because nothing ruins a good day faster than a parking ticket (or, worse, getting towed).

Housing Styles: From grand Victorian homes to modest row houses to modern condos, Pittsburgh's housing stock is as diverse as its neighborhoods. You'll find everything from student-filled apartments to family-friendly single-family homes, and the prices can vary dramatically. We'll break down the typical housing types and price ranges for each neighborhood.

The Vibe: This is the intangible, the *feeling* of a neighborhood. Is it trendy and bustling? Quiet and residential? Artsy and eclectic? Family-oriented? Student-centric? We'll do our best to capture the essence of each neighborhood, so you can get a sense of where you'll fit in.

Now, let's get to the neighborhoods themselves. Keep in mind that this is not an exhaustive list - Pittsburgh has over 90 officially recognized neighborhoods! - but it's a solid starting point that covers some of the most popular and well-known areas:

Lawrenceville: If you're looking for a neighborhood that's constantly buzzing with activity, Lawrenceville might be your spot. It's undergone a significant transformation in recent years, evolving from a somewhat gritty industrial area to a hipster haven filled with trendy restaurants, bars, boutiques, and art galleries. Butler Street is the main drag, and it's packed with places to eat, drink, and shop. Housing is a mix of renovated row houses, new condos, and some older, more affordable options. Parking can be tricky, especially on weekends, and prices have been steadily rising as the neighborhood's popularity has soared. Be prepared for a younger, more vibrant crowd, and a lot of construction as development continues.

Shadyside: A bit more upscale than Lawrenceville, Shadyside offers a blend of sophisticated charm and urban convenience. Walnut Street is the heart of the neighborhood, known for its upscale boutiques, national retailers, and restaurants. You'll find a mix of young professionals, families, and graduate students here. Housing is a mix of apartments, condos, and some grand Victorian homes. It's generally walkable and bikeable, though parking can still be a challenge. Prices are higher than in many other Pittsburgh neighborhoods, reflecting the area's desirability.

Squirrel Hill: This is one of Pittsburgh's largest and most established neighborhoods, known for its strong sense of community, its excellent food scene, and its large Jewish population. Forbes and Murray Avenues are the main commercial corridors, offering a diverse array of restaurants, shops, and businesses. You'll find everything from traditional Jewish delis to Asian cuisine to independent bookstores. Housing is a mix of single-family homes, apartments, and condos, with prices ranging from moderate to

expensive. Squirrel Hill is relatively walkable, with good public transportation options, but parking can be competitive, especially in the more densely populated areas. It's a great neighborhood for families, with good schools and plenty of parks.

South Side: Once a primarily working-class neighborhood, the South Side has transformed into a major entertainment district, particularly along East Carson Street. This street is packed with bars, restaurants, and nightclubs, making it a popular destination for nightlife. However, the South Side is also a residential neighborhood, with a mix of historic row houses and newer developments. Parking is notoriously difficult, especially on weekends, and the noise levels can be high, particularly near the bars. It's a more affordable option than some of the other neighborhoods we've mentioned, but be prepared for a more boisterous atmosphere. The South Side Flats are the lower, flatter area closer to the river, while the South Side Slopes rise steeply up the hillside, offering stunning city views but also challenging climbs.

North Side: Home to PNC Park (baseball), Heinz Field (football), and a growing number of museums and cultural attractions, the North Side is a diverse area with a mix of revitalized and still-developing neighborhoods. Allegheny Commons Park is a large green space, and the Mexican War Streets offer charming historic architecture. The North Side has some areas that are quite walkable and convenient, while others are more car-dependent. Parking varies depending on the specific location. Prices are generally more affordable than in some of the South Hills neighborhoods, but it's important to research specific areas within the North Side, as some are still experiencing challenges.

Mount Washington: If you're looking for breathtaking views of the city skyline, Mount Washington is the place to be. This hilltop neighborhood is famous for its inclines (the Duquesne and Monongahela), which offer a unique way to travel up and down the steep slopes. Grandview Avenue is lined with restaurants and observation decks, making it a popular tourist destination. Housing is primarily residential, with a mix of single-family homes and condos. Parking can be limited, especially near the inclines and restaurants. It's not the most walkable neighborhood due to the hills, but the views are unparalleled.

Bloomfield: Known as Pittsburgh's "Little Italy," Bloomfield is a walkable neighborhood with a strong Italian heritage. Liberty Avenue is the main street, lined with Italian restaurants, bakeries, and shops. You'll find a mix of row houses and smaller apartment buildings, with a generally friendly and close-knit community atmosphere. Parking can be tight, but it's manageable. Prices are generally moderate, making it a more affordable option than some of the trendier neighborhoods. West Penn Hospital is also located in Bloomfield.

Downtown: The central business district of Pittsburgh, Downtown is experiencing a resurgence in residential development, with new condos and apartments attracting

people who want to live close to work and entertainment. It's highly walkable, with easy access to public transportation, but parking is expensive and limited to mostly garages. Cultural attractions like the Benedum Center and Heinz Hall are located Downtown, along with numerous restaurants and shops. Prices for housing are generally high, reflecting the prime location.

Oakland: Dominated by the University of Pittsburgh, Carnegie Mellon University, and UPMC hospitals, Oakland is a bustling student-centric neighborhood. Forbes and Fifth Avenues are the main thoroughfares, packed with restaurants, shops, and student-oriented businesses. Housing is primarily rentals, catering to the large student population. Parking is extremely challenging, and traffic can be congested. It's a very walkable and bikeable area, with good public transportation options, but it's definitely geared towards a younger demographic.

Strip District: A historic market district, the Strip District is a vibrant daytime destination known for its wholesale produce vendors, ethnic grocery stores, street food, and unique shops. Penn Avenue is the main street, and it's bustling with activity, especially on weekends. It's not primarily a residential neighborhood, though there are some loft apartments and condos. Parking is metered and can be difficult to find during peak hours. The Strip District is a great place to explore for foodies and those looking for unique finds, but it's not the quietest or most residential of neighborhoods.

These brief overviews offer a taste of the diverse neighborhoods within Pittsburgh city limits.

But, the Pittsburgh metropolitan area extends beyond the city itself, encompassing a number of popular suburban communities. Here are some of those suburban areas:

Sewickley: An affluent suburb located northwest of Pittsburgh, Sewickley is known for its charming village atmosphere, its excellent schools, and its beautiful homes. It's a more expensive area, with a mix of historic estates and newer developments.

Mt. Lebanon: A well-established suburb south of Pittsburgh, Mt. Lebanon is popular with families due to its top-rated schools, its tree-lined streets, and its strong community feel. It offers a mix of housing styles, from older, well-maintained homes to newer constructions.

Fox Chapel: Another affluent suburb, Fox Chapel is located northeast of Pittsburgh and is known for its large estates, its rolling hills, and its prestigious country clubs. It's a very exclusive and expensive area.

Upper St. Clair: Located south of Pittsburgh, Upper St. Clair is another highly-rated suburb known for its excellent schools and family-friendly environment. It offers a mix of housing options, from established neighborhoods to newer developments.

North Hills & South Hills (various municipalities): Both the North Hills and South Hills encompass a wide range of municipalities, each with its own character and price point. Generally, the North Hills is considered to be slightly more rural and spread out, while the South Hills is more densely populated and closer to the city. Commute times to Downtown Pittsburgh can vary significantly depending on the specific location within the North or South Hills. Choosing that specific location is key.

Choosing the right neighborhood is arguably the most important decision you'll make when moving to Pittsburgh. Take your time, do your research, and, if possible, visit the neighborhoods that interest you to get a feel for the atmosphere. Ask yourself some key questions. Do you prefer a quiet, residential street or a bustling, vibrant one? Do you want to be able to walk to shops and restaurants, or are you comfortable driving? What's your budget for housing? Do you need good schools?

Answering these questions honestly will help you narrow down your options and find the perfect Pittsburgh neighborhood to call home. And don't be afraid to explore! Pittsburgh is a city of surprises, and you might just discover a hidden gem that's perfect for you.

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