

Epicurean in Pittsburgh



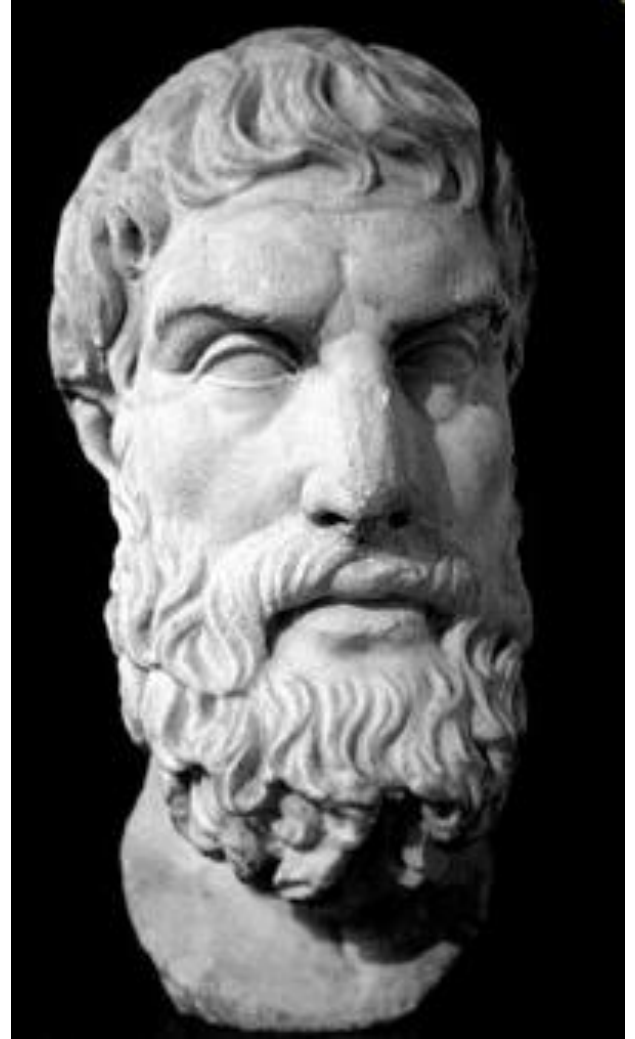
In vino veritas © FotoRita

Random Musings by Alyosha Efros

Epicureanism, a philosophy misunderstood

- Seeking happiness from simple pleasures
- Avoiding pain and suffering for self and others

“It is impossible to live a pleasant life without living wisely and well and justly (agreeing neither to harm nor be harmed). And it is impossible to live wisely and well and justly without living a pleasant life.”



Epicurus, 341– 270 B.C.

Living Wisely

- Yes, you won't be rich, but...
 - You are way better off than most grad students
 - You are saving ~\$5000/year on housing compared to students in MIT, Berkeley, and Stanford
- Spending wisely, e.g.:
 - \$4 for so-so latte vs. \$8 for surprisingly good bottle of wine
 - Fees & charges at the local bank, vs. Internet Bank (ING Direct, Everbank.com, etc)
 - \$30 for bottle of so-so wine in restaurant vs. BYOB
 - \$150+/month cost of car ownership vs. \$7/hr ZipCar for weekend outings
 - <http://www.zipcar.com/carnegiemellon/> (6 cars around campus)

Living Well

Do you need to be rich to live well?

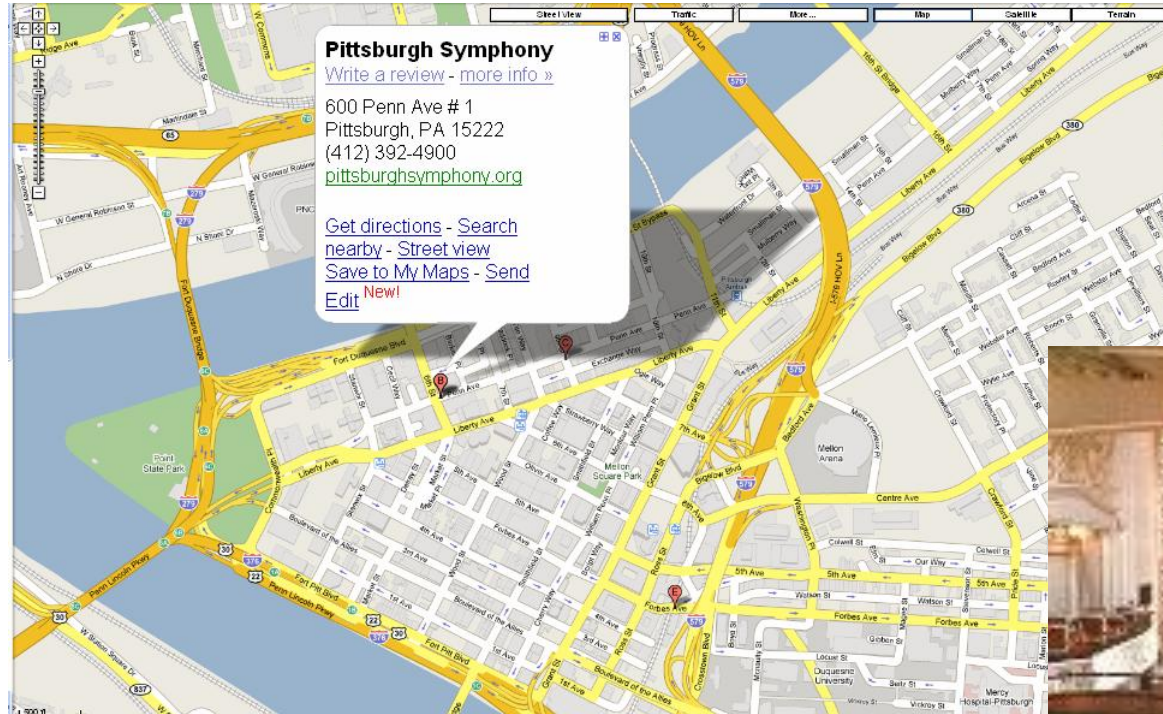
Recent research on long-term effect of spending on happiness:

- “the only category to be positively correlated to happiness was leisure: vacations, entertainment, sports and equipment like golf clubs and fishing poles.” - DeLeire & Kalil
- *“spending money for an experience — concert tickets, French lessons, sushi-rolling classes, a hotel room in Monaco — produces longer-lasting satisfaction than spending money on plain old stuff.”*

**A Highly Subjective and Opinionated Guide
to Seeking Small Pleasures
while Avoiding Pain
in Pittsburgh
without a car
and on the cheap**

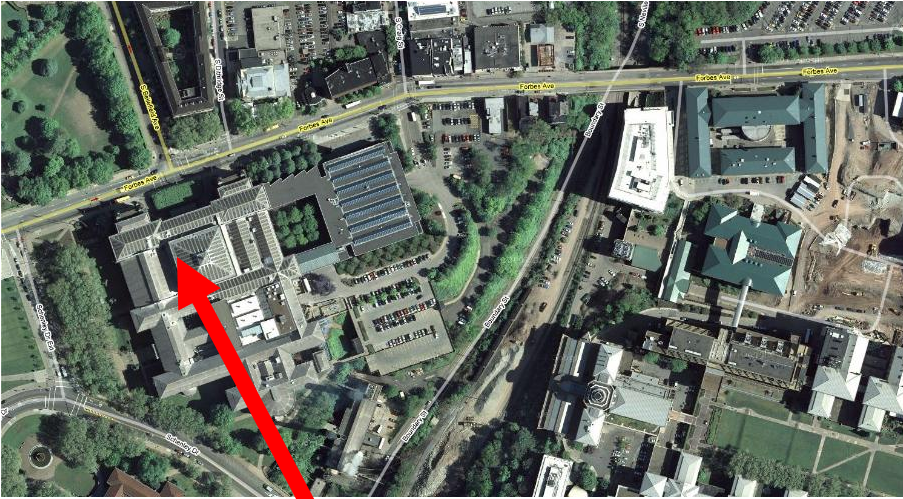
Cultural Pleasures

Pittsburgh Symphony



- A truly world-class orchestra! ...in a truly gaudy hall
 - if you even wanted to know what kitch looks like
- Student cost: ~\$15 (rush tickets, often front row (!), 2 hours before show)
- Transportation: all 61-series buses and others (~20min)

Pittsburgh Chamber Music Society



Carnegie Music Hall



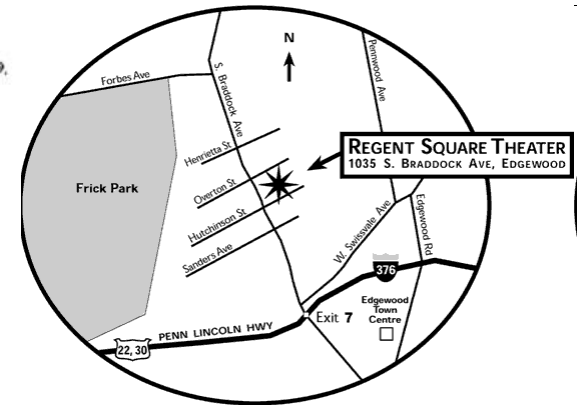
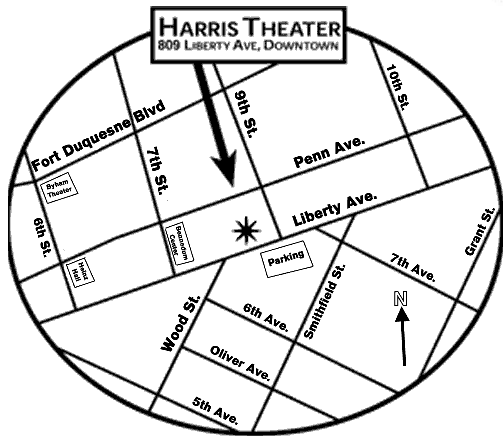
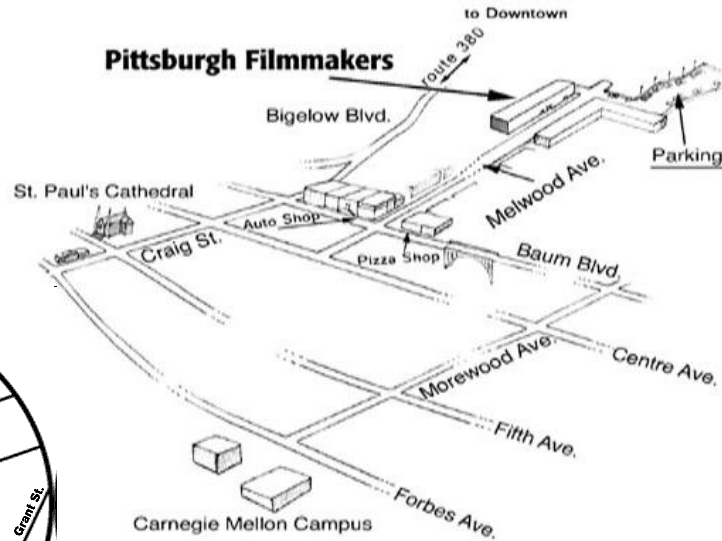
- Brings top chamber groups to Pittsburgh
- Student Cost: ~\$15
- Transportation: 5 min walk

Renaissance and Baroque Society



- brings absolute top groups in renaissance, baroque, and early classical period music
 - One of Pittsburgh's hidden gems!!!
- Student cost: \$10
- Transportation: 15 min walk

Pittsburgh Filmmakers



- The place to see good cinema
- Student cost: ~\$5
- Transportation:
 - Melwood Screening Room: ~ 30 min walk
 - Harris Theatre (downtown) – 61-series and other buses
 - Regent Sq. Theatre – 61B, or 61A + 15 min walk

Other cultural pleasures

- [Chatham Baroque](#)
 - A local baroque group. Heard them once, they are awesome!
- [Pittsburgh Irish & Classical Theater](#)
 - Pittsburgh has many good theatres. This one is apparently one of the best
- [The Mattress Factory Art Museum](#)
 - Hands down the best museum in Pittsburgh! World-famous and truly unique!
- [Dreaming Ant](#) *“DVDs. A little off center”*
 - where films are sorted by director, as it should be! Has films that even NetFlix doesn't carry! Two locations: Craig St. and in Bloomfield (bigger store, take 54C bus).
- [A/B Films](#)
 - \$1 movies at the UC. An eclectic mix of amazing foreign films and truly awful Hollywood mass-market junk.

Outdoor Pleasures

Kayak Pittsburgh (part of Venture Outdoors)



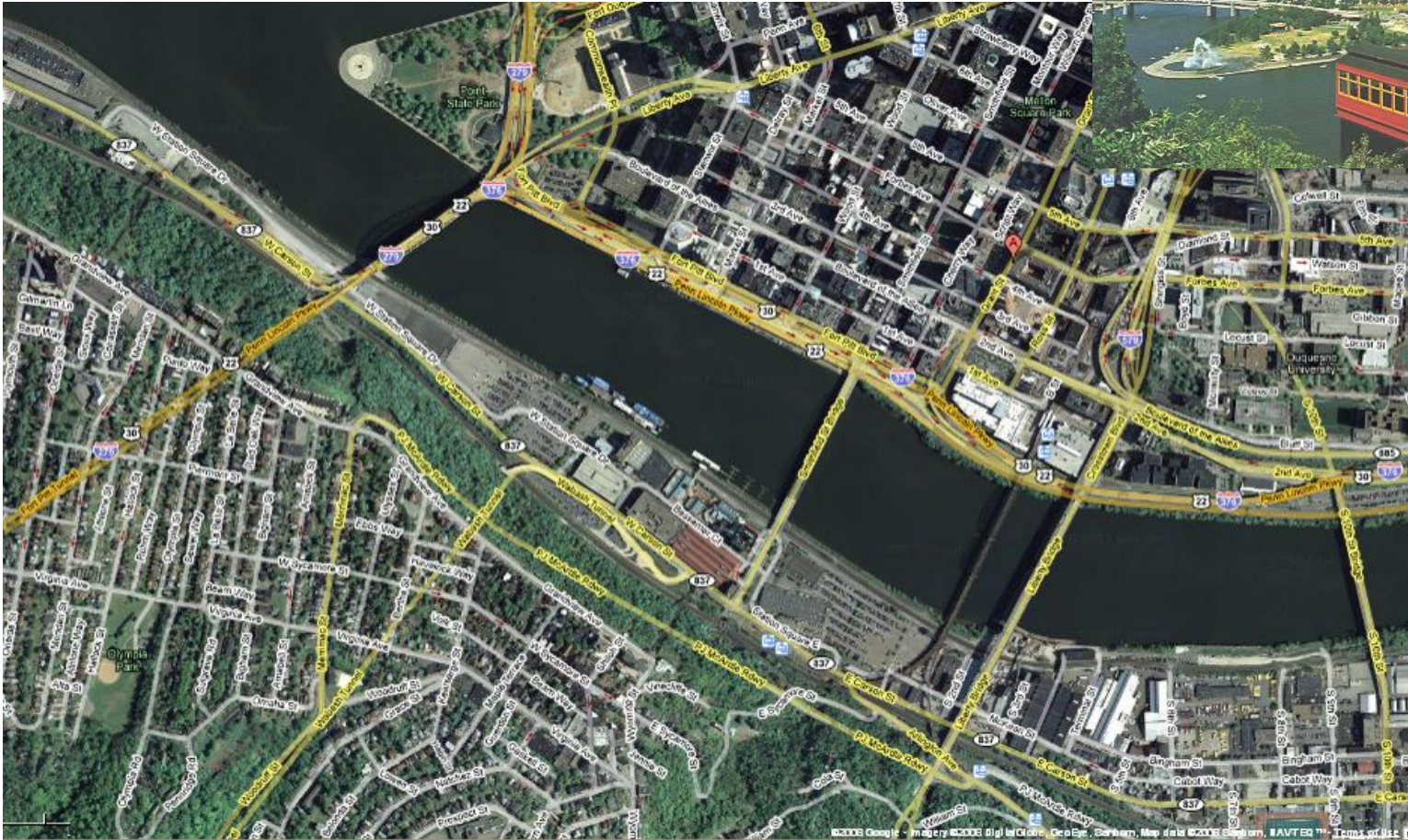
- Kayaking -- more spiritual than yoga, way less dangerous than vodka!
- Open May to September, October only weekend. Evenings are best!
- Cost: \$15/hr single, \$20/hr tandem, \$5 off with membership
- Transportation: all buses downtown, then 10 min walk across river

Schenley Skating Rink



- Open from Thanksgiving to mid-March. Go for 9:30pm sessions to avoid kiddies
- Cost: \$3-5, including rentals
- Transportation: 25 min walk (in the dark). 20 min from Sq. Hill (not so dark)

Pittsburgh Inclines walk



- An easy, very scenic walk, ~1.5 – 2 hrs
- Transportation: Any downtown bus to Smithfield St. Both includes free with CMU ID. PAT transfers also valid.

Eliza Furnace and other bike/walk trails



And finally...
...the pleasures of good food and drink

Inspired by:

Peter Su's [Pittsburgh Restaurant Micro-reviews page](#)

Best Pittsburgh Food Bargains

My Biased Top 5 Picks

Yo Rita (Tacos)

- Artisan Mexican Food
- If you don't like Mexican, try this place
- If you do like Mexican, come with an open mind – you may never go back to Taco Bell!
- Cost: ~\$10
- Transportation: Bus to Southside



La Feria (Peruvian)

[La Feria: Peruvian Restaurant & Crafts Gallery](#)

- Homey, super-tasty, inexpensive food in unpretentious atmosphere. BYOB.
- I recommend:: the specials, lemonade, sweet potato chips, bread-pudding
- Where: Shadyside, 5527 Walnut St (2nd floor, above Pamela's), 20 min walk
- Cost: ~\$10-15



Sun Penang (Malay)



- Sun Penang – an authentic Malaysian / Singaporean place! Better than some famous places in New York and Paris!
- Outdoor Seating! Free Delivery!
- I recommend: anything with tofu (sizzling Japanese tofu, Szechuan bean curd), bah ku teh (soup), rodi kanai (appetizer). Don't get anything thai-sounding.
- Where Sq. Hill, 5829 Forbes Ave, 30 min walk or 61-series buses
- Cost: ~\$10-15, sadly not BYOB anymore

Paris 66 (French)



- Authentic Breton Creperie (much better than Crepes Parisian!)
- Real French chief (don't come in August)
- Where East Liberty (Bus 500)
- Crepes: ~\$12, BYOB

Udipi Café (South Indian)



- [Udipi Café](#) -- super-authentic south-Indian food!!! (note: completely vegetarian, obviously)
- I recommend: masala dosas, of course!
- Where: far-far away.... 4141 Old William Penn Hwy, Monroeville, PA. Hitch a ride with some Indians in the know.
- Cost: ~\$10, BYOB
- Nearby: Famous Indian Temple, with simple but very tasty food for \$1 to go

Legume (splurge)



- Very authentic “neighborhood Parisian Bistro”
- Simple, non-pretentious, the focus is on quality food
- BYOB, reservations essential
- Cost: ~\$20 for main dish
- Transportation: 61B to Regent Sq.

Other good places

- [Chaya Japanese Cuisine](#)
 - A really good sushi place. Home-made wasabi! In Sq. Hill
- Rose Tea Café
 - Pretty authentic Taiwanese place. In Sq. Hill
- Oishi Bento
 - It's actually Korean. Try Bi Bin Bap. In Oakland
- Il Pizzaiolo
 - Reasonably authentic Italian pizza. But far, far away!! Cool kids (Anupam, Luis, etc) love it, but I am not sure if it's worth the carbon footprint.
- Minh (Bloomfield)
 - Vietnamese Pho

Avoiding Pain...

- Lu Lu Noodles (Craig St.)
 - First place to get torched when the revolution comes!
 - Q: what happens to left-over Lulu food??? A: NSH Atrium!
- Nakama Pretend Japanese, (South Side)
 - Beautiful people
 - awful food
- Food Trucks
 - Be nice to your stomach
- New Dumpling House (Sq. Hill)
 - If you still go, pleeeeeease don't get the dumplings!
- Pamela's (many locations)
 - Famous Pittsburgh breakfast / brunch place
 - I can't understand why

Other nice spots

- Good lunch spots
 - Eat Unique (Craig St.)
 - Café at the Carnegie Museum
 - “Taste of India” Indian place in Resnik Hall
- Good pubs
 - Harris Grill (outdoor seating, good food!)
 - Shape Edge (great selection of Belgian Beers)
 - Point Brugge (upscale version of Sharp Edge, good food & dessert)
- Some Good Cafes
 - Coffee Tree Roasters (good coffee, I am told)
 - 61C (great teas!)
 - ...
 - Avoid: Kiva Han

Other nice spots

- Bakery
 - Allegro Bakery (Murrey & Hobart)
 - Avoid: Panera “Bakery”
- Ice cream
 - Dave and Andy’s (Oakland)
 - Mulberry Creamery (almost real gelato, Shadyside)
 - Avoid: Rita’s (Sq. Hill)
- Yummiest Dessert in Most Unexpected Place:
 - Cannoli at Mineo’s Pizza, on Murray Ave. (Sq. Hill)

Stores

- [Trader Joe's](#)
- Many stores in the Strip, e.g. [Pennsylvania Macaroni Company](#)
- Whole Foods (a.k.a. Whole Paycheck)
- Wine Store near Whole Foods
- [McBroom Beer Distributor](#) (Regent Sq.)

Sometime, one needs to get away...

Weekend trips



- Cities with cheap fares (\$120+ R/T!) from Pittsburgh:
 - New York City (LGA, JFK, Newark): bunch of airlines
 - Boston: jetBlue, US Airways
 - Chicago: Southwest (MDW), United, AA (ORD)
 - Washington DC: Southwest (BWI), US Airways (National), UA
 - Philadelphia: Southwest, US Airways
- Splurge: Non-stop Delta Flight to Paris (\$500 in winter)

Cheers!

