

Beaver Stadium

Beaver Stadium, home to the Penn State Nittany Lions football team was built in 1960. The stadium has been expanded many times since its opening and has a current capacity of 106,572, making it the second largest football stadium in the country and third largest stadium in the world.

Penn State football began play in 1887 and has a rich history of success over the years. The program is among the top teams in terms of all time wins as well as winning percentage. Penn State played as an independent for many years before joining the Big 10 in 1990. Penn State played its first Big 10 football game in 1993. There have been many greats who have played at Penn State before continuing their football careers in the NFL.

Needless to say, a Saturday game here is time well spent. A white out night game is a must see for any college football fan.

Seating

Stadium sections are broken down by directions. For example, section SB would be the South Side section **B**. You might be in section WCU, which is **W**est Side, Section **C**, Upper Deck. The U means you will be above the catwalk. The seats numbers sometimes confuse people. As you walk up the steps in the sections, the odd numbered seats will be on one side of the steps and the even number will be on the other side of the steps.

The seating is bench style seating in most of the sections. If you have tickets on a bench that has a lot of people, it could get extremely tight if the stadium is full. Some body shapes are much larger than the seat allows for and that usually spells doom for the more petite person that can't throw their weight around to create room for themselves.

Food and Beverage

Beaver Stadium has typical stadium food unless you sit in the Club Seats which have upgraded menu items including fresh cut meats. The highlight specialty items include Penn State Creamery Ice Cream which is made on campus, BBQ pulled pork, pulled pork nachos, and Game Day Turkey Sandwiches.

On the concourse, items such as hot dogs, hamburgers, and nachos can be purchased. The cheesesteak is quite tasty and highly recommended. Most of the concession stands around the concourses on the non-club levels carry the same items. The lines are typically long; however, you can find some concession stand virtually empty. The good news is lines move rather quickly. Some lines are roped off helping to facilitate traffic flow during busy periods such as during halftime. More stadiums should create lanes like this to alleviate congestion during stoppages of play.

Pepsi products are sold at the stadium and when the weather gets colder, you can warm up drinking hot chocolate that is usually luke warm. Alcoholic beverages are not served in the stadium yet, but some discussion has been ongoing to serve alcohol to generate money for future expansions. It also should be noted that game day programs are sold by each entrance and at a few of the concession stands.

Atmosphere

The game time atmosphere at Beaver Stadium varies on the kickoff time as well as the opponent. Night games are a lot more electric than a 12pm or 3:30pm start. That being said, the crowd at Penn State is something that every fan must experience and see at least once. Many media types call Penn State one of the best places to experience a college football game in the country. At least once per season, Penn State has an 8pm kickoff under the lights, and fans are encouraged to wear all white. This creates an awesome "White-Out" atmosphere on TV and it's even better live in person. There is something to be said about 107,000 fans wearing white while dancing to Zombie Nation or chanting to the tune of "Seven Nation Army" in unison. Your throat will be sore in the morning and unless you wore ear protection, your ears will ring for hours after the game. But it is well worth it.

The seating bowl here provides fantastic views no matter your budget. The upper deck seats may look steep when walking up to the stadium but are angled at an upward tilt which gives fans a feel of being on top of the action. Lower bowl seats and club level also offer great views. Standing room options are available at the top of the lower bowl for fans who enjoy the vantage point. The club seats are sold with a long term contract and license fee that brings the cost per seat to about \$300 per game; however, it is beautiful with a large indoor area with upgraded food, TVs and couches.

Students line up early for the best seats in south end zone creating one of the better home field advantages in the Big 10. Tailgating at Penn State is awesome and often a family tradition passed down from generation to generation. Penn State fans welcome opposing team fans into their elaborate tailgate parties. Get in your seat at least 30 minute before kickoff to watch the Penn State Blue Band perform. Watch the drum major spring down the field and do a flip with a perfect landing.

If you arrive to the game two hours before kickoff you can see the Penn State players get off their blue buses, walk through the crowd, and into Beaver Stadium. They high five the fans, and it gets very loud.

Neighborhood

Penn State is surrounded by the town of State College, Pennsylvania which has plenty of nice hotels, fun bars, and great restaurants close to campus and Beaver Stadium. Most bars and restaurants are downtown on College Avenue, but there are also some near Toftrees Golf Resort North of downtown.

As with most college football campuses, tailgating is huge so many people don't venture out into the neighborhoods much before the game.

One must stop if you are going to a game here is the Penn State Berkey Creamery located on the corner of Curtin and Bigler Roads. This famous ice cream shop is well worth your time, but be prepared to choose from copious different flavors. Big lines form here before the game, but the ice cream and sherbet is a must when visiting campus. It is made fresh on site in the department of food science building.

Fans

Students camp out in tents at Beaver Stadium entrance which has been named Nittanyville, so they can get the best seats for big games. The stadium sells out for big games, but students usually leave early if the score is lopsided. The stadium gets loud for close games, and the "WE ARE....PENN STATE" cheer is very impressive.

Students and fans alike cheer loudly for their team no matter what, and the stadium has the best mix of music and chants seen at a college football venue. Opposing fans may take some good natured ribbing from Penn State faithful but nothing over the top.

Access

State College is located in the middle of Pennsylvania and is accessible from the west by I-80, from the south by I-99, and from the southeast by Rt. 322. Beaver Stadium is on the east side of campus and is a short walk from the main campus and downtown. Many tailgaters arrive Friday night for a Saturday game. Traffic in and out is manageable, but many fans tailgate after the game to let traffic subside after a big game. There is no mass transit other than buses.

Parking is plentiful and reasonably priced for the most part - car parking is \$100 for a season parking pass or \$40 per game for day of game. RV Parking is \$350 for season pass or \$120 per game for day of game. There is residential parking north of College Avenue that can be had for free, but as always, watch your street signage carefully. There are some garages on College Avenue that will be less expensive than the regular lots as well.

Return on Investment

A day at Beaver Stadium is whatever you want to make of it. For budget travelers, parking for free and walking a mile plus to the stadium can be had. This way, you can see the campus. Food and drinks are priced decently so your wallet or purse won't be lightened much.

Extras

There aren't a lot of extras here with Penn State football and that isn't a bad thing. Their basic uniforms scream tradition. There are some monuments and the Penn State All Sports museum outside the stadium.

Final Thoughts

Seeing a game at Penn State is a must for any college football fan. Fan interactions, program traditions, and the campus setting make this a great way to spend a Saturday in the fall season.