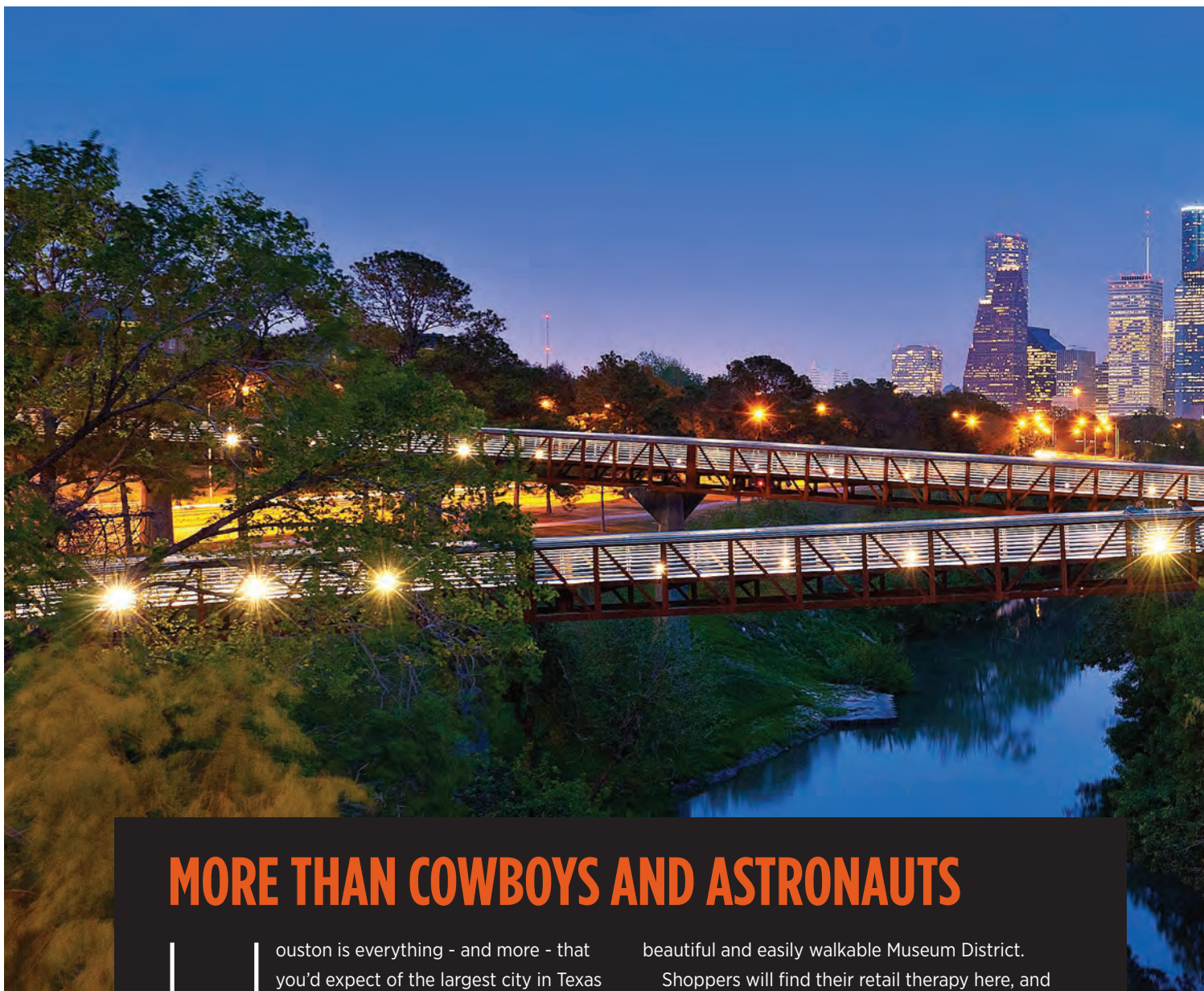


# HOUSTON

BEYOND YOUR EXPECTATIONS





## MORE THAN COWBOYS AND ASTRONAUTS

Houston is everything - and more - that you'd expect of the largest city in Texas and the fourth-largest one in the USA.

Founded on the banks of Buffalo Bayou in 1836, only three months after Texas won its independence from Mexico - Houston served as capital of the republic of Texas until 1846 when Texas joined the USA - it's now well-known as Space City for its exciting role in putting men on the Moon.

When asked exactly what is the appeal of this south Texas city of some 2.2 million people spread over nearly 600 square miles, local residents and business leaders are seldom lost for words.

For businessmen and women it is an exciting, innovative, can-do business and financial community - home to the headquarters of 26 Fortune 500 companies, more than any other place outside New York City. For lovers of the performing and visual arts, it has one of America's largest downtown Theatre Districts plus an extensive,

beautiful and easily walkable Museum District.

Shoppers will find their retail therapy here, and it's enhanced by the opportunity for foreign visitors to recover their sales tax. Sports lovers can enjoy major sporting events year-round. There are great places to hike, bike, canoe, kayak, golf, fish, sail and swim both in and around the city. And that's not to forget the wide, sandy beaches of the Gulf of Mexico, less than an hour to the south.

Visitors fascinated by Texas's colourful Western heritage can enjoy role-playing at a local ranch, a thrilling annual rodeo and the opportunity to adorn themselves in Western gear at a variety of local shops. Families can explore everything from the city's activity-filled parks to its child-friendly museums, and food lovers will be delighted by the burgeoning culinary scene that offers far more than great steaks and Tex-Mex dishes, as Houston is now one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the USA.

Come with us to discover more about the city and some of its most-appealing neighbourhoods.

The Houston skyline  
as seen from  
Buffalo Bayou Park



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**GETTING THERE,  
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# A DYNAMIC DOWNTOWN

**Punctuated by skyscrapers designed** by the likes of IM Pei and Philip Johnson, Houston's Downtown is not only a vibrant business hub, but also home to a 17-block theatre district, three major stadiums, numerous appealing parks, restaurants, bars and family-friendly attractions including the **Downtown Aquarium**.

It's also a great place to learn about the history and heritage of Houston and other parts of Texas. The city's oldest park, named after politician and soldier Sam Houston, invites you to visit an array of historic homes, including an 1823 settler's cabin, an 1850s plantation-style mansion, the home of an emancipated slave and an 1891 church built by German-speaking Lutherans. Also on the grounds, the **Heritage Society Museum** tells you more about the city and state. And in **Sesquicentennial Park** there's a statue of former President George H W Bush, who made his fortune in Texas oil.



Dynamic Houston  
is the headquarters  
of 26 Fortune 500  
companies

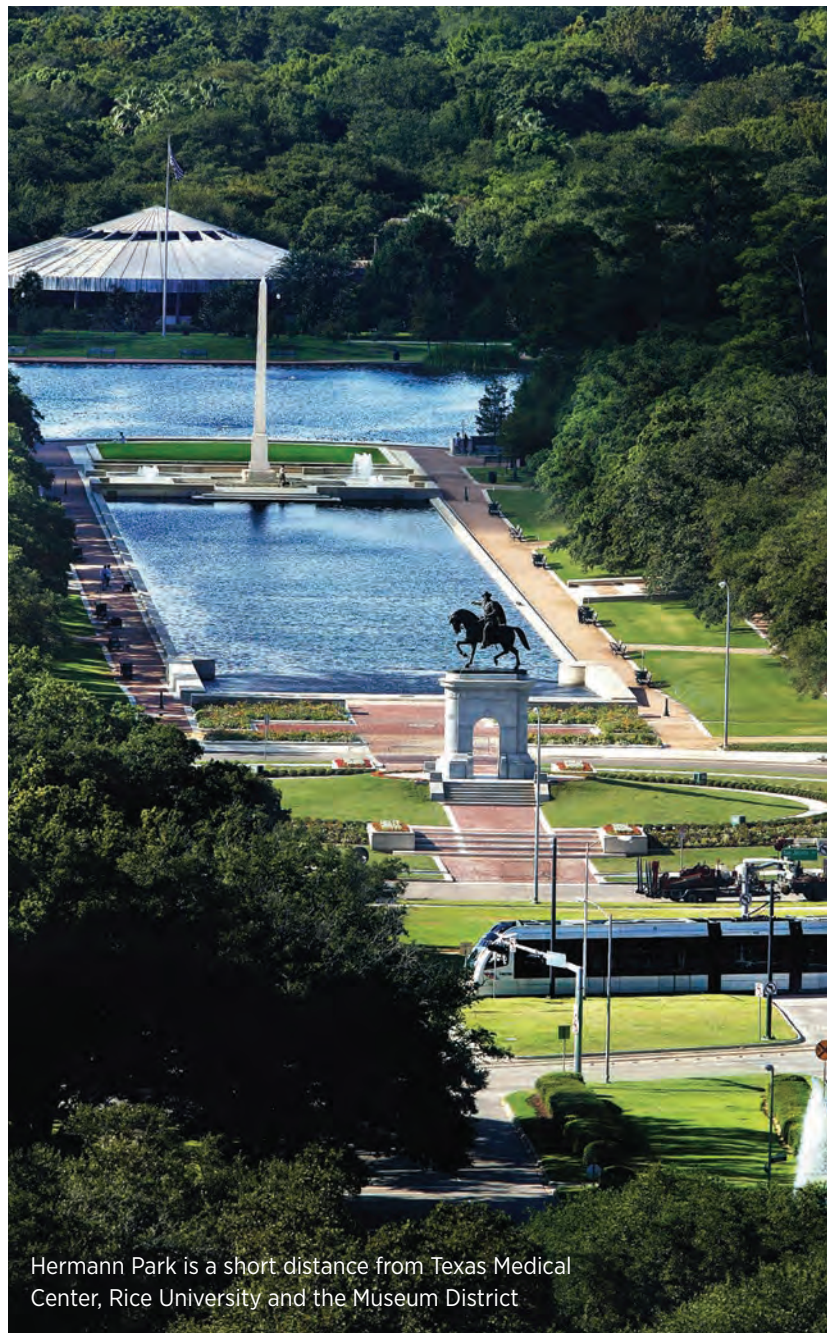
## OTHER NEIGHBOURHOODS OF NOTE

**Encircled by Interstate 610**, which is known as 'The Loop', are 11 quite different neighbourhoods, each with its own distinct charm. Many visitors head first for the **Houston Museum District**, home to 19 world-class museums, cultural centres and galleries. Just to the south is an area dominated by the **Texas Medical Center**, the world's largest such centre and a popular place for many visitors as it encompasses 59 renowned research and treatment institutions. It's also near the NRG Stadium, home to the National Football League football team the Houston Texans, and site of the 2017 Super Bowl.

Those in search of retail therapy head for such neighbourhoods as **Montrose**, **West University**, **Rice Village** and **Houston Heights**. Posh **River Oaks** now boasts a new 14-acre luxury shopping and dining complex.

Just to the west of The Loop, the **Galleria Uptown** district gets its name from The Galleria shopping complex. To its south is colourful **Chinatown**, home of the two-and-a-half acre Jade Buddha Temple and of bubble tea cafés, ethnic markets, mom-and-pop restaurants and other attractions of particular interest to Chinese residents and visitors.

The city's **East End** near the Port of Houston is a melting pot for the Germans, Italians and Mexicans who have settled there over the decades, while the **Third Ward**, near the Medical Center, is the centre of the city's African-American community.



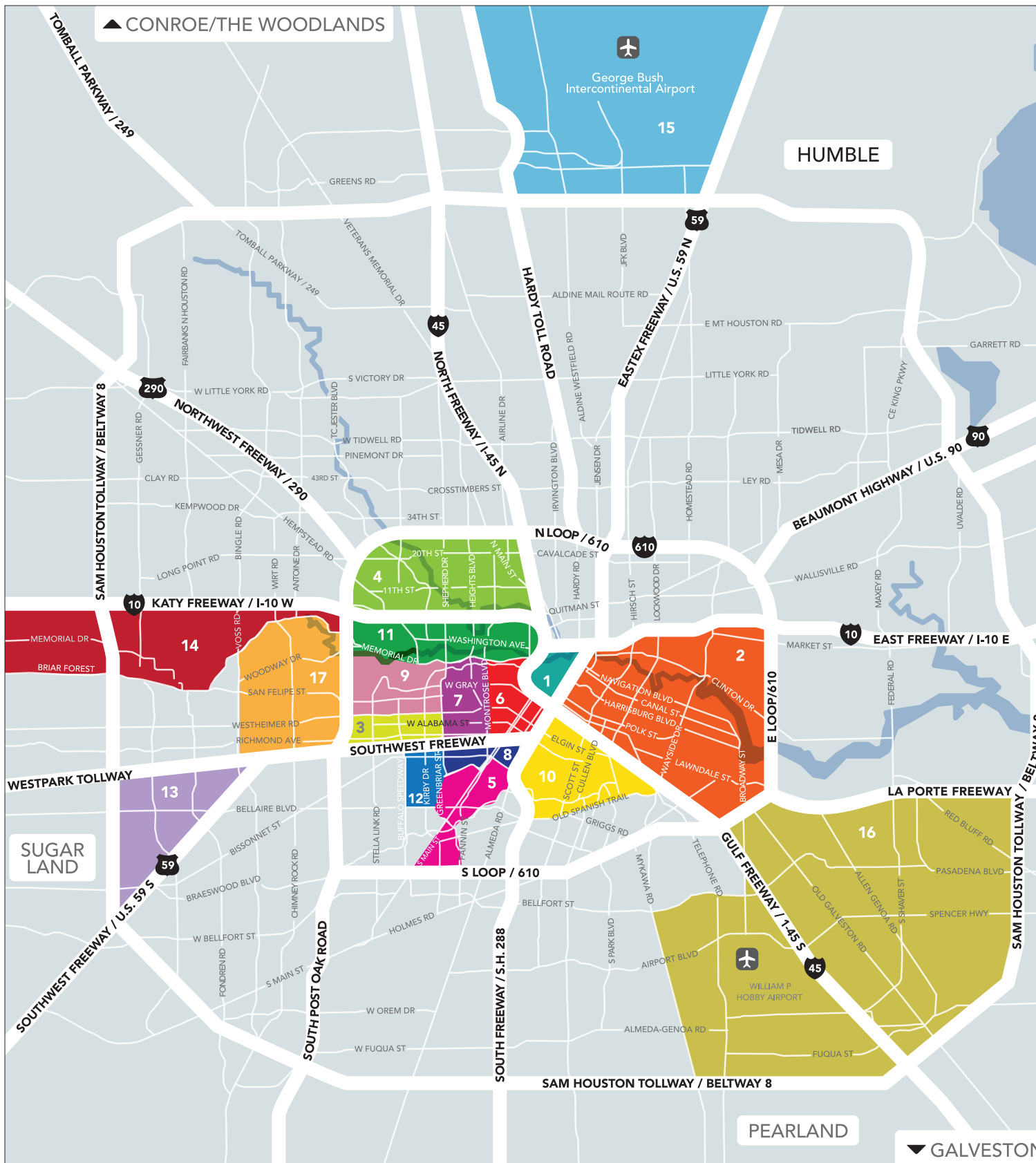
Hermann Park is a short distance from Texas Medical Center, Rice University and the Museum District



Houston is one of the most culturally-diverse cities in America and includes many Mexican-, Chinese- and German-Americans among its 2.2 million residents

### WHERE ARE ALL THE PEOPLE?

Why are all the Downtown streets so empty even at the height of a working day in the midst of summer? Because most of the people are underground enjoying the seven miles of climate-controlled tunnels linking 95 downtown blocks and lined with shops, cafes, restaurants and even doctors' offices.



## FAMILIES CAN EXPLORE EVERYTHING FROM THE CITY'S ACTIVITY-FILLED PARKS TO ITS CHILD-FRIENDLY MUSEUMS.

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The Houston Ballet in a performance of *The Nutcracker*

# HOUSTON OVERVIEW

## HOUSTON NEIGHBORHOODS

### INSIDE LOOP 610

- 1 DOWNTOWN
- 2 EADO / EAST END
- 3 GREENWAY PLAZA / UPPER KIRBY
- 4 HOUSTON HEIGHTS
- 5 MEDICAL CENTER / NRG PARK
- 6 MIDTOWN
- 7 MONTROSE
- 8 MUSEUM DISTRICT
- 9 RIVER OAKS / HIGHLAND VILLAGE
- 10 THIRD WARD
- 11 WASHINGTON CORRIDOR / MEMORIAL PARK
- 12 WEST UNIVERSITY / RICE VILLAGE

### OUTSIDE LOOP 610

- 13 CHINATOWN
- 14 MEMORIAL / ENERGY CORRIDOR
- 15 GREENSPPOINT / IAH
- 16 PASADENA / HOBBY
- 17 UPTOWN GALLERIA

## A MULTI-FACETED CULTURAL SCENE

Houston is known as a hub of both the performing and the visual arts. Its **Downtown Theatre District** is home to the Houston Grand Opera, Houston Symphony and Houston Ballet, as well as the acclaimed Alley Theatre, which completed a \$46.5-million makeover in 2015. From this crucible of creativity have come many Grammy, Tony and Emmy award-winning performances.

Located in the **Houston Museum District** the seasonal Miller Outdoor Theatre performances include free cultural and educational events.

Those fascinated by dinosaurs or dazzling collections of crystals will love the **Houston Museum of Natural Science**. The **Museum of Fine Arts Houston** and **The Menil Collection** are treasure houses of art through the ages,

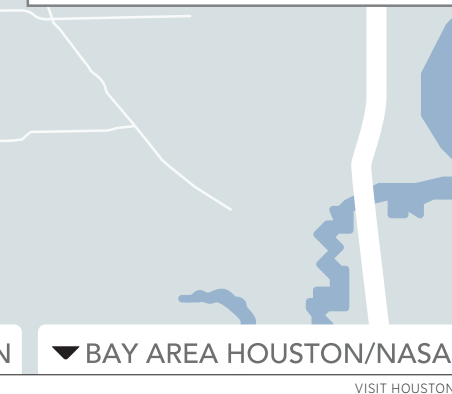
while the **Rothko Chapel** and the **Chapel of St Basil** on the grounds of St Thomas University are architectural delights.

Another unmissable site is **Bayou Bend**, the majestic home of the late oil heiress, philanthropist and collector, Ms Ima Hogg. Welcoming its visitors with a swinging bridge over **Buffalo Bayou**, and surrounded by 14 acres of beautiful gardens, Bayou Bend is now owned by the Museum of Fine Arts Houston. It displays its outstanding collection of early-American decorative arts in a series of exquisitely-adorned and furnished rooms.

Each spring, there's an Azalea Trail tour through the splendid surrounding neighbourhood, including entrance to five of its magnificent mansions.



The Houston Museum of Natural Science is known for its impressive dinosaur exhibits



▼ BAY AREA HOUSTON/NASA

VISIT HOUSTON

## FUN AND FUNKY ATTRACTIONS

Houston boasts more than two dozen eye-boggling murals, many of which can be seen at what is known as Graffiti Park at the corner of Leeland and St Emmanuel streets east of Downtown. Details of the Houston Mural Festival, held in October, can be obtained from [www.huemuralfestival.com](http://www.huemuralfestival.com)



### THE ART CAR MUSEUM

140 Heights Blvd, Houston

\*\*\*

Also known as The Garage Mahal, this amazing exhibition includes such exhibitions as a Honda motorcycle transformed into a shiny, red and rolling stiletto heel.

[www.artcarmuseum.com](http://www.artcarmuseum.com)

### BEER CAN HOUSE

222 Malone St, Houston

\*\*\*

Located near Memorial Park at 222 Malone Street west of Downtown and now managed by the Orange Show Center, this home was lovingly adorned by its late owners, the Milkovischs, with 50,000 flattened beer cans.

[www.beercanhouse.org](http://www.beercanhouse.org)

### THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF FUNERAL HISTORY

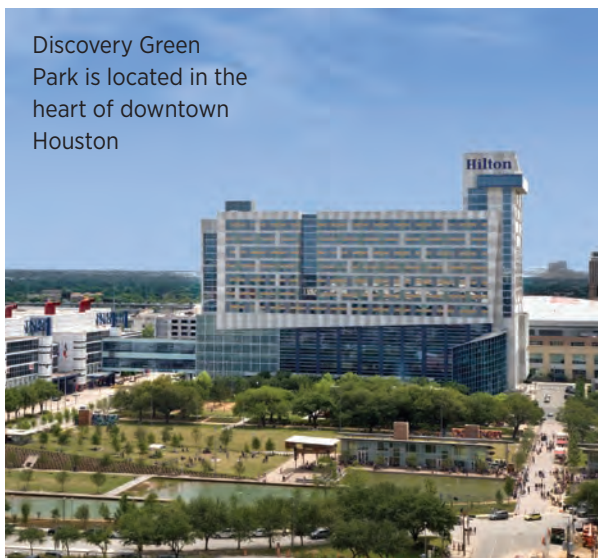
415 Barren Springs Dr., Houston

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America's largest collection of funeral service artefacts is to be found north of Downtown and near George Bush Intercontinental Airport. Among the unmissable exhibits: the hearses that carried the bodies of Grace Kelly and US Presidents Reagan and Bush and a dozen brightly coloured 'fantasy coffins'.

[www.nmfh.org](http://www.nmfh.org)

Discovery Green Park is located in the heart of downtown Houston



## OUTDOOR DELIGHTS

Outdoor lovers will feel right at home in Houston. **Hermann Park** sited between the Museum District and the Texas Medical Center, is a 445-acre outdoor treasure encompassing Lake McGovern, which you can explore by pedal boat, an 18-hole golf course, train rides, play areas, a large amphitheatre and the **Houston Zoo**. Twelve-acre **Discovery Green**, next to the George R Brown Convention Center, is not only a centrally-located green space but also offers everything from film screenings and art exhibitions, to an ice-skating rink during the holiday season and two restaurants. To the north of Downtown, **Market Square Park** is known for its entertainment, dining and public art. Occupying one square block, nearby **Tranquility Park** was inspired by Neil Armstrong's famous words after his Moon landing: "Houston, Tranquility Base here. The Eagle has landed." And that's not to forget all the attractions in the green spaces along **Buffalo Bayou Park**.



The Galleria is known for its 400 shops, restaurants and ice-skating rink



## SUPER SHOPPING

The only ordeal to be faced by Houstonians and others in search of retail therapy is the daunting decision of where to head first. How can you resist legendary **The Galleria** where Texas's largest shopping complex offers some 400 stores and restaurants and even a grand indoor ice-skating rink? Anchored by the Neiman Marcus, Saks Fifth Avenue, Nordstrom and Macy's department stores, The Galleria also includes designer boutiques such as Jimmy Choo and Louis Vuitton

Then there's the allure of the **River Oaks Shopping Center**, built in 1927 in Art Deco style, and the new **River Oaks District**, which includes so much exclusive, luxury retail and restaurant space that it's now considered, at least by Houstonians, to be the equivalent of California's Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills. Among the names to conjure with there are Dior, Etra, Roberto Cavalli, Tom Ford, Hermes and Harry Winston.

In the historic **Houston Heights** shops featuring unique and vintage attire are nestled among handsome Victorian homes and in the **Montrose** neighbourhood, Westheimer Street is awash with tempting and funky one-off and consignment shops.

Looking for bargains? Then head for the **Houston Premium Outlets** in the Cypress suburbs off Highway 290 or for the 80 shops of **Tanger Outlets** to the south, always remembering that you can request a refund of your sales tax at designated places when you shop in Texas.



The new River Oaks District specializes in exclusive, luxury retail shops



## FABULOUS FOOD

Great steaks are on offer at Pappas Bros Steakhouses, including this one Downtown

With more than 10,000 restaurants showcasing cuisine from 71 countries and American regions, Houston is, according to the *New York Times*, “a world-class food scene (with) a rising generation of culinary stars”.

Houston is particularly well-known for the wonderful seafood found at such places as Liberty Kitchen & Oysterette, REEF, Holley’s and Trulucks. Classic American ‘comfort food’ can be enjoyed at the city’s State of Grace, presided over by James Beard award-nominated chef Ford Fry. For Oriental delights, check out Chinatown’s Fufu Cafe, Tan Tan and Sinh Sihm or the variety of Vietnamese, Korean and Thai cuisines on offer.

For that very special high-end treat, head for Tony’s, Brennan’s, Mockingbird Bistro, Masraff’s, Oxheart, Underbelly, Steak 48 or Chez Nous in Humble.

Of course, being Texas there’s no lack of superb steaks and where better to find them than at one of the Pappas Bros Steakhouses or at West Houston’s Taste of Texas. The city is full of tempting barbecue and Tex-Mex restaurants, but for real Mexican fare, head for Hugo’s, owned and run by friendly Mexican chef Hugo Ortega.

Nor should you forget the city’s wealth of gastro pubs and the music-rich nightlife at places such as Downtown’s House of Blues, and establishments along Montrose’s edgy, gay-friendly Westheimer Curve or Washington Avenue, where you can bar hop throughout the night for only \$15 on The Houston Wave jitney.



Houston is known for its succulent seafood



Mexican-American chef Hugo Ortega presides over several local restaurants, including his namesake Hugo’s

# CALLING ALL SPORTS FANS

Regardless of the season, there's always great sport on tap throughout Houston. From April until October, you can root for the local baseball team, the Houston Astros, at **Minute Maid Park**, where a retractable roof offers the best environment regardless of the weather. During the same period, the Houston Dynamo MLS (Major League Soccer) team is flexing its muscles in the open-air **BBVA Compass stadium**.

Meanwhile, running from October until April, the Houston Rockets basketball team plays in **Toyota Center**; among its fans are Oprah and Beyonce. And, if you're interested in American-style football, head for the **NRG Stadium**, home to the National Football League's Houston Texans from August until January.

If, on the other hand, you prefer to be your own sports hero, make for the 160-acre, recently-enhanced **Buffalo Bayou Park** where you can hike, bike, kayak, canoe or show off your skate board skills at the **Lee and Joe Jamail Skatepark**. You can enjoy boating, fishing and swimming on nearby lakes or just relaxing on the miles of wide, sandy Gulf of Mexico beaches only an hour or less drive away.



Minute Maid Park is the downtown home of the Houston Astros



The NRG Stadium is home to the Houston Texans from August until January

Enjoying a Christmas time cook-out at George Ranch Historical Park



## WILD WEST AND WONDERFUL

**Houston hasn't forgotten** its colourful Western heritage. How could it? Texas became an independent country on the San Jacinto Battleground located south-east of the city on April 21, 1836, and much of its early fortune was established by both cattlemen and oil tycoons. Today, you can relive those days at the 480-acre **George Ranch Historical Park** south-west of the city centre or by attending the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo taking place for three weeks each March.

And if you want to get the look - a cowboy hat shaped by hand, great boots, a vintage belt buckle and all the rest - head for Cavender's, Lucchese, Pinto Ranch, Maida's, The Hat Store, Tejas Custom Boots or Max Lang.

## FIVE FAMILY FUN THINGS TO DO IN HOUSTON

1. Enjoy the hands-on exhibits and educational fun in the **Children's Museum of Houston**. It's the most-attended museum of its kind in the USA.
2. Watch the hundreds of thousands of Mexican free-tail bats emerge at sunset from underneath Buffalo Bayou's **Waugh Bat Bridge**.
3. Marvel at the aquatic life, including a giant Pacific octopus, at the **Downtown Aquarium**.
4. Walk on the wild side with the 6,000 animal residents in the 55-acre **Houston Zoo**.
5. Get your thrills on the Bullet roller-coaster or on the upside-down Inverter at picturesque **Kemah Boardwalk** 30 miles south of Houston.

An attraction at the Children's Museum of Houston





Space Center Houston,  
gateway to NASA Johnson  
Space Center

## SPACE-FOCUSED AND SPECIAL

**Located only 22 miles south** of Houston, NASA Johnson Space Center is where human spaceflight training, research, and flight control are conducted. Space Center Houston is the official visitors center to NASA Johnson Space Center and offers educational and inspiring space attractions.

Thrill to the epic adventures of space exploration depicted in the IMAX films and various exhibitions, get a behind-the-scenes tour of human space travel in action, and enjoy hands-on activities.

Then clamber aboard the Space Center's newest attraction: the world's only space shuttle replica mounted on a Boeing 747 of the type that ferried the shuttles across country en route to and from their space explorations.

And while there, notice the fascinated school children... could one or more of them someday set foot on Mars?

Other nearby attractions include the Kemah Boardwalk, the San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Park, where, from the top of a 570-foot monument, you can view the famous site where the future of Texas was settled, and the *USS Texas*, the only American battleship to serve in both World Wars.

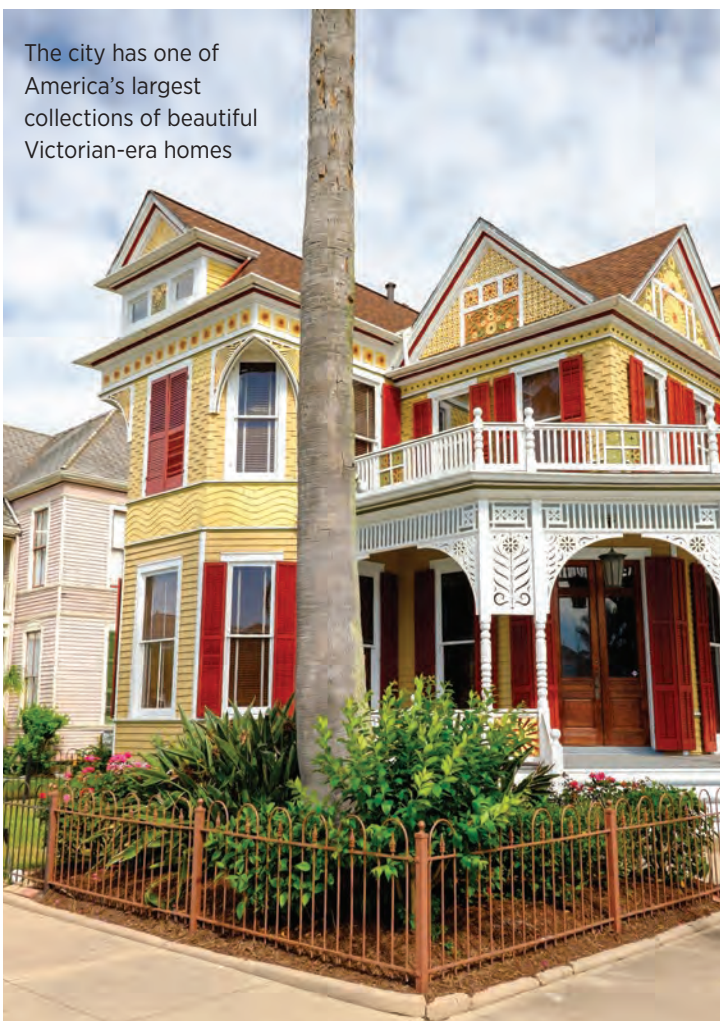
## SAVE HALF THE COST OF ATTRACTIONS WITH CITYPASS



Families in particular benefit from great savings when purchasing a nine-day Houston CityPASS which provides discounted access to **Space Center Houston**, the **Downtown Aquarium**, the **Houston Museum of Natural Science**, and a choice of the **Houston Zoo** or the **Museum of Fine Arts** and of all-day rides at **Kemah Boardwalk** or the **Children's Museum of Houston**. Just a few of the thrills awaiting visitors are a tram ride to the **Space Center Houston** area where the astronauts train and the sight of rare white tigers at the **Downtown Aquarium**...and you can skip the ticket queue at all attractions! For additional information and prices visit [www.citypass.com/houston](http://www.citypass.com/houston).



Major cruise lines offer multiple Caribbean cruises from Galveston



The city has one of America's largest collections of beautiful Victorian-era homes

## GLORIOUS GALVESTON

**Floating in the Gulf of Mexico** less than an hour's drive south of Houston, historic Galveston Island adds sand and sea to the city's appeal. A major port, business and financial centre in the 19th century – when Galveston was known as the 'Wall Street of the South' – it re-emerged from the devastation by America's most-powerful hurricane in 1900 to become a popular seaside resort, one of the country's major collections of Victorian architecture and the fourth-largest cruise port in the USA with regular sailings to Mexico, the Caribbean and Key West, Florida.

Its historic 1940s **Pleasure Pier** - notorious for its colourful clientele in Prohibition days - was rebuilt in 2012 as a more family-friendly attraction boasting amusement arcades, thrill rides and places to eat. There are tours past the flamboyant Victorian mansions, the **Bishop's Palace**, built in 1892 and later the home of the Catholic Bishop of Galveston, and another mansion, recently reopened as the **Bryan Museum**, which houses the world's largest collection of south-western American historic artefacts.

Those interested in Galveston's amazing history as the base for infamous yet charismatic pirate Jean Lafitte and as a valiant survivor of the 1900 hurricane can learn more from the fascinating films shown at the waterfront **Pier 21 Theatre**.

In addition to its miles of wide, sandy beaches, resort hotels and picturesque main street, known as **The Strand**, the seaside city of about 50,000 residents is also home to the **Moody Gardens** entertainment and educational complex and the **Schlitterbahn Galveston Island Waterpark**, boasting one of the world's tallest water coasters.

The attractions of family-friendly Kemah Boardwalk 30 miles south of Houston include thrill rides, restaurants and shops



## GREAT DAY TRIPS

**Houston is a great touring base** for trips to a variety of South Texas cities, friendly small towns and outdoor attractions.

**Alvin** – Explore the Bayou Wildlife Zoo, shop for antiques at the Alvin Antique Center.

**Bay Area Houston** - Between Space Center, Kemah Boardwalk, Armand Bayou Nature Center, and delicious food, Bay Area Houston has something for everyone.

**Baytown** – Become one with nature at Baytown Nature Center, get up close and personal with the wildlife of the area at Eddie V. Gray Wetlands Center.

**Beaumont** – Tour the Spindletop-Gladys City Boomtown Museum on the site of the first (1901) oil

boom, taste authentic Cajun food at Floyd's Cajun Seafood & Steak House.

**Brazosport** – Soak in the sun and sea at Surfside Beach; off-shore fish in Lake Jackson; take the family to the free-admission aquarium, Sea Center Texas.

**Conroe** – Enjoy water activities at Lake Conroe. Golfing and luxury resorts are also available.

**Deer Park** – Called the “Birthplace of Texas” explore nearby San Jacinto Battleground and Monument as well as Battleship Texas.

**Huntsville** – View the larger than life statue of Sam Houston, and, for an off-beat experience tour the Texas Prison Museum.

**Pearland** – Enjoy the German beer, food, and music at King's Beirgarten, taste award winning Texas barbecue at Killen's, and admire the Sri Meenakshi Temple, dedicated to a Hindu goddess.

**Port Arthur** – Admire Janis Joplin's psychedelically painted Porsche at the Museum of the Gulf Coast, and experience beautiful, natural seascapes at Sea Rim State Park.

**Sugar Land** – Watch a Skeeters baseball game, visit a dinosaur at Houston Museum of Natural Science at Sugar Land and take some time out to go shopping.

**Tomball** – Enjoy live music, craft breweries, golf, and an amazing array of ongoing local festivals!

**The Woodlands** – Be charmed by the luxury shopping, fine dining and premier entertainment at the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion.

# GETTING THERE, GETTING AROUND AND MORE



## TRAVEL NOTES

### GETTING THERE:

Houston is a major gateway with more than 6,000 flights a week arriving in its George Bush Intercontinental (IAH) and William P Hobby (HOU) airports. From the airports, there are SuperShuttle, taxi, Uber and rental car services.

### GETTING AROUND:

For \$1.25 one-way the public transportation METRO offers service throughout the city. There's also wheelchair and stroller-friendly METRORail

connecting Downtown with such areas as the Houston Museum District, the Texas Medical Center and NRG Stadium. About 1,230 buses serve the city. The Houston Taxis offering a flat \$6 rate within the Downtown area are available, and if you have a smart phone app it is simple to hail a cab from wherever you are – Houston was the first Texas city to approve ride-sharing services such as Uber.

### OVERNIGHT

#### ACCOMMODATION:

There's a wide selection of accommodation ranging from luxurious hotels equipped with swimming pools and spas to chic boutique establishments and family-friendly hotels and motels.

#### CLIMATE INFORMATION:

Although summer can be hot and humid, Houston has a mild winter climate

averaging 12.7C that is conducive to biking, hiking, golfing and other outdoor activities. Early spring and autumn are an ideal time to visit.

#### FURTHER INFORMATION:

Tap into [www.visithouston.com](http://www.visithouston.com) or contact Houston's European representative office: AP Consulting, [info@apconsulting-houston.com](mailto:info@apconsulting-houston.com)



Space Center Houston  
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