

Discover New Frontiers In Texas

## 'We welcome everybody': a local's guide to Houston, Texas

Famed for its multicultural population, world-class sports teams, Beyoncé and even space exploration, Houston really is an out-of-this-world destination, says local blogger Becky Salgado



📷 Houston's East End Street Fest celebrates the city's Mexican and Chicano community. Photograph: Dan Joyce Photo

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Tue 20 Aug 2024 05.58 EDT

Houston is one of the cultural urban heavyweights of the US, and its influence is felt everywhere. It's the city of Beyoncé and a feverish fanbase for homegrown hip-hop. It's the city of two-time baseball World Series winners the Houston Astros. A city of 2.3 million people, with no majority race or ethnicity, Houston is uniquely representative of Texas's strong diversity, whether you're looking for incredible cuisine, sightseeing adventures you won't find anywhere else, or the arts and music extravaganza that is the East End Street Fest, which celebrates all things Mexican and Chicano.

### Food and drink

Becky Salgado, Houston-based blogger for Becky's Travel List, never runs out of interesting food recommendations to share with friends and visitors to her hometown. "The food scene in Houston is so diverse," she says.

For a good representation of the many different types of cuisine, head to [POST Houston](#), a trendy food court created in a massive old regional post office building, with concert and event spaces found in the same building.



📷 Uptown eats and cowboy beats: Zanti Cucina (left) and live music at Goode Company Armadillo Palace. Photograph: Zanti/Jason Boland

For date night, Salgado says she loves [Zanti Cucina](#) for Italian food in River Oaks, where chefs prepare daily pasta dishes and steak tableside. Another great upmarket date-night spot is [Guard and Grace](#), a steakhouse that weaves in fusion dishes such as spicy fried chicken katsu and umami duck melt.



A classic restaurant that's always been one of Salgado's favourites is Taste of Texas, which opened in 1977. "You get to choose one of the cuts of certified angus beef steaks from their on-site butcher shop, their salad bar is really nice, and they have a lot of Texas history memorabilia," she says.

## Nightlife

For a true Texas-style experience, Salgado advises that visitors head to Goode Company Armadillo Palace, which by day serves lunch and dinner in a casual, family-friendly environment. In the evenings, the atmosphere is fuelled by live music, and people love hanging out in the back yard and on-site dance hall enjoying the tunes.

Karaoke fans will find a lot of fun options in the International District (formerly known as Chinatown) concentrated along Bellaire Boulevard, where karaoke bars line the strip, along with dozens of dim sum, dumpling and noodle shops, and ice-cream and bubble tea restaurants.



📷 Paddlers taking part in the Buffalo Bayou Park Regatta. Photograph: Houston First Corporation/Lance Childers

Houston's Montrose district is another great place for eclectic nightlife, from bars serving craft cocktails to a variety of tattoo shops.

## Outdoors, sports and adventure

Buffalo Bayou Park, a 65-hectare (160-acre) green space in the heart of Houston with a waterway running through it, is beloved by locals and visitors alike. Salgado recommends this area for kayaking and the historical tours, on pontoon boat or by foot, as well as several hike and bike trails.

Houston's largest park, Memorial Park, is also extremely popular among locals, says Salgado. "There are walking trails, food trucks, and just last year, they opened these cool land-bridge tunnels where cars drive through them and people walk on top."

As with other cities in Texas, these spaces allow each city to preserve its green spaces for public use, while routing traffic safely underneath.

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adventure course operated by the local parks department.

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And you can't leave the city without checking out at least one home game, whether it's the Houston Astros at Minute Maid Park or a Houston Rockets basketball game, or one of the minor-league teams such as the Sugar Land Space Cowboys. "Get ready to cheer. Any Texas game that you go to, the fans are very loud, and it's a great atmosphere to be around the fans," says Salgado. "People love their teams and the fans are very supportive no matter what. The stadiums have good food, too."

### **History and heritage**

Among other things, Houston is known as a pivotal city for space exploration, launching the first moon mission in 1969. Visitors can explore the fascinating exhibits and see some of the equipment used during that historic mission at Johnson Space Center.



📷 Johnson Space Center (left); Houston Museum of Natural Science. Photograph: Houston First Corporation/Lance Childers and HMNS/Mike Rathke

Salgado also recommends the lesser-known but incredibly moving and important Holocaust Museum Houston - the fourth largest one in the US. Visitors should also check out the Houston Museum of Natural Science, with an impressive dinosaur hall, Imax theatre, and a planetarium.

### **Music, arts and culture**

Head to the city's Museum District for world-class collections in the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and Contemporary Arts Museum Houston. There is also an impressive number of public art murals, which you can tour on your own or with a guided tour, as well as dozens of private studios and galleries in Arts District Houston.





📷 Street art in Houston's Arts District

Salgado recommends keeping an eye out for cultural events that take place in the city throughout the year. Whether it's Hispanic Heritage Month, Black History Month, or Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, you're likely to find events going on at Discovery Green, an urban park in downtown Houston. At other times of year, watch for arts festivals featuring local vendors in Midtown.

"I feel like we welcome everybody, that's my experience. It doesn't matter where you're from, you're going to be accepted," says Salgado. "I don't really know how to explain it, but it's something that makes Houston very special."

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