Top 20 Things to Do in Kansas City, MO: Museums, Tours, Eats, and More

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### Discover the best things to do in Kansas City, MO, from iconic venues, fun attractions and activities, outdoor recreation, and downtown nightlife.

Located at the confluence of the Kansas and Missouri rivers, Kansas City, MO, offers a unique blend of urban excitement and natural beauty. From the iconic Kansas Speedway to the historic [Strawberry Hill neighborhood](https://www.redfin.com/blog/kansas-city-mo-neighborhoods/), the city is brimming with opportunities to explore and discover. Indulge in the world-renowned barbecue scene, explore the arts district, or take a stroll through the picturesque parks and gardens. With its welcoming atmosphere and endless array of activities, Kansas City, MO, is a must-visit destination for travelers and locals alike.

So whether you're searching for [apartments in Kansas City](https://www.apartmentguide.com/apartments/Missouri/Kansas-City/), [homes for sale](https://www.redfin.com/city/35751/MO/Kansas-City/filter/include=forsale+mlsfsbo+construction), [homes for rent](https://www.rent.com/missouri/kansas-city/apartments_townhouses_condos_houses), or are already a local, this Redfin article will be your guide. Here's a list of the top 20 things to do in Kansas City, including insider tips, for both newcomers and long-time locals alike.

## 1. Check out the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

The [Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art](https://www.nelson-atkins.org/) is a cornerstone of Kansas City’s cultural scene, renowned for its vast and varied collection of over 35,000 works of art. Visitors can journey through time, exploring galleries that span ancient Egyptian artifacts to cutting-edge contemporary art. “My favorite Kansas City recommendation is a day trip to the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art,” recommends [Hallie Sigwing](https://www.halliesigwing.com/), a local documentary wedding photographer in the Kansas City area. “We are so lucky that our city is home to such a prolific art museum, and I can't recommend it enough. Did I mention that admission is free? You can spend the day wandering the various exhibits – including a Monet –  and afterward, have a picnic on the lawn just south of the museum, which even has Wi-Fi. A perfect day, in my opinion.”

Steve Yang, a KC wedding videographer with [Moontage Films](http://www.moontagefilms.com/), seconds visiting this famous museum. "As an 8-year Kansas City resident, I recommend the Nelson-Atkins Museum Of Art, a perfect place for an art journey and outdoor activities!" advises Steve. "Located less than one mile from the Plaza, the Nelson-Atkins Museum is the most popular area for wedding, engagement, and family photos, plus over 40,000 works of art for free to visit!"

**The perfect date night:** The Nelson-Atkins Museum can be a perfect beginning destination on a date night in Kansas City. “If we were to plan a perfect date night it would start with a visit to the Nelson-Atkins museum, the historical pieces provide an incredible visual to the depth and vastness of art,” says Trvan Hiatt of [Hiatt Films](https://www.hiattfilms.com/), a video production studio in Kansas City. “Next we would head to [Jack Stack BBQ](https://www.jackstackbbq.com/freight-house/?srsltid=AfmBOorNGUOMBAMFlfjfo_Pw4qIW-ixpoESCIPqxZi0ryOco3Jak1-zy), for some of the best burnt ends in the city, our favorite location is the Freight House. After dinner, we would head to dessert at [McCormick & Schmick's](https://www.mccormickandschmicks.com/location/mccormick-schmicks-kansas-city-mo/) for coffee and their Chocolate Bag.”

## 2. Ride the streetcar around town

Riding the streetcar around town is a great way to get the lay of the land before diving into other activities around town. “The streetcar is a great way to get around the downtown area,” says Sherrie Ortiz of [Just One Day Travel Tours](https://justonedaytraveltours.com/), a full-service tour company serving the Kansas City area. “There are many things to see along the way: lots of entertainment like First Fridays and the art scene, [Up-Down Arcade Bar](https://updownarcadebar.com/kansas-city/) is one of my favorites, [Tom's Town Distillery](https://www.toms-town.com/), lots of murals, coffee spots, several James Beard awarded restaurants. Currently on the streetcar, you can start at Union Station which has a lot of history and displays to see, and travel all the way to the City Market –  the birthplace of Kansas City.”

**Affordable travel:** Since it opened on May 6, 2016, the streetcar has been free to ride to the public. More stations are on the way to serve more of the Kansas City community.

**3. Visit English Landing Park**

English Landing Park in Missouri is a scenic riverside park located near Kansas City, featuring walking trails, picnic areas, playgrounds, and beautiful views of the Missouri River. “My favorite thing to do in Kansas City is going and walking the Missouri River at English Landing Park!” shares local lifestyle photographer Cristen Stark of [Cristen Stark Photography](https://www.cristenstarkphotography.com/). “There's lots of unique shops to explore and my favorite restaurants. There's even a fun miniature golf course! It’s perfect for date night.”

**Fun fact:** English Landing Park is home to the annual [Parkville Days](https://visitplatte.com/event/parkvillemo-org-event-parkville-days/) festival, featuring live music, art and crafts, food, and other local attractions.

## 4. Catch a Chiefs game

Watching a Kansas City Chiefs game is an electrifying experience, with passionate fans filling Arrowhead Stadium, known for being one of the loudest stadiums in the NFL. “Our favorite thing to do in Kansas City is to go to Chiefs games,” shares the team at Olive Street Boutique. “We are season ticket members to the Chiefs and we absolutely love going to GEHA Field at Arrowhead Stadium to tailgate with friends and watch the Chiefs play football. Definitely our favorite thing to do in KC.”

**Don’t miss:** When attending a Kansas City Chiefs game, it's essential to experience the pre-game tailgating tradition in the Arrowhead Stadium parking lot, where fans gather hours before kickoff to grill, share food, and celebrate with one of the most enthusiastic fan bases in the NFL.

## 5. Stroll through the Kansas City River Market

The [Kansas City River Market](https://kcrivermarket.com/) is a lively historic district featuring a bustling farmers market, eclectic shops, diverse dining options, and vibrant street vendors, all set against the scenic backdrop of the Missouri River. “One of my favorite activities is going to the River Market on a Sunday morning,” says Chris Harrington of [Westside Storey](http://www.westsidestorey.com/), a vintage clothing store in Kansas City. “At the River Market, they have the historic Farmers Market that's been going for over 100 years. There are also pop-ups of local makers with [Art Garden KC](https://www.artgardenkc.org/) and vintage clothing with the [River Market Flea](https://www.instagram.com/rivermarketflea/?hl=en). The vintage clothing selection is phenomenal.”

**Get active:** The Kansas City River Market frequently hosts events like yoga in the park, live concerts, and cultural celebrations – all great opportunities to engage with the local community.

## 6. Enjoy the Rabbit hOle Immersive Museum

[The Rabbit hOle](https://www.rabbitholekc.org/) is a one-of-a-kind museum in Kansas City that brings classic children’s literature to life in an immersive, multi-sensory, and narrative experience. “Each room is themed toward different children’s books,” shares Chandler Hottenstein of [Cinder Block Brewery](https://cinderblockbrewery.com/), a local KC brewery. “My daughter is 3 years old and loves ‘Goodnight Moon’ – we read it every night. The Rabbit hOle has a life-sized replica of the Great Green Room from that book. She thought it was the coolest thing in the world to be ‘in the book!’”

**Must do:** If you’re traveling with kids, Chandler has the perfect day in mind. “At Cinder Block Brewery, we are a kid-friendly brewery with lots of games for kiddos and their parents. Stop by the brew for a beer or slushy then hop down to the Rabbit hOle for a perfect day of family fun.”

## 7. Enjoy the local cuisine

[Kansas City](https://www.redfin.com/living-in/MO/Kansas-City/6/35751), MO, boasts a vibrant food scene known for its world-famous barbecue, diverse range of local restaurants, farm-to-table dining, and innovative chefs who bring a unique twist to classic Midwestern flavors. “If you’re a foodie like us, you’ll love the vibrant restaurant scene Kansas City has to offer,” says the team at [Vitality Lifestyle Medicine](https://www.vlmkc.com/). “We’ve put together dining guides for delicious local offerings, including a guide for common dietary preferences.”

**Don’t miss:** If you’re looking for a premier dining experience, you have to visit [Story](https://www.storykc.com/). Story is a creative American restaurant featuring cuisine from James Beard nominee and Food & Wine magazine’s Best New Chef, Carl Thorne-Thomsen. “At Story, we offer an award-winning wine list, craft cocktails and upscale dining room, intimate bar and patio seating. Come visit for dinner Wednesday through Sunday,” shares Susan Thorne-Thomsen of Story KC.

## 8. Get your heart pumping at Worlds of Fun

[Worlds of Fun](https://www.worldsoffun.com/) in Kansas City is a popular amusement park that offers over 235 acres of thrilling rides, live entertainment, and attractions, making it a must-visit destination for families and thrill-seekers alike. “Worlds of Fun just celebrated their 50th anniversary last year,” says Megan Sahlfeld of [Clay County Missouri](https://www.claycountymo.gov/). “It’s fun for all ages and complete with everything from high-octane thrill rides to a relaxing lazy river.”

**Must do:** You have to check out the iconic Mamba roller coaster and the Oceans of Fun water park at Worlds of Fun.

## 9. Visit the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art

The [Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art](https://www.kemperart.org/) in Kansas City is a dynamic cultural hub that showcases an impressive array of modern and contemporary artworks from emerging and established artists, offering a thought-provoking experience through its rotating exhibitions, interactive programs, and engaging public art installations. “At The Truitt, we’re located steps from the Kemper Art Museum,” says Ryan Hiser of [The Truitt](https://www.thetruitt.com/), a boutique hotel in Kansas City. “One of our favorite little-known secrets is Café Sebastienne at the Kemper Art Museum, serving the best lunch/brunch in town to eat while sitting amongst art in the gallery.”

**Fun fact:** Café Sebastienne has two unique spaces: one with a floor-to-ceiling installation of more than 100 paintings by Frederick James Brown and the other in an enclosed courtyard filled with natural light.

## 10. Stay in one of the many local B&Bs and boutique hotels

Kansas City is home to many unique and welcoming accommodations aside from the route of a more traditional hotel. [The Truitt](https://www.thetruitt.com/) is one example, offering the unique experience of living just a quick stroll away from museums and other attractions in the Historic Country Club Plaza District. Another local accommodation is the [Silver Heart Inn](https://silverheartinn.com/), offering a variety of rooms to stay in. Guests of the Silver Heart Inn say, “Our stay was very peaceful and the hospitality was off the charts. They have a hot tub, a beautiful backyard area, and you can tell they put a lot of work into making it beautiful and peaceful. Charles and Amy were wonderful.”

## Quick tip: Compare rates for your accommodations before visiting Kansas City, because local boutique hotels may prove more affordable than a chain hotel while offering additional curated amenities.

## 11. Explore Downtown Shawnee

Located just a short drive from Kansas City, Downtown Shawnee has a wealth of shops, breweries, and more to explore. “We love hanging out in Downtown Shawnee,” says Christie Jackson of [Transport Brewery Shawnee](https://www.transportbrewery.com/shawnee). “There are three breweries, but our favorite has to be Transport Brewery for our beer, community, and fun atmosphere. Then there is a chocolatier, a deli, two restaurants, an ice cream shop, and some boutiques all within a few steps of each other.”

**Other suggestions:** Christie and the team at Transport Brewery also love to head to downtown Kansas City. “While in downtown Kansas City, go to the [World War 1 Museum](https://www.theworldwar.org/) then go eat at [Browne's Marketplace](https://brownesirishmarket.com/) which is the oldest Irish business in America. They are known for their spectacular Reuben sandwiches and since the building is so old it is a house that has different Irish items you can buy in each of the rooms. Very cool and fun.”

## 12. Visit the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum

The [Negro Leagues Baseball Museum](https://nlbm.com/) offers a compelling look into the history and impact of African American baseball, showcasing the stories and achievements of legendary players and teams. Explore the museum's extensive collection of artifacts, photographs, and interactive exhibits, providing a comprehensive overview of the Negro Leagues' legacy and contributions to the sport. Participate in a guided tour to gain insight into the challenges and triumphs faced by African-American ballplayers, or visit the museum's gift shop to take home a piece of baseball history.

**Photo opt:** Experience the museum's Field of Legends, an outdoor exhibit featuring life-size bronze sculptures of Negro Leagues players, capturing the spirit and athleticism of the era.

## 13. Visit the Kansas City Zoo

The [Kansas City Zoo](https://www.kansascityzoo.org/) is an essential destination for animal lovers, offering an experience across its sprawling 200-acre landscape. Home to over 1,700 animals, the zoo provides a diverse array of exhibits that transport visitors to various parts of the world. The African Plains exhibit is particularly impressive, where majestic giraffes, zebras, and elephants roam in habitats that mimic their natural environments. Meanwhile, the Helzberg Penguin Plaza is pretty fun, showcasing playful penguins in a state-of-the-art facility designed to mimic their frigid natural habitats.

The Australian exhibit offers a hands-on experience where visitors can hand-feed colorful lorikeets, bringing them face-to-face with these vibrant birds. Additionally, the zoo’s iconic train ride offers a scenic tour, providing a comprehensive overview of the zoo’s many attractions and stunning landscapes.

**Don't forget:** Make sure to attend one of the daily animal feedings and keeper chats. These sessions provide a glimpse into the lives of the zoo’s residents and offer educational insights from the keepers who care for them.

## 14. Explore the Country Club Plaza

The [Country Club Plaza](https://countryclubplaza.com/) is Kansas City’s premier shopping and dining district, renowned for its Spanish-inspired architecture and upscale ambiance. Visitors can wander along charming streets adorned with beautiful fountains, intricate statues, and designer boutiques. The Plaza’s array of restaurants offers a global culinary tour, with options ranging from fine dining to casual eateries. The district’s atmosphere is further enhanced by live music performances and seasonal events, making each visit unique. The Plaza’s blend of culture, commerce, and community creates a fun experience that reflects the essence of Kansas City.

**Local insight:** Experience the annual [Plaza Art Fair](https://www.plazaartfair.com/). This event showcases works from local and national artists, transforming the Plaza into a dynamic art gallery and providing an opportunity to engage with the creative community.

## 15. Visit the Kansas City Museum

The [Kansas City Museum](http://kansascitymuseum.org/) journeys through the city's history, culture, and heritage. Housed in the historic 1910 Beaux-Arts style mansion, the museum features a diverse collection of artifacts, photographs, and interactive exhibits that showcase the evolution of Kansas City over the years. Explore the museum's beautifully restored rooms, each offering a glimpse into the city's past, or participate in one of the museum's educational programs and events for a deeper understanding of Kansas City's rich legacy.

**Photo opt:** Don't miss the opportunity to explore the museum's meticulously landscaped grounds, including the scenic Reflecting Pool and iconic Corinthian Hall.

## 16. Experience the Power and Light District

The [Power and Light District](https://www.powerandlightdistrict.com/) is the heartbeat of Kansas City’s entertainment scene, offering an electrifying mix of dining, shopping, and nightlife. This bustling district boasts a wide range of cuisines, from sophisticated steakhouses to laid-back eateries serving up local favorites. [The Kansas City Live!](http://www.powerandlightdistrict.com/eat-and-drink/kc-live) Block is the district’s centerpiece, an open-air venue that hosts live music and events year-round, creating a lively atmosphere for visitors. Whether you’re catching a concert, enjoying a meal, or sipping a craft cocktail at one of the trendy bars and lounges, the Power and Light District promises a memorable experience.

**Must do:** Don’t miss the annual Beer, [Bourbon & BBQ Festival](https://kcbeerfest.com/). This themed event is a celebration of local flavors and brews, offering a unique opportunity to sample some of the best food and drink Kansas City has to offer.

## 17. Visit the Arabia Steamboat Museum

The [Arabia Steamboat Museum](https://www.1856.com/) offers a fascinating glimpse into the history of the American frontier, showcasing the remarkable discovery and excavation of the sunken steamboat Arabia. Explore the museum's extensive collection of artifacts and treasures recovered from the steamboat, including everyday items, clothing, and tools that provide insight into life on the frontier in the 19th century. Take a guided tour to learn about the excavation process and the preservation of Arabia's cargo, or visit the museum's gift shop to take home a unique piece of history.

**Tip:** The museum is open Wednesday to Saturday from 10 AM to 5 PM, Sunday from 12 PM to 5 PM, and Monday to Tuesday from 10 AM to 5 PM. It is recommended to arrive early for parking.

## 18. Explore the West Bottoms Historic District

The [West Bottoms Historic District](https://www.visitkc.com/business-detail/west-bottoms-historic-entertainment-district) offers a unique blend of history, architecture, and vintage shopping, making it a must-visit destination for enthusiasts of all things retro and antique. Explore the district's historic buildings and warehouses, now home to a variety of antique stores, boutiques, and art galleries offering a treasure trove of vintage finds. Get more in touch with Kansas City culture, with live music performances, food trucks, and special events adding to the allure of this hidden gem in Kansas City.

**Don't forget:** Don't miss the opportunity to attend one of the [district's First Friday Weekend events](https://www.visitkc.com/first-weekends), featuring live entertainment and extended shopping hours.

## 19. Experience the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

The [Kauffman Center](https://www.kauffmancenter.org/) for the Performing Arts is a world-class venue that showcases a diverse array of performing arts, from symphony concerts and ballet performances to Broadway shows and contemporary dance. Explore the center's stunning architecture, featuring iconic glass facades and sweeping views of the Kansas City skyline, or attend a performance in one of the center's state-of-the-art theaters for an unforgettable cultural experience.

**Must do:** Take a guided [tour of the Kauffman Center](https://tickets.kauffmancenter.org/overview/4991) to gain insight into the design and acoustics of this architectural masterpiece.

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