



Guests at the Children's Museum's Science Station enjoy hands-on fun

Museum Hopping in Houston

Educational Adventures Close to Katy

Written by Gabrielle Browne

Katy residents may live outside of the Houston city limits, but one of the benefits of being a Katyite is that one is never far from true educational entertainment. A wealth of both individual and family opportunities is only a short drive away in Houston's Museum District. The District's eighteen museums create a powerhouse of education, and the variety of programs and exhibits provides enough to occupy a school holiday, a weekend, or just a daylong excursion. Don't forget the camera, and make sure to visit the gift shops for lasting memories to take back to Katy.



CHILDREN'S MUSEUM OF HOUSTON

1500 Binz St., Houston
713-522-1138
cmhouston.org

If the children in the family range from very young to middle school-aged, The Children's Museum is the perfect destination. This fun place expertly provides a family with hours of educational enjoyment. The youngest of visitors will delight at Tot Spot's bubbles, mirrors, and specially-designed steps and obstacles. Older children will learn about being on TV, explore matter with a special microscope, investigate sources of pollution, practice grocery shopping, and "travel" to Yalalag, a mountain village in Mexico.

Admission is \$5 for children and adults, \$4 for seniors, and Museum Members and children under two are free. Thursday evenings are Free Family Nights from 5 – 8 p.m.

HOUSTON MUSEUM OF NATURAL SCIENCE

One Hermann Circle Dr., Houston
713-639-4629
hmns.org

Only at this museum can Katyites visit the age of the dinosaurs in the morning, fly to outer space by noon, and explore the African Serengeti after lunch. The beautiful crystallized minerals and collection of shells will impress both kids and adults, and it would be a shame to miss Ankh-hap, a real mummy. History comes alive as visitors travel through the Hall of the Americas. See real artifacts from 50 cultures.

Admission for permanent exhibits, college students, children, and seniors is \$7, adults are \$10. Permanent exhibit halls are open for free on Tuesdays from 2 – 8 p.m.



Imaginations run wild as kids invent their own robots at the Children's Museum



Kids can do their own grocery shopping at the Children's Museum

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N Eldridge at Spring Cypress
281-257-5955

17111 West Rd, #105
West Rd at Queenston
281-656-2224

The museums in the district can occupy visitors for days, but there are other fun places to see in this area of Houston, too.

MILLER OUTDOOR THEATRE

100 Concert Dr., Houston
281-373-3386
milleroutdoortheatre.com

Well-known for its summer Shakespeare plays and children's performances, the Miller is also home to dance performances and a wide-range of musical concerts. The two main draws of the Miller Outdoor Theatre are that everything is free and the setting is perfect for a romantic night out or a cultural experience with the family.

HERMANN PARK

713-524-5876
hermannpark.org

When the weather cooperates, it's time to visit Hermann Park. Exercise, explore insects and trees, enjoy the beautiful statues and gardens, fly a kite, have fun on the pedal boats, or just relax under the old trees.

RICE UNIVERSITY

6100 Main St., Houston
713-348-0000
futureowls.rice.edu/futureowls/Campus_Tours.asp
Explore one of the nation's premiere universities. Student-led tours of Rice are offered year-round. Tours are at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m., and they depart from the Office of Admissions, Lovett Hall, Entrance C.

BURKE-BAKER PLANETARIUM

One Hermann Circle Dr., Houston
713-639-4629
hmns.org

A part of the Houston Museum of Natural Science, the planetarium may be accessed separately. In addition to reproducing stars, planets, comets, and other special effects such as flights through space, the planetarium shows movies on a variety of subjects.

IMAX

One Hermann Circle Dr., Houston
713-639-4629
hmns.org

A part of the Houston Museum of Natural Science, visitors can make the IMAX the main part of a trip to the Museum District. How fun would it be to see a movie on a 60 by 80 foot screen?

COCKRELL BUTTERFLY EXHIBIT

One Hermann Circle Dr., Houston
713-639-4629
hmns.org

The Butterfly and Insect Zoo is a part of the Houston Museum of Natural Science, but like the Planetarium and IMAX, tickets are sold separately. See 50-60 species of butterflies and learn about how to begin a butterfly garden at your own home.



The meerkat bubble exhibit is a kid favorite



The Houston Zoo has over 4500 living specimens

“A wealth of both individual and family opportunities is only a short drive away”

A close-up photograph of a person's hands cupping water. The water is splashing and creating a misty effect. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue.

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Relaxation for the Soul

Bella Salon and Day Spa
2004 S. Mason Road, D-1
281-392-7676 • www.bellaspaonline.com

Kids can participate in interactive learning stations at the Children's Museum



This Museum of Fine Arts Houston docent teaches children about art through a story

THE HEALTH MUSEUM

1515 Hermann Dr., Houston
713-521-1515
mhms.org

Visitors will have an eye-opening time exploring this museum, which seeks to be interactive as it teaches the importance of health and wellness. In fact, there's actually a walk-in eyeball to teach how eyes take in information. Tour the rest of the human body at the Amazing Body Pavilion, or see the effects of poor diet and smoking on the body. At You: The Exhibit, visitors can look into the future to see how they will age up to 30 years! See how life in Houston compares with life in other global areas, then take a break in the Sensory Garden filled with plants, flowers, and the sounds of nature.

Admission ranges from \$6 to \$8, Museum Members and children under two are free. Free Family Thursdays lasts from 2 – 7 p.m.

HOUSTON ZOO

6200 Gold Course Dr., Houston
713-533-6500
houstonzoo.org

The zoo is not usually considered to be a museum, but visitors will soon discover that it fits the definition perfectly. One major difference, of course, is the fact that the zoo has over 4,500 living residents! The zoo is perfect for people who might need a day outdoors, like senior citizens, energetic toddlers, and stay-at-home moms. "The Houston Zoo is a great place for new moms. When I first had my son Reza, we would go with another mommy and baby and walk and talk. Reza and Eliana would sleep in the strollers. It was lovely to go and walk and visit the animals. Now that Reza is older he loves to run around the children's zoo and pet the sheep and ride the carousel," says Katy resident Laura Atabala.

Admission is \$6 for children and seniors, \$10 for adults, and

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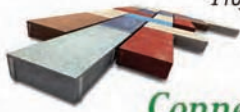
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HCC seeks to provide equal educational opportunities without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

The Houston Museum District SNEAK PEAK

The District is made up of 18 museums, which means there's something for everyone! Visit houstonmuseumdistrict.org for more information on the district as a whole, or visit the museum websites listed below for admission prices and museum operation hours.

Buffalo Soldiers National Museum

713-942-8920
buffalosoldiermuseum.com

Byzantine Fresco Chapel Museum

713-521-3990
menil.org/byzantine.html

Contemporary Arts Museum Houston

713-284-8250
camh.org

Houston Center for Contemporary Crafts

713-529-4848
crafthouston.org

Houston Center for Photography

713-529-4755
hcponline.org

The Jung Center of Houston

713-524-8253
junghouston.org

Lawndale Art Center

713-528-5858
lawndaleartcenter.org

The Menil Collection

713-525-9400
menil.org

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

713-639-7300
mfah.org

Rice University Art Gallery

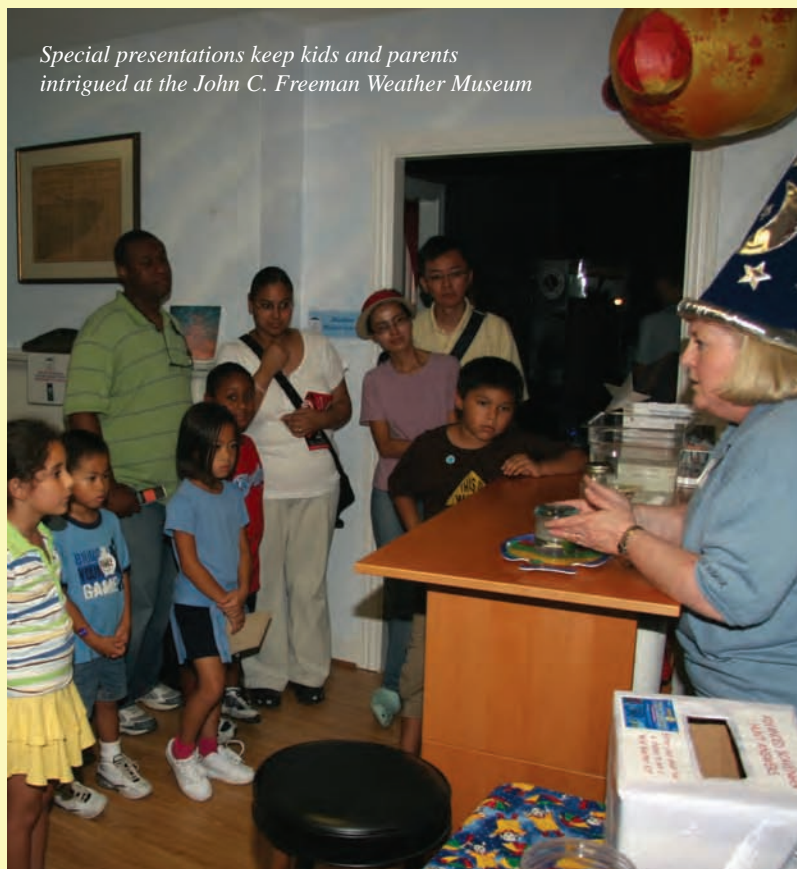
713-348-6069
ricegallery.org

The Rothko Chapel

713-524-9839
rothkochapel.org

For a list of all museums, admission fees, and hours, visit HoustonMuseumDistrict.org.

Special presentations keep kids and parents intrigued at the John C. Freeman Weather Museum



Museum Members and children under two are free. There are also several Free Admission Days throughout the year.

JOHN C. FREEMAN WEATHER MUSEUM

5104 Caroline, Houston
713-529-3076
wxresearch.org

Visitors will leave this museum knowing more about weather than they originally thought possible. Families can view real satellite and radar images and videos of hurricanes, report forecasts in a mock weather studio (available for purchase after), and see a real-life simulation of a tornado. "The interactive information provided at the Weather Museum educated my children on the dangers of hurricanes and global warming. It helped my 13-year-old understand the Doppler Radar, which she used during Hurricane Ike's approach," says Katy mom Anne Dillon.

Admission is \$5 for adults, \$3 for seniors and students. Call ahead for a guided tour, which costs \$8 for adults and \$5 for seniors, students, and teachers.

HOLOCAUST MUSEUM HOUSTON

5401 Caroline, Houston
713-942-8000
hmh.org

The museum, which is both an education center and a memorial, seeks to educate the current generation so that the past will neither be forgotten nor repeated. Even the architecture of the building is designed to draw the visitor into the chilling history. While older children will probably be able to handle the pictures and videos on display, parents may want to choose to wait before bringing the younger ones. Admission is free.
KM

GABRIELLE BROWNE lives in Katy with her husband and toddler son. As a teacher and a mom, she is always looking for exciting outings.