

Jeff and Laurie enjoy a ride at the bike trails of George Bush Park

Wide Open Spaces

Hiking and Biking Near Katy

Many Katy neighborhoods offer hiking and biking trails literally right outside your front door. But, what happens when you've mastered the local residential trails and hunger for something a bit more adventurous, yet don't want to venture far from that front door? Well, you simply head to one of these nearby parks for a few hours of exercise, nature and fun!

Brazos Bend State Park

The hiking and biking trails of Brazos Bend State Park were created to enhance the park's natural setting and abundant wildlife. Covering approximately 5,000 acres with an eastern boundary of 3.2 miles along the Brazos River, the park is an important refuge for birds, with more than 300 species recorded, and is also home to approximately 21 species of reptiles including the American alligator.

The hiking and biking trails are considered relatively easy and appropriate for the entire family. The trails range from ½ mile to up to 4 miles. Maps can be picked up daily from the Visitor Center. The trails meander through lakes and the swampy terrain of the Brazos River. "My kids love to look for alligators while we are pedaling about the park.



The kids have fun and I get to ride for an hour or two,” says Tim Stalker, Katy resident and father of two. Alternatively, sign your family up for one of the several guided hikes offered daily. Be sure to bring plenty of water, insect repellent, and wear loose, layered seasonal clothing. As for those alligators lulling about the lake areas, it is best to observe them from a safe distance!

George Bush Park

George Bush Park is a City Park that serves as a nature reserve for the Buffalo Bayou. Biking is popular year round in this park with many of the trails surrounded by swamps and forests. The bike trails are fairly easy and considered appropriate for the entire family. Owing to the park’s proximity to Buffalo Bayou and its former life as a reservoir, it is best to avoid the bike/hiking trails after heavy rains due to flooding. The trail runs from Highland Knolls at Fry Road through George Bush Park and connecting with



The beautiful trails of Cullen Park seem to be a little cooler on hot days

Terry Hershey Park via a tunnel beneath HWY 6. George Bush Park is open daily from dawn to dusk. On the north and eastern edges of the park there is a nice smooth tarmac path following the old reservoir levee. The top of the levee itself is ride-able for those of you with more rough and ready cycles and runs from the north, going south, then west all the way out to Peek Rd. following the line of the Westpark Tollway. You will need to negotiate a couple of roads on this route however. It also affords quite a good view being a relative high-spot.

Terry Hershey Park

Terry Hershey Park is a popular biking/hiking destination for many living in the greater West Houston area. The trails are located along the Buffalo Bayou from State Highway 6 to the Sam Houston Tollway. The western section of the trail is tamer providing a peaceful ride for all members of the family all the while enjoying nature’s ambience. The paved walkways in the park have small biking trails running parallel to them. These dirt trails give bikers the opportunity to steer away from joggers/hikers. The eastern end of the trails can be the most fun for those with a bit



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Beautiful Hike and Bike Trails at Terry Hershey Park
Terry Hershey also offers dirt mountain bike trails along the bayou and through the trees

However, older kids might especially enjoy the “BMX Bowl” at the far end of the “Anthills” (closer to Wilcrest). “It is great place for practicing dirt jumps,” says Jones. Terry Hershey Park is open from dawn to dusk daily.

On Road Biking

The Katy area has many great on road bike routes for those interested in exploring the countryside. The paths run from Old Katy, to Fulshear, to Brookshire, and back again. Maps of local bikes routes are available for no charge at the Bike Barn. If you are interested in riding with a group, “local bikers meet at 8:00 a.m. every Saturday morning at the Bike Barn for a 20+ mile ride. All levels are welcome,” says Jones. The Bike Barn is located at Mason Road and Kingsland Blvd.

more biking experience. The infamous “Anthills,” a favorite among off-road cyclists, is located mainly on the south bank of the Buffalo Bayou. Danyee Jones, a Bike Mechanic at Bike Barn in Katy, says, “The trail is a single track mountain bike path” mainly hidden from pedestrian view and runs very near the bayou within thick forested areas. This trail might not be the best choice for younger children though.

No matter your skill level, if you prefer off-road or paved road, a family ride or endurance, you only need to look just BEYOND your front door to find the right bike trek for you. **KM**

STEPHANIE K. RICE Is a Katy mom of four year old twins and wife to an avid cyclist. She is the Assistant Editor of Katy Magazine.

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