

Kansas City Sights

Barbecue, jazz and cattle have helped shape this Midwestern city, which plays host to the 2004 NJAS July 12-17.

by *Kindra Gordon*



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Located in the “heart of America” at the junction of the Kansas and Missouri Rivers, Kansas City’s central location made it a historic gathering point for pioneers heading west. Later, when the railroad was established, the Kansas City Stockyards helped the city grow as it became a hub where western ranchers and eastern buyers met to trade cattle.

In July Kansas City, Mo., will again be the gathering place for cattle enthusiasts when Missouri juniors host the 2004 National Junior Angus Show (NJAS).

While Angus activities will keep participants busy, one can’t help but visit this city without taking in some of its sights, sounds and saucy barbecue. You’ll find all that and more at the Plaza, an outdoor shopping center with Spanish architecture and flowing fountains. Designed in 1922, it was actually the nation’s first suburban shopping district. Stroll through the streets or take a horse-drawn carriage to tour this 12-block area and enjoy more than 180 exclusive shops and eclectic restaurants. One can also view the Plaza from afar with boat rides along a nearby canal.

The many ornate fountains found in the Plaza and throughout the city, are said to number more than any other city in the world except Rome, earning Kansas City the title of “City of Fountains.” Many started as simple drinking troughs for livestock in the late 1800s and have become sculpted pieces of art through the years.

Other popular shopping and restaurant areas include the City Market, located near downtown along the riverbank. It includes a bustling farmers’ market and the Arabia Steamboat Museum, which showcases recovered treasures from the 200-ton steamboat that sank in 1856. The 18th and Vine Historic District was home to jazz clubs and gambling joints in the 1920s and 1930s. Jazz musicians flocked to the city during that time, because while the rest of the nation was suffering through prohibition, Kansas City turned a blind eye toward the bars and clubs that sold alcohol. Today, it still features an active jazz scene,

which is documented in the nearby American Jazz Museum.

Hallmarks of the city

Kansas City’s claims to fame include its being the birthplace of Walt Disney, and the place where Teflon™, the Crock-Pot™, and the McDonald’s Happy Meal® were invented. The city is also home to Russell Stover Candies Inc., Farmland Industries and Hallmark Cards Inc.

The Crown Center complex houses the international headquarters for Hallmark, but it’s also an urban entertainment center that contains shops, restaurants, a movie theater, two live theaters and two hotels. It’s worth a visit any time of year. Highlights include the Crayola Café and Store and free card-making sessions where children can explore and create using scrap material from Hallmark’s manufacturing processes.

Across the street from Crown Center is another adventure land — Union Station. Built in 1914, it is the second-largest train station in the nation, after New York City’s Grand Central Terminal. With its 95-foot ceiling in the Grand Hall, three 3,500-pound chandeliers and a 6-foot-wide clock hanging in the Station’s central arch, this is a

KC BBQ
 Since the early 1900s, Kansas City, Mo., has been known for its barbecue. The secret to Kansas City barbecue can be summed up in two words: “low” and “slow.” Kansas City barbecue is always slow-smoked at a low temperature over wood — usually hickory. Another interesting fact: The actual barbecue sauce is never applied to the meat until it is ready to serve.

must-see attraction. Today, it houses an assortment of unique shops, movie theaters, restaurants and Science City interpretive center, where kids can search for fossils at a dig site, solve a mystery in the crime lab and track a tornado — for starters.

If you are still looking for something to do, there’s the Kansas City Zoo, which includes an elephant sanctuary and the Sprint IMAX® Theatre; the Kansas Speedway, which hosts NASCAR races year-round; four riverboat casinos north of downtown; or Powell Gardens, a peaceful, 900-acre botanical garden.

For more information about Kansas City, go to www.visitkc.com or call 1-800-767-7700.



Stops along the way

As you trek to Kansas City, Mo., for Angus events, consider a rest stop in one of the neighboring communities.

- ▶ **North** — Just 45 minutes north of Kansas City is Saint Joseph, Mo., which was the birthplace of the Pony Express and is home to the American Angus Association. Other towns to Kansas City’s north include Jamesport, which boasts the largest Missouri Amish community, and Weston, where more than 100 pre-Civil War buildings are on the National Register of Historic Places.
- ▶ **East** — Retrace the steps of our 33rd President, Harry S. Truman, in his hometown of Independence, Mo. The Truman Home and Presidential Museum and Library are a sample of the historic sites offered.
- ▶ **West** — Coming through Kansas? Atchison is the birthplace of Amelia Earhart; Lawrence has established itself as a unique arts community; and although Leavenworth is known for the U.S. Federal Penitentiary, visits to historic Fort Leavenworth and the Buffalo Soldier Monument are worthwhile. Bonner Springs pays tribute to agriculture with its Museum of Farming and Farm Town USA, a replica of a 1900s rural village.
- ▶ **Outskirts** — Amidst the sprawling suburbs of Kansas City, you’ll find the Mahaffie Stagecoach Stop and Farm at Olathe, Kan. It’s the only remaining stage stop of the Santa Fe Trail. Worlds of Fun and Oceans of Fun are side-by-side amusement parks offering 200 acres of rides, shows and entertainment.