

# Tulsa Time

Oklahoma's second-largest city is a great destination for education and recreation.

by Kindra Gordon

**T**he American Dream” is the theme of this year’s National Junior Angus Show (NJAS), set for July 1-7 in Tulsa, Okla. And it’s a theme that is fitting for this city, whose history was shaped by many in search of the American dream.

Tulsa is a true melting pot that includes Indian and African-American cultures, the Old West and oil. Tulsee Town, as it was first called, was established in 1836 by the Lochapoka Creek Indians who had been forced out of the southeastern U.S. They followed what’s called the “Trail of Tears” until they arrived here and dreamed it would be a better place.

African-Americans soon came to Tulsa as well to start new lives, since Oklahoma was one of the first places where they had a fair shot at the American dream. Land runs and freedmen allotments offered blacks the opportunity to quickly become landowners, farmers and businessmen.

Early settlers also discovered that Tulsa sat in some of the best cow country in the land. Ranching is still a viable industry in the region today. Just north of Tulsa is the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve, where the buffalo still roam.

By the early 1900s, the discovery of oil, and the dreams of those

who came in search of it, fueled Tulsa. Oil brought the wealth that merged Tulsa’s cow town image with cosmopolitan tastes — and it’s what makes Tulsa unique today.

## Tributes to the past

Many of Tulsa’s sites and museums honor the city’s rich cultural past. Tulsa’s Gilcrease Museum ([www.gilcrease.org](http://www.gilcrease.org)) is one of the country’s best facilities for the preservation and study of American art and history. It houses the world’s most comprehensive collection of art of the American West, including an unparalleled collection of Native American art and artifacts. In addition to the Gilcrease exhibits are its beautiful themed gardens on 23 acres surrounding the grounds.

A few miles west of Tulsa in the town of Claremore is a memorial to Oklahoma’s favorite son, Will Rogers. The museum showcases Rogers’ personal belongings and a movie theater where you can watch “The Ropin’ Fool” and other classic movies starring the beloved cowboy humorist.

An hour north of Tulsa at Bartlesville is where oil was first discovered. At Johnstone Park visitors can see a replica of the Nellie

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## Tulsa treasures

Around the city there are some time-honored sites unique to Tulsa. They include:

- ▶ **The Creek Council Oak Tree** (18th St. and Cheyenne Ave.) — Dating back to 1836, this tree is the site of Tulsa’s birthplace. It was here the Lochapoka Creek Indians gathered to start a new life, as they kindled a ceremonial fire using live coals they had carried from their Alabama homeland over the “Trail of Tears.” The revered tree still lives today.
- ▶ **The Golden Driller** (21st St. and Pittsburg Ave.) — Built in 1966 for the International Petroleum Exposition, this 76-foot (ft.)-tall symbol of an oilfield worker pays tribute to Tulsa’s oil history. It is one of the world’s largest free-standing statues.
- ▶ **Cain’s Ballroom** (423 North Main) — This has been a popular nightclub in Tulsa since the 1920s, especially for country western aficionados. Often referred to as the Carnegie Hall of country western music, it was here that Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys unveiled their western swing music and played such hits as “San Antonio Rose” and “Take Me Back to Tulsa.” Other musical legends who performed at Cain’s include Hank Williams, Ernest Tubb, Tennessee Ernie Ford and Patsy Cline.
- ▶ **Route 66** (11th St., from east Tulsa through downtown to west Tulsa, and on to Sapulpa) — The historic highway to the West passed through Tulsa. Many one-of-a-kind sites can still be found along Route 66 in the Tulsa area, from Lyon’s Indian Store to the Bama Pie Co.
- ▶ **Woodward Park & Tulsa Garden Center** (21st St. to 24th St. & S. Peoria Ave.) — You can stop and smell the roses as you stroll through more than 9,000 rose bushes in the All-American Rose Society Test Garden between Woodward Park and the Tulsa Garden Center. Covering 40 acres in the heart of Tulsa, the park also boasts azaleas, tulips and a Victorian conservatory.

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Johnstone No. 1 — Oklahoma's first commercial oil well, drilled in 1897.

Just outside of Bartlesville is the Woolaroc Museum and Wildlife Preserve, a 4,000-acre ranch established in 1925 by oilman Frank Phillips as his private retreat. Today it is part Western art museum, part wildlife preserve and part nature trail. The museum houses 10,000 works of Native American and Western art and artifacts.

While at Bartlesville, also look for Price Tower. Known as Oklahoma's "Prairie Skyscraper," this is the only skyscraper designed by famed architect Frank Lloyd Wright as an apartment and office community. The tall, slim structure was said to have been inspired by a tree.

For a true Western taste of Oklahoma, visit Discoveryland ([www.discoverylandusa.com](http://www.discoverylandusa.com)). Here, cowboys race on stage astride real ponies as Rodgers' and Hammerstein's classic musical *Oklahoma!* is performed in the outdoor amphitheater. The musical *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* is also performed during the summer. Before the shows, you can chow down at the cattleman's ranch dinner, ride a pony, watch Native American dancing, or shop the Indian trading post for art, beadwork, crafts and jewelry.

### Cool for kids

Tulsa also offers some great kid-friendly destinations. The Oklahoma Aquarium ([www.okaquarium.org](http://www.okaquarium.org)) features 200 exhibits of ocean creatures and more than 1 million gallons of water.

At the Tulsa Zoo and Living Museum

([www.tulsazoo.org](http://www.tulsazoo.org)), visitors can trek through rain forests and the frozen tundra that is home to penguins. Located on 78 acres within Tulsa's Mohawk Park, the zoo displays nearly 1,500 animals, many of them rare and endangered. A favorite stop is the Chimpanzee Connection, which allows up-close encounters.

For something unique, the Tulsa Air and Space Museum ([www.tulsaairandspacemuseum.com](http://www.tulsaairandspacemuseum.com)) not only features a varied display of aircraft, but also offers the Electric Sky Theater/Planetarium. The multimedia display creates a three-dimensional journey through space, showcasing a multitude of stars, planets, asteroids and galaxies.

Bell's Amusement Park and the Big Splash Water Park are two of Tulsa's favorite spots among kids. Both offer loads of fun for thrill seekers.

And, what summer day wouldn't be complete without a big scoop of ice cream? At Blue Bell Creameries ([www.bluebell.com](http://www.bluebell.com)) you can take a tour and see how the ice cream is made and then top it off with what they claim is the "Best Ice Cream In The Country."

For more great food — and shopping — country folks will feel right at home at The Farm Shopping Center (51st St. and S. Sheridan Rd.). In the heart of Tulsa, this center features a restored rustic barn and boardwalk-style walks between the shops and restaurants.

For more details about Tulsa, visit [www.visittulsa.com](http://www.visittulsa.com).



## Serving up the brand

Certified Angus Beef LLC's web site ([www.certifiedangusbeef.com](http://www.certifiedangusbeef.com)) features a quick way to locate restaurants and retail stores selling the brand within a given location. A quick search of where to buy *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) in Tulsa, Okla., yielded the following results:

### Restaurants:

- ▶ 5 & Diner, Peoria 3641 S. Memorial Dr.
- ▶ Chili's Grill & Bar, 3302 E. 51st St.; 918-742-9795
- ▶ Chili's Grill & Bar, 9009 E. 71st St.; 918-252-2207
- ▶ El Chico Café, 9825 E. 21st St.; 918-663-7755
- ▶ El Chico Café, 2255 E. 51st St.; 918-742-9922
- ▶ El Chico Café, 9705 E. 71st St.; 918-252-9442
- ▶ El Chico Café, 4107 S. Yale Ave.; 918-665-6519

- ▶ Spaghetti Warehouse, 22 E. Brady St.; 918-587-4440
- ▶ Tulsa Country Club, 701 N. Union Ave.; 918-585-8151

### Grocery stores:

- ▶ Reasor's No. 13, 11005 E. 41st St.; 918-610-0610
- ▶ Reasor's No. 15, 4909 E. 41st St.; 918-270-2100
- ▶ Reasor's No. 16, 1885 S. Yale Ave.; 918-293-2244
- ▶ Reasor's No. 7, 7114 S. Sheridan Rd.; 918-493-7442