

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

# Museum Hopping in Houston

## *Educational Adventures Close to Sugar Land*

*Written by Gabrielle Browne*

**S**ugar Land residents may live outside of the Houston city limits, but one of the benefits of living here is that you're 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 Sugar Land.



## 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 \$7 for children and adults, \$6 for seniors, and Museum Members and children under one are free. Thursday evenings are Free Family Nights from 5 to 8 p.m.

## HOUSTON MUSEUM OF NATURAL SCIENCE

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

Only at this museum can you 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.

**Don't forget to tell them  
Sugar Land Magazine  
sent you!**

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



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



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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](http://milleroutdoortheatre.com)

Well-known for its summer Shakespeare plays and children's performances, the Miller Outdoor Theatre 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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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 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 is \$7 for adults and children 1 and up, \$6 for seniors, and free for Museum Members. Thursdays are Free Family Nights from 5 to 8 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 Laura Atabala.

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



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



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## The Houston Museum District **SNEAK PEAK**

The District is made up of 18 museums, which means there's something for everyone! Visit [houstonmuseumdistrict.org](http://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](http://buffalosoldiermuseum.com)

### **Byzantine Fresco Chapel Museum**

713-521-3990  
[menil.org/byzantine.html](http://menil.org/byzantine.html)

### **Contemporary Arts Museum Houston**

713-284-8250  
[camh.org](http://camh.org)

### **Houston Center for Contemporary Crafts**

713-529-4848  
[crafthouston.org](http://crafthouston.org)

### **Houston Center for Photography**

713-529-4755  
[hcponline.org](http://hcponline.org)

### **The Jung Center of Houston**

713-524-8253  
[junghouston.org](http://junghouston.org)

### **Lawndale Art Center**

713-528-5858  
[lawndaleartcenter.org](http://lawndaleartcenter.org)

### **The Menil Collection**

713-525-9400  
[menil.org](http://menil.org)

### **Museum of Fine Arts, Houston**

713-639-7300  
[mfah.org](http://mfah.org)

### **Rice University Art Gallery**

713-348-6069  
[ricegallery.org](http://ricegallery.org)

### **The Rothko Chapel**

713-524-9839  
[rothkochapel.org](http://rothkochapel.org)

For a list of all museums, admission fees, and hours, visit [HoustonMuseumDistrict.org](http://HoustonMuseumDistrict.org).

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](http://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 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](http://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. **SLM**

*GABRIELLE BROWNE is a teacher and a mom who is always looking for exciting outings.*

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



The meerkat bubble exhibit is a kid favorite at the zoo



The Houston Zoo has over 4,500 living specimens



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



“The Museum district has something for children and adults of all ages.”