

# URBAN LIVING



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# Outdoor Recreation

Houston offers exciting outdoor-recreational opportunities year-round.

- Outdoor activities abound in Houston as a result of the city's favorable location and climate. Rainfall totals about 46 inches per year, ensuring lush lawns, large trees and a profusion of flowers. Weather seldom restricts outdoors activities: Houston averages less than one measurable snowfall every four years.
- More than a dozen state parks and recreation areas lie within a short drive of the Houston area, and more than 500 city and county parks and open spaces are located in the immediate area. Harris County and City of Houston parks alone total some 43,700 land acres and 12,200 water acres. The Houston area offers well over 150 public and private golf courses, plus nearly countless tennis courts, basketball courts, playing fields, and hike-and-bike trails. Just south of Houston is the Gulf of Mexico, and surrounding the city are numerous lakes, rivers, streams and bayous.
- Texas offers a wide variety of hunting and fishing and is a leading state in this form of recreation. The array of wildlife found in Texas allows hunters to take deer, turkey, javelina, antelope, aoudad sheep and all small game and migratory game birds. Duck, goose and dove hunting are extremely popular. Other small game includes quail, squirrel, pheasant and waterfowl.
- An estimated 3 million Texas fishermen spend more than 9 million days fishing each year on the 1.5 million acres of lakes and 80,000 miles of rivers, streams and bayous of Texas. They fish for sport and for food, avidly seeking such long-time favorites as large-mouth bass, crappie, sunfish, white bass and various species of catfish. The Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife has successfully introduced walleye, striped bass, small-mouth bass and hybrid stripers into some larger man-made lakes.
- Sport fishing offshore in the Gulf of Mexico and in the inshore waters of the Texas coast has long been a favorite recreational pursuit of both Texans and visitors. Catches include tarpon, kingfish, red snapper, wahoo, ling, bonito and yellow-finned tuna. Eighty miles offshore from Galveston is some of the country's best bill fishing, with catches of blue and white marlin and sailfish.
- The Clear Lake area is considered to be the nation's third coast for boating, with one of the greatest concentrations of sailboats, yachts and pleasure craft in the United States.

# Parks & Play Spaces

Houston offers fitness enthusiasts a wide variety of training and exercise options.

City/County Facilities	Number
City of Houston Parks	293
Other Municipalities' Parks	95
Harris County Parks	119
<b>Total Parks</b>	<b>507</b>
Swimming Pools	
City of Houston Swimming Pools	43
Other Municipalities' Swimming Pools	11
<b>Total Public Pools</b>	<b>54</b>
Hike and Bike	
City of Houston Hike and Bike Trails	80.0 miles
County Hike and Bike Trails	60.4 miles
<b>Total Hike and Bike Trails</b>	<b>140.4 miles</b>
Misc.	
Public Golf Courses	7
Neighborhood Tennis Courts	156
Sports Fields	423
Basketball Courts	164
Playgrounds	251
Private Golf Courses	125+
Health clubs, exercise and fitness salons, gymnasiums, physical fitness centers	175+

Source: Houston Facts 2002

# Sports

Sports fans cheer for a variety of professional, semi-pro, and collegiate sports teams.

- Professional football returned to Houston in 2002 when the Houston Texans, the National Football League's 32nd and final franchise, took the field. The team's home is the new 69,500-seat Reliant Stadium, the world's first retractable roof NFL stadium.
- Other professional teams in Houston include the Houston Astros of Major League Baseball's National League. Home games are played in Minute Maid Field, which opened March 2000. The retractable-roof stadium seats 42,000.
- The two-time world champion Houston Rockets of the National Basketball Association bring basketball to the Compaq Center, a Houston sports arena and entertainment center seating 16,285 people. On November 8 2000, Houston voters overwhelmingly approved construction of a \$175-million basketball/hockey arena in downtown Houston. The Houston Rockets should begin the 2003/2004 NBA season in that new facility.
- The four-time world champion Houston Comets of the Womens National Basketball Association play to sell-out crowds in the Compaq Center, as do the Houston Aeros, 1998-99 Turner Cup Champions of the International Hockey League. The Comets and Aeros will also play in the new downtown arena.
- Houston's collegiate teams—Houston Baptist University, Rice University, Texas Southern University and University of Houston—round out the sports calender, competing in most major sports.

# Sports City

Welcome, sports fans. For those who like to be where the action is, Houston is the place. The city that built the Astrodome, once held as the "Eighth Wonder of the World," is again making history. Houston is the first city in the nation to offer three high-tech sports arenas to support every sport fan's passion.

Professional Sports Teams
Houston Aeros
International Hockey League, 1999 IHL Turner Cup Winners
Compaq Center (713-627-3865)
Houston Astros
National Baseball League division champions (1997-1999)
Reliant Astrodome (713-259-8000)
Houston Comets
Four-time Women's National Basketball Association champions (1997-2000)
Compaq Center (713-627-3865)
Houston Energy
Women's Professional Football League
Dyer Stadium (713-683-0129)
Houston Hotshots
World Indoor Soccer League, 1996-1997 finalists
Reliant Arena (713-468-5100)
Houston Rockets
Two-time National Basketball Association champions (1994-1995)
Compaq Center (713-627-3865)
Houston Texans,
National Football League
Reliant Stadium (713-336-7700)

Houston ThunderBears

Arena Football League

Compaq Center (713-627-3865)

College Sports

Houston Baptist University Huskies

(281-649-3342)

Rice University Owls

(713-348-4068)

San Jacinto College Gators

(281-459-7107)

Texas Southern University Tigers

(713-313-7270)

University of Houston Cougars

(713-743-9444)