

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 50 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.
- The Houston MSA has the largest county park in the U.S. –George Bush Park; the region also contains the third-largest municipal park in the U.S. –Cullen Park. Hermann Park, near Houston's city center, is among the top dozen most visited parks in the U.S. according to the Trust for Public Land's (TPL) 2014 Report. The City of Houston contains 52,154 acres of parks, according to TPL. Parks represent 14.1 percent of the cities land area –well above the median of 7.1 percent for cities of similar density.
- Houston Parks and Recreation Department manages the City's 366 developed municipal parks and more than 200 greenspaces. Additionally, Harris County maintains 179 parks totaling 25,126 acres and 45 trails totaling 228.8 miles. In November 2012, Houston voters overwhelmingly approved a major bond referendum providing \$166 million in parks funding, \$100 million of which is dedicated to Bayou Greenways 2020. This project will significantly expand and enhance Houston's parks system, creating a continuous system within the city limits of 150 miles of parks and trails along Houston's 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 three million Texas fishermen spend more than nine million days fishing each year on 1.7 million acres of lakes and 80,000 miles of rivers, streams and bayous in 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.
- The City of Houston Bikeway Program is a 345-mile bikeway network spanning across the city and providing access to 500 square miles throughout Houston. City parks offer 80 more miles of hike and bike and nature trails.
- Bird-watching is popular in Houston. Houston is the Central Flyway, a route for birds migrating to and from Canada, and at the edge of the Mississippi Flyway. Hawks and hummingbirds are the stars of fall migration, although chimney swifts and several kinds of swallows also pass through in large numbers. The Houston Audubon Society has recorded more than 400 species of birds in the Houston region and counting. Seventeen bird sanctuaries have been designated in the Houston region