

## Downtown Dallas: A Cultural Mecca for Visitors and Locals Alike

### DOWNTOWN DALLAS' BEST ATTRACTIONS



Photo courtesy of Dillon Diers

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They say that everything is bigger and better in Texas and that couldn't be more true than in Downtown Dallas, where you can find some of the biggest and best attractions in the country.

First up is the Dallas Arts District—spanning 68 acres on the northern edge of Downtown Dallas. Here, you'll find the Dallas Museum of Art, one of the nation's top art museums, the Nasher Sculpture Center, home to one of the world's finest contemporary sculpture collections, and the AT&T Performing Arts Center, one of the largest performance complexes outside of New York's Lincoln Center. Also located in the district is the Crow Collection of Asian Art, featuring one of the most exquisite jade collections in the United States.

Situated across from the district is the award-winning Klyde Warren Park, a 5-acre oasis perched atop a sunken freeway.

At the opposite end of the park is the Perot Museum of Nature and Science, an architectural gem featuring five floors of mind-blowing exhibit halls.

In the Historic West End, you'll find the Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza chronicling the assassination and legacy of President John F. Kennedy. Across the street is the Old Red Museum offering a glimpse into Dallas' past and present. History also comes to life in a fun way at Dallas Heritage Village.

A visit to Dallas isn't complete without a trip up to Reunion Tower's GeO-Deck for a birds-eye view of the skyline that USA Today 10Best named the best in the world.

### **10 Dallas Heritage Village at Old City Park**

This living history village, located in one of the city's oldest parks on the southeastern edge of downtown-- allows visitors to experience what life was like in North Texas during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The village is comprised of thirty-eight restored and fully furnished buildings, some of which include-- a log cabin, a Greek Revival style mansion, a school house, a shotgun house and a farmstead. Kids will especially like the general store where they can weigh products, wrap up merchandise and sit around an old stove playing a game of checkers. Adding to the atmosphere are costumed docents, live farm animals and a host of recurring events, ranging from mock gunfights to historical reenactments. (214-421-5141, 214-428-5448)

### **9 Old Red Museum**

While much of downtown Dallas is geared toward the present, the Old Red Museum gives visitors an insight into Dallas' past-- dating back to the city's first settlement in 1841 through to present day. The museum takes up the second floor of a magnificent Romanesque style building that served as the county's courthouse from 1892 until 1966. Here, visitors can tour four galleries filled with over 1,000 artifacts, ranging from a Civil War-era dragoon pistol and a World War I-era gas mask to handcuffs worn by Lee Harvey Oswald and J.R. Ewing's famous Stetson hat. There is also a special hands-on children's area where kids can check out historical toys, play games in touch-screen kiosks and try on reproduction period clothing. (214-745-1100, 214-886-1644)

### **8 Crow Collection of Asian Art**

This stunning museum in Dallas' Arts District contains a carefully curated collection of over 600 master works hailing from Japan, China, India and Southeast Asia. Most of the pieces come from the private collection of local real estate developer Trammel Crow and his wife Margaret. Here, visitors can explore a series of galleries showcasing art objects, paintings, scrolls and large architectural pieces, some of which dates back to the 10th century. The

museum also hosts special exhibitions featuring art from renowned collectors, other museums and private institutions throughout the world. Highlights include one of the most exquisite jade collections in the U.S. and a suit of Samurai armor from the Edo period, one of the museum's most valued acquisitions to date. Additional works by artists Liu Yonggang, Wang Shugang and Qin Feng can be found in the museum's gorgeous sculpture garden. Best of all, admission to the museum is free. (214-979-6430)

### **7 Nasher Sculpture Center**

Located next to the Dallas Museum of Art, this outstanding 55,000-square-foot facility, designed by renowned architect Renzo Piano, showcases the private sculpture collection of real estate developer Raymond Nasher and his wife Nancy. The collection is considered to be one of the most extraordinary assemblages of modern and contemporary sculptures in the world, with more than 300 significant works of art from masters such as Rodin, Brancusi, Matisse, Picasso, Koons, Calder and Miró. In addition to the treasures to behold inside the center, visitors will find around twenty-five more sculptures scattered around a lush 1.4-acre garden that surrounds the complex. The center also offers a variety of year-round programs, including hands-on art classes, lectures, live music and film screenings. (214-242-5100, 214-242-5118)

### **6 Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza**

Whether you're a history buff or a conspiracy theorist, you'll find the Sixth Floor Museum an interesting source of information about the assassination and legacy of President John F. Kennedy. The museum's exhibits contain over 45,000 items documenting Kennedy's presidency through to his final days. One of the highlights of the tour is the Plexiglas enclosed area where Lee Harvey Oswald is believed to have fired the fateful shot. But there's much more to see here, including a host of powerful images, documents, artifacts, video footage and home movies. After visiting the museum, be sure to go down to the grassy knoll to gain more perspective about what transpired that tragic day. (214-747-6660, 888-485-4854)

### **5 Dallas Museum of Art**

The sprawling 370,000-square-foot Dallas Museum of Art, designed by New York architect Edward Larrabee Barnes, offers one of the largest and most impressive art collections in the nation. Its permanent holdings, dating back from the third millennium BC to the present day--encompass over 23,000 works of paintings, sculptures, jewelry and artifacts from all over the world. Here, you'll find masterpieces from heavy hitters such as Pollock, Rothko, Monet, Rodin and Picasso to name a few. Especially interesting is Wendy and Emory Reeves' collection of over 1,400 objects (jewelry, furniture and paintings by impressionist, post-impressionist, and early modernist masters), on display in a 15,000-square-foot replica of their villa on the French Riviera. The museum also hosts regular exhibitions and a diverse array of programming. Beyond the galleries, the museum houses a children's creative zone, a sculpture garden and a cafe featuring a window of Dale Chihuly's glass flowers. (214-922-1200, 214-922-1803)

#### **4 Reunion Tower**

When you think of Dallas, the first image that comes to mind is Reunion Tower-- which has graced the city's skyline with its flickering orb since 1978. The tower is not only the city's most iconic landmark, it's also one of the most visited, especially since the new observation deck opened in late 2013. Unless you're coming to eat or drink in Wolfgang Puck's famed Five Sixty restaurant, located at the top (560 feet up), the only way up is by purchasing a ticket for the GeO-Deck, a viewing platform situated at 470 feet, offering 360-degree views across the city and beyond. The attraction is comprised of an outside deck equipped with high-powered telescopes and an indoor area filled with informative touch screens and high-definition zoom cameras allowing guests to get up close and personal with the city. (214-571-5744)

#### **3 Perot Museum of Nature and Science**

Whether you're a science buff or just have a curious mind, the world-class Perot Museum offers a treasure trove of goodies that are certain to fascinate visitors of any age. Opened in 2012, this stunning 180,000-square-foot architectural gem, designed by Pritzker Architecture Prize Laureate Thom Mayne and his firm, Morphosis-- features five floors of mind-blowing exhibit halls filled with hands-on activities, interactive kiosks and a state-of-the-art multimedia cinema. Highlights include a children's museum with a dinosaur dig, a hall of gems and minerals with a 5-foot geode and an earth hall where you can experience an earthquake. Not to be missed is the Texas Instruments Engineering and Innovation Hall where explorers can build robots and create their own digital music. A good way to start is to take the external glass escalator up to the top and work your way down while enjoying the panoramic views of downtown Dallas. ((214) 428-5555)

#### **2 AT&T Performing Arts Center**

Billed as the largest performance center outside of New York's Lincoln Center, this 10-acre complex features a stunning opera house, an intimate theatre, an open-air performance space and a park that serves as a setting for picnics and a variety of outdoor activities. Along with its stunning architectural facades, the center's venues host a variety of world-class productions, ranging from Broadway hits to ballet, dance, opera, theatre and musical performances. In addition to ticketed events, you can find a wide range of free things going on here as well. The year-round programming includes everything from weekly yoga and zumba classes to concerts and outdoor film screenings. ((214) 880-0202)

#### **1 Klyde Warren Park**

Perched atop a sunken freeway, this nationally acclaimed 5-acre oasis is just one of the examples of what makes Dallas' downtown area so dynamic. The park was opened in 2012 for the purpose of encouraging more pedestrian foot traffic to the area as well as to be a central gathering place for locals and visitors to enjoy. Today, the resplendent space is abound with year round programming, ranging from fitness sessions, dance lessons and lawn games to children's entertainment, musical performances and film screenings. There are also special areas within the park allocated for kids, for dogs and for playing board games. In case you work up an appetite after all of the activities, you can tempt your taste buds at the park's

chic gastro-pub, Savor, it's companion kiosk, Relish-- or from a variety of food trucks stationed along the side. (214.716.4500)