

H O M E T O W N S • A C R O S S • A M E R I C A

# Going to Kansas City

It may be a big city, but this energetic, fun-to-visit Midwestern hub holds tight to its small-town charms



For 10 years, Missouri-born sisters Casey and Sloane Simmons have stocked their colorful shop, Stuff, with out-of-the-ordinary gift items, jewelry, crafts, and fine art by hundreds of local, regional, and national artists. SEE SHOPPING GUIDE FOR DETAILS.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BROOKE SLEZAK    PRODUCED & WRITTEN BY MONICA MICHAEL WILLIS

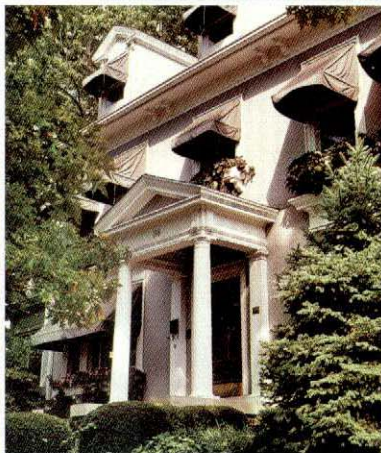
( OPEN FLAP ► )

# It's Official.

After visiting Kansas City, Mo., we're convinced this pretty, sophisticated city is one of the Midwest's best-kept secrets. Affordable, easy to navigate, and populated by friendly Midwesterners, the city has tremendous creative energy. Art galleries and unique shops are part of the fabric of many neighborhoods, it's the site of the Midwest's largest farmers' market, and it features some of America's loveliest public parks. In a single weekend, you can explore the Crossroads Art District, visit the American Jazz Museum, scour an antique mall for regional treasures—and have time to sample plenty of barbecue. To learn more about our Kansas City adventure, hear a podcast with Features Editor Monica Michael Willis, and see many more pictures of shops and sights, check out [countryliving.com/collect](http://countryliving.com/collect).

## AROUND TOWN

**WATER WORKS:** Despite being landlocked, Kansas City has water, water everywhere. Nicknamed the "City of Fountains," KC has hundreds of municipal and private fountains gracing its parks, buildings, and thoroughfares. Part of Country Club Plaza, the classically styled J. C. Nichols Memorial Fountain (below, left) is a local landmark.



**SWEET DREAMS:** Reserve a room at the Southmoreland on the Plaza (above, right). Housed in a 1913 Colonial, the welcoming 13-room B&B sits on a quiet residential street within walking distance of KC's prestigious Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art and the Moorish-style Country Club Plaza, America's first outdoor shopping center. The rooms are comfortable, and most have lovely tree-shaded balconies. Room rates start at \$130, depending on season, and include a full breakfast and fresh-baked cookies: (816) 531-7979; [southmoreland.com](http://southmoreland.com).

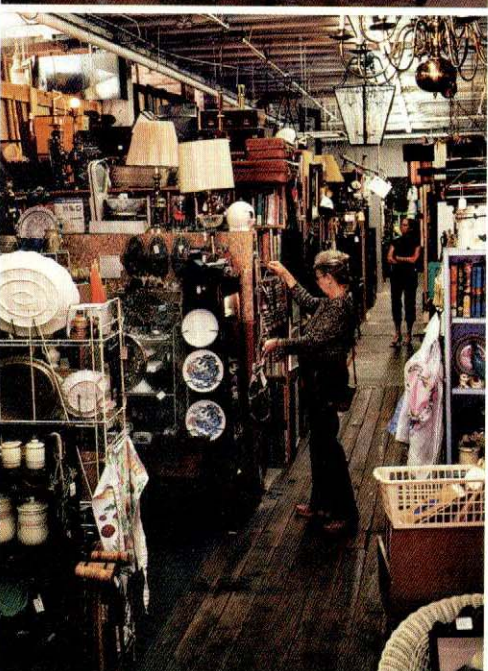
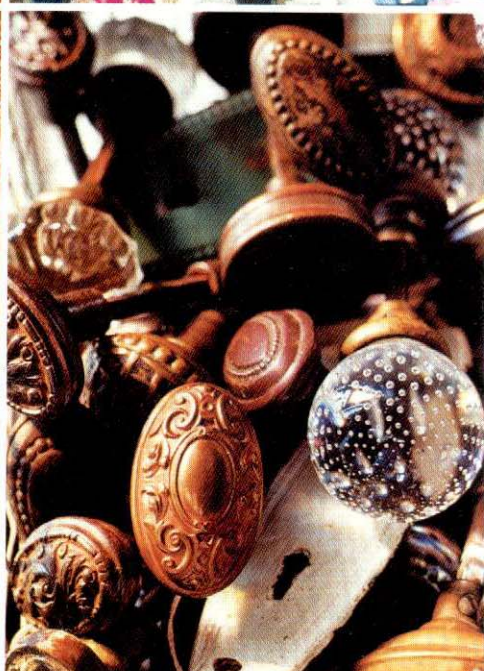
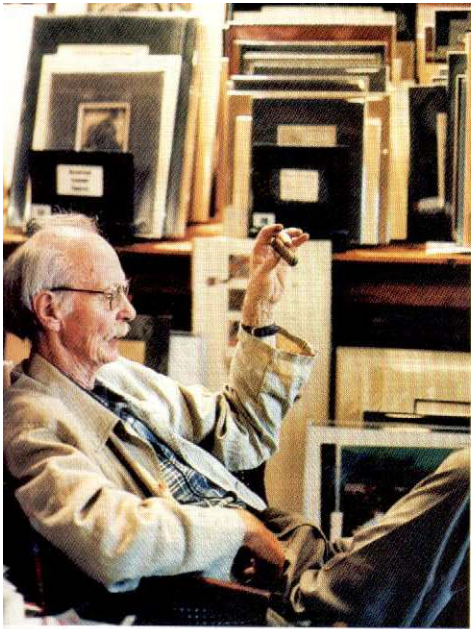
**LET'S GO:** Book your flight into Kansas City International Airport. Renting a car is the easiest, fastest way to explore the city, and finding parking is rarely a problem. To learn more, log on to [visitkc.com](http://visitkc.com).

## GET READY TO SHOP

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: David Spivey, owner of **Spivey Books**, is KC's go-to-guy for rare books and fine prints. **Webster House** specializes in American and European antiques. At her shop, **Birdies**, Peregrine Honig stocks beautiful lingerie. **Antiquities & Oddities Architectural Salvage** has three floors of vintage building supplies. Opened in 1913 by the founder of Hallmark Cards, **Halls** remains the city's most elegant department store. Spend hours at **River Market Antique Mall**, a playground of well-priced vintage finds. Emily Voth, founder of **Indigo Wild**, the makers of Zum all-natural soaps, operates a retail shop at her headquarters. Some 350 dealers show their wares at **Mission Road Antique Mall**. Don't miss the furniture and accessories at **High Cotton**.



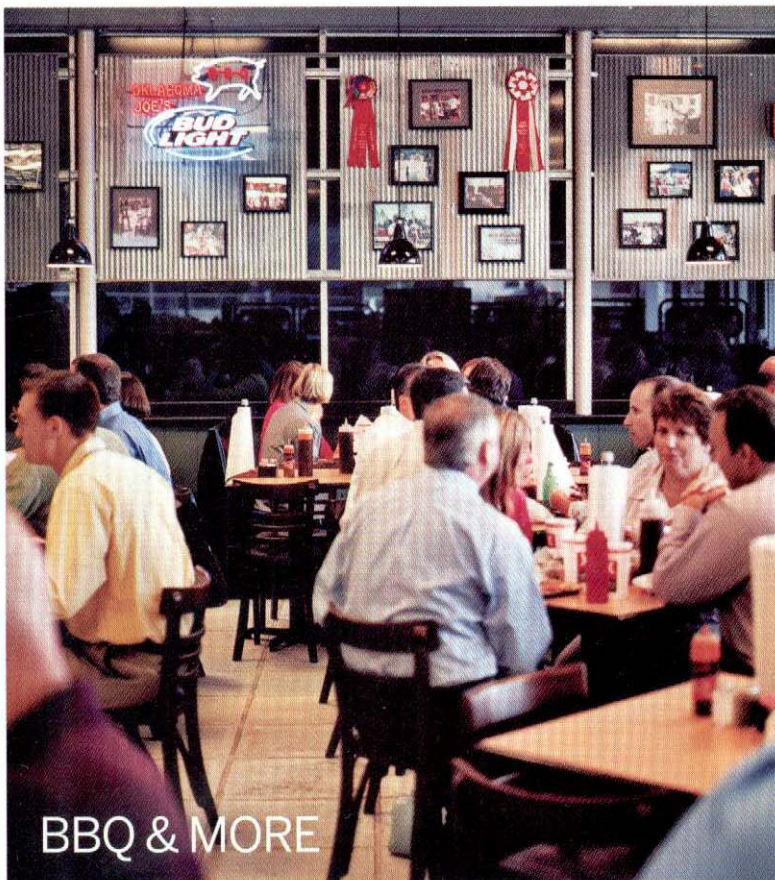
**Red Star Studios** ceramic center operates a gallery that represents many of America's top functional ceramics artists.



# KANSAS CITY IS FAMOUS FOR BARBECUE, BUT THE TOWN IS FULL OF FLAVORS

## GOOD STUFF

For his heavenly artisanal breads, Fred Spompinato (below, top) of **Fervere** uses organic flour milled in Kansas as well as an oven fashioned after ones used in France for centuries. The bakery is open only Thursday to Saturday, so arrive early. When the last loaf of olive-rosemary bread is sold, the screen door shuts until the next week. For exceptional sweets, head to **Christopher Elbow Artisanal Chocolates**, where Christopher Elbow (below, bottom) turns the finest ingredients into chocolates with dazzling fillings, such as pear-cinnamon caramel and espresso-lemon ganache.



Pulled pork on soft white bread gets high marks at **Oklahoma Joe's** in Kansas City, Kans. (above), a busy, family-owned eatery in a former gas station. For a more leisurely feast, request a cozy booth at **Fiorella's Jack Stack Barbecue** (try the "Burnt Ends"). At **The Blue Bird Bistro**, satisfying comfort foods and desserts are made with mostly organic, locally sourced ingredients. At lunchtime, refuel at **Lulu's Thai Noodle Shop**. For a romantic dinner, try **Le Fou Frog**, a local favorite for innovative bistro fare, or **Pierpont's**, an upscale steak house in Union Station.



## HOT!

In Kansas City, barbecue is big business—and nearly EVERYBODY has an opinion on who makes it best. In our unscientific survey, four BBQ restaurants were mentioned repeatedly: Gates, Fiorella's Jack Stack, Arthur Bryant's, and Oklahoma Joe's.

## PINT-SIZED PLEASURES

Kids—and their parents—love the **Reading Reptile**, an independent bookstore where budding bibliophiles are king. Three doors down, find **Lauren Alexandra**, a children's boutique filled with dreamy clothes and gear for junior fashionistas. Afterwards, admire the works on view at the 22-acre **Kansas City Sculpture Park** or get a bird's-eye view of Kansas City from the observation deck of the 217-foot Memorial Tower at **Liberty Memorial**, a monument built in 1926 to honor veterans of the First World War.



THE DECORATING ISSUE

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