Top Things to See and Explore When Visiting Spartanburg, South Carolina

Spartanburg, South Carolina, is a destination filled with Southern charm, fascinating history, cultural attractions, and beautiful outdoor spaces. Located in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, this welcoming city offers visitors plenty of opportunities to discover something new, whether they enjoy exploring historic landmarks, visiting museums, spending time in nature, or experiencing the local arts and entertainment scene.

Often called the Hub City, Spartanburg has developed into an interesting travel destination where historical character meets modern attractions. From its lively downtown district to peaceful gardens and scenic nature preserves, there are plenty of ways to make your visit memorable. If you're planning a trip to the area, here are some of the top things to see and explore when visiting Spartanburg, South Carolina.

1. Explore Historic Downtown Spartanburg

One of the best ways to begin exploring Spartanburg is by spending time in its historic downtown district. The area features charming streets, historic buildings, locally owned shops, restaurants, public art, and inviting gathering spaces.

Start your visit at Morgan Square, a central downtown gathering place where you can admire the Daniel Morgan Monument, enjoy the surrounding atmosphere, and explore nearby businesses. The square frequently hosts community activities, seasonal entertainment, and live music.

Visitors interested in architecture and local history can also follow the downtown historic walking tour, which highlights points of interest across the area. It's an excellent opportunity to learn more about Spartanburg's development while enjoying a leisurely walk.

2. Discover Art and Culture at Chapman Cultural Center

For visitors who appreciate art, history, and cultural experiences, Chapman Cultural Center is a destination worth including in their itinerary. Located in downtown Spartanburg, this cultural campus brings together several organizations and attractions dedicated to the arts, education, and community enrichment.

Visitors can explore art exhibitions, discover educational displays, and enjoy theatrical productions, musical performances, and other cultural activities. The center also provides opportunities to experience the creative talents of local artists and performers.

Whether you're interested in contemporary art, performing arts, or educational experiences, Chapman Cultural Center offers an enjoyable way to appreciate Spartanburg's vibrant cultural community. Check its event calendar before visiting to see which exhibitions and performances are available.

3. Enjoy the Natural Beauty of Hatcher Garden and Woodland Preserve

If you're looking for a peaceful place to relax and appreciate nature, Hatcher Garden and Woodland Preserve is an excellent destination. This beautiful botanical garden and woodland preserve offers a refreshing escape from the busy pace of everyday life.

As you explore the property, you'll encounter colorful flowers, native plants, wooded pathways, peaceful streams, and inviting spaces for enjoying the outdoors. Its different garden areas provide plenty of opportunities for photography, leisurely walks, and quiet moments surrounded by nature.

Hatcher Garden is particularly appealing to visitors who enjoy gardening, wildlife, and scenic outdoor environments. Whether you're traveling with family or simply looking for somewhere peaceful to spend an afternoon, this destination deserves a spot on your Spartanburg itinerary.

4. Visit the Historic Hub City Railroad Museum

Spartanburg earned its nickname, the Hub City, through its important railroad connections, making the Hub City Railroad Museum an interesting stop for anyone curious about the area's transportation and industrial heritage.

Located inside a historic railway depot, the museum showcases exhibits that explain how railroads contributed to Spartanburg's growth and economic development. Visitors can discover railroad memorabilia, historical photographs, telegraph equipment, and displays highlighting the region's textile and agricultural industries.

The museum also features railroad-related experiences that make learning about local history more engaging. It's especially appealing to families, railroad enthusiasts, and anyone interested in understanding how transportation helped shape the city.

Because the museum has limited visiting days and hours, check its current schedule before planning your trip.

5. Spend Time Outdoors at Croft State Park

Nature lovers and outdoor enthusiasts will find plenty to enjoy at Croft State Park. Located just outside the city, this expansive state park provides an opportunity to experience the natural beauty of South Carolina's Upstate region.

The park features wooded landscapes, lakes, hiking trails, and recreational opportunities for visitors with different interests. You can spend your time walking along scenic trails, enjoying a peaceful picnic, fishing, boating, or simply appreciating the surrounding greenery.

Croft State Park is also a popular destination for camping and horseback riding, making it suitable for visitors who want to spend more than just a few hours outdoors.

If you're looking to take a break from downtown sightseeing and enjoy a more adventurous experience, Croft State Park is certainly worth exploring.

6. Take a Relaxing Walk Through Cleveland Park

Cleveland Park is another wonderful destination for visitors who enjoy spending time outdoors. Known for its welcoming atmosphere and recreational facilities, this community park provides a pleasant setting for relaxation and outdoor activities.

The park features a scenic pond, paved walking paths, playground facilities, and open spaces where visitors can enjoy the fresh air. Families can bring children to enjoy the playground, while couples and individuals can take a leisurely stroll around the grounds.

It's also a lovely place to take photographs, enjoy a picnic, or simply sit back and appreciate the peaceful surroundings. If you're looking for a family-friendly outdoor attraction in Spartanburg, Cleveland Park is a great option.

7. Experience Live Entertainment at Barnet Park

For those who enjoy community events and outdoor entertainment, Barnet Park is a destination worth discovering. Situated in downtown Spartanburg, this attractive green space serves as an important gathering place for residents and visitors.

The park features landscaped grounds, walking areas, and spaces for community celebrations and outdoor performances. Throughout the year, it hosts various events that bring people together through music, entertainment, and cultural activities.

Visitors can enjoy a relaxing walk during quieter hours or check the local event schedule to see whether a concert, festival, or special gathering coincides with their visit.

Its convenient downtown location also makes Barnet Park easy to combine with other nearby attractions.



8. Discover the Scenic Glendale Shoals Preserve and Waterfalls

If you're searching for a destination that combines natural scenery with historical character, Glendale Shoals Preserve and Waterfalls is an excellent place to explore.

Located in the historic Glendale community near Spartanburg, this scenic preserve offers beautiful views of Lawson's Fork Creek, small waterfalls, historic mill ruins, and a restored pedestrian bridge.

Visitors can enjoy peaceful walking trails, photograph the surrounding landscape, and learn about the area's industrial past. The combination of natural beauty and historic structures gives this destination a distinctive atmosphere.

It's particularly appealing to photographers, nature enthusiasts, and travelers who enjoy discovering quieter places away from crowded tourist destinations.

Remember to exercise caution around the water, especially when conditions are wet or currents are stronger.

9. Step Back in Time at Walnut Grove Plantation

History enthusiasts should consider visiting Walnut Grove Plantation, an important historic attraction located in Roebuck within Spartanburg County.

Dating back to the 18th century, this historic property offers visitors an opportunity to learn about life in the South Carolina Backcountry during the colonial period and Revolutionary War era.

The plantation features historic buildings and structures, including a manor house, kitchen cabin, blacksmith forge, barn, and other preserved features. Guided tours provide additional insight into the people who lived and worked on the property, the region's development, and the complex history of colonial society, including the experiences of enslaved people.

Exploring Walnut Grove Plantation offers a meaningful educational experience for visitors interested in local heritage, architecture, and American history.

Check tour availability and admission arrangements before making the trip.

10. Appreciate Contemporary Art at Spartanburg Art Museum

Art lovers looking for something creative and inspiring should add the Spartanburg Art Museum to their sightseeing plans.

Located within Chapman Cultural Center, the museum focuses on contemporary visual arts and provides opportunities to discover the work of established and emerging artists.

Its exhibitions change throughout the year, giving visitors the chance to experience different artistic styles, themes, and creative perspectives. The museum also supports art education and community engagement through various programs and activities.

One appealing feature is its free general admission, making it an accessible cultural attraction for travelers who want to explore Spartanburg without spending much on sightseeing.

Before visiting, check its exhibition schedule and opening hours, as temporary installation periods may affect public access.

11. Explore the Exhibits at Spartanburg Science Center

Families traveling with children may enjoy a visit to the Spartanburg Science Center, an educational attraction that makes learning about science more interactive and engaging.

The center offers hands-on educational experiences and exhibits covering subjects such as animals, natural science, fossils, and other fascinating scientific topics.

Children can discover interesting facts, explore educational displays, and participate in activities designed to encourage curiosity and learning.

It's a particularly good option for families looking for an indoor attraction or an educational activity to include in their Spartanburg itinerary. Check the center's current programs and operating schedule before arriving.

12. Enjoy a Scenic Adventure Along Cottonwood Trail

Visitors who appreciate peaceful outdoor adventures should consider exploring Cottonwood Trail, a popular nature trail located within the Edwin M. Griffin Nature Preserve.

Browse this site

The trail provides an opportunity to experience Spartanburg's natural surroundings through wooded paths, creekside scenery, and areas that support local wildlife.

It's a pleasant destination for walking, jogging, birdwatching, and enjoying a little exercise away from the busy downtown district.

One of its interesting features is the colorful Rainbow Pet Bridge, which has become a recognizable spot along the trail.

Whether you're an experienced outdoor enthusiast or simply looking for a relaxing nature walk, Cottonwood Trail offers a refreshing way to discover another side of Spartanburg.

13. Discover More of the Outdoors at Edwin M. Griffin Nature Preserve

Another worthwhile destination for nature enthusiasts is Edwin M. Griffin Nature Preserve. This natural area provides a peaceful environment where visitors can enjoy wooded landscapes, wetlands, and scenic views along Lawson's Fork Creek.

The preserve features natural walking routes that allow visitors to appreciate the area's plant life and wildlife. It's an appealing destination for photographers, hikers, birdwatchers, and anyone who enjoys spending time in a natural setting.

Its location near the city also makes it convenient for visitors who want to experience nature without traveling too far from downtown Spartanburg.

14. Explore Spartanburg's Historic Neighborhoods and Architecture

Beyond its museums and major attractions, Spartanburg has several historic neighborhoods that offer a glimpse into the city's architectural and cultural development.

Hampton Heights is particularly interesting for visitors who appreciate historic homes and traditional architectural styles. The neighborhood features residential properties dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, including examples of Queen Anne, Craftsman, and bungalow architecture.

Walking through historic neighborhoods can be a rewarding way to appreciate the city's character while discovering architectural details that might otherwise go unnoticed.

Remember to respect private property when exploring residential areas and enjoy the historic surroundings from public streets and sidewalks.

15. Enjoy Family-Friendly Activities at The Children's Museum of the Upstate

Families visiting Spartanburg with young children may want to spend some time at The Children's Museum of the Upstate.

This interactive attraction is designed to encourage creativity, exploration, and learning through play. Its exhibits provide opportunities for young visitors to discover different subjects through hands-on activities and imaginative experiences.

Children can explore interactive environments, participate in educational activities, and enjoy exhibits that encourage curiosity about the world around them.

It's a convenient indoor destination, particularly for families looking for something entertaining when the weather isn't ideal for outdoor sightseeing.

Check its current admission information, age recommendations, and operating schedule before planning your visit.

16. Visit Morgan Square and Discover the Daniel Morgan Monument

Morgan Square is one of the most recognizable places in downtown Spartanburg and an excellent stop for visitors interested in the city's history.

At the center of the square stands the Daniel Morgan Monument, honoring General Daniel Morgan, a prominent Revolutionary War figure associated with the American victory at the Battle of Cowpens.

The monument was erected in 1881 and remains an important historical landmark. Around the square, visitors can enjoy nearby shops, restaurants, public spaces, and seasonal community activities.

Whether you're interested in American history or simply want to experience the atmosphere of downtown Spartanburg, Morgan Square is a convenient and worthwhile place to visit.

17. Experience the Beauty of the Wofford College Arboretum

For visitors who appreciate beautiful landscapes and peaceful campus environments, the Wofford College Arboretum is another interesting destination to discover.

Wofford College is known for its attractive campus and extensive collection of trees, providing a pleasant setting for a leisurely walk and outdoor appreciation.

As you explore the grounds, you can admire the landscaping, mature trees, and historic campus architecture. It's a nice opportunity to enjoy a quieter side of Spartanburg while learning more about one of the city's educational institutions.

Visitors should check campus access guidelines before planning a visit, particularly during academic events and university activities.

18. Enjoy Sports and Entertainment at Fifth Third Park

Sports enthusiasts visiting Spartanburg may want to experience a baseball game at Fifth Third Park, home of the Hub City Spartanburgers.

The stadium provides an exciting atmosphere for baseball fans, families, and visitors looking for an entertaining evening activity. Watching a game is also a great way to experience the local community spirit and enjoy an American sporting tradition.

Depending on the season, visitors can attend scheduled games and enjoy the stadium's food, entertainment, and game-day activities.

If you're planning to catch a game, check the team's official schedule and purchase tickets ahead of time, especially for popular matchups and special events.

19. Discover Local History Through Spartanburg's Textile Heritage

Spartanburg's history is closely connected to the textile industry, which played an important role in shaping the region's economy, communities, and development.

Visitors interested in industrial heritage can discover this history by exploring historic mill buildings, former mill communities, and local historical exhibits.

The area's textile heritage provides a fascinating look at how manufacturing influenced everyday life and helped establish Spartanburg as an important industrial center in South Carolina.

You can also learn more through local textile heritage tours, which highlight historic mill locations and connect visitors with parts of Spartanburg's industrial past.

This experience is particularly interesting for travelers who enjoy learning about the economic and cultural forces that shaped the destinations they visit.

20. Take a Relaxing Break at Downtown's Local Shops

No visit to Spartanburg would be complete without spending some time browsing its local shops, boutiques, and independent businesses.

Downtown Spartanburg offers an enjoyable shopping experience, with specialty stores, bookstores, restaurants, and small businesses that reflect the city's character.

East Main Street is a particularly pleasant area to explore, offering opportunities to discover unique merchandise, enjoy refreshments, and find locally inspired souvenirs.

Visitors can also stop by Hub City Bookshop to browse a selection of books, including works connected to Southern literature and regional history.

It's an excellent way to slow down, support local businesses, and experience the welcoming atmosphere that makes Spartanburg an enjoyable destination.

Tips for Planning Your Visit to Spartanburg, SC

To make the most of your trip, consider a few practical suggestions before heading out to explore the city.

- **Plan your itinerary:** Group nearby attractions together to save travel time and make sightseeing more convenient.
- **Check opening hours:** Museums, historical sites, and cultural attractions may have different operating schedules.
- **Make time for outdoor activities:** Include destinations such as Hatcher Garden, Croft State Park, and Glendale Shoals in your plans.
- **Explore downtown on foot:** Morgan Square, Chapman Cultural Center, and several local shops and restaurants are conveniently located near one another.
- **Look for local events:** Concerts, festivals, sporting events, and community activities can make your visit even more memorable.
- **Bring comfortable walking shoes:** Many attractions offer walking opportunities, especially parks, gardens, and historic districts.

Final Thoughts

Spartanburg, South Carolina, offers a wonderful combination of history, culture, recreation, and natural beauty. From exploring the historic streets of downtown and discovering fascinating museum exhibits to enjoying scenic gardens and outdoor adventures, visitors have plenty of opportunities to create memorable experiences.

Whether you're planning a family vacation, a weekend getaway, or simply passing through the Upstate region, Spartanburg has attractions that appeal to different interests and travel styles.

Take the time to explore its historic landmarks, appreciate its artistic community, discover its natural surroundings, and experience the local atmosphere. With so many interesting places to see and activities to enjoy, Spartanburg is certainly a destination worth adding to your South Carolina travel plans.