

# GALVESTON, TX



## ABOUT GALVESTON

Galveston has so much to offer as a reunion site that you may want to come early or stay past the reunion dates just to see it all! With 32 miles of beautiful beaches, historic Victorian homes and buildings, fine museums, gardens and sight-seeing opportunities, there is always something to do and see.

Located on Galveston Island, part of the string of sand barrier islands, the city of Galveston is two miles offshore in the Gulf of Mexico. Houston is 50 miles to the northwest, but many Galveston residents can't remember the last time they visited the mainland—they just have no reason to leave Galveston!

Galveston was named for a Spanish colonial governor, Bernardo de Galvez in 1786, but the area had been visited as early as 1528 by the Spanish explorer Cabeza de Vaca. Perhaps the most famous of the early residents of the area was the pirate Jean Lafitte, who arrived on the island in 1817. It became his base of operations until 1821 when he was forced off after attacking an American ship. Many still search for his buried treasure, which supposedly he left behind, but it has never been found.

The most devastating event in the history of Galveston was the 1900 hurricane. On September 8, 1900 a storm with winds exceeding

120 mph hit the area, killing over 6,000 people. The storm was the deadliest natural disaster in United States history. To prevent something of this magnitude from happening again, the city built a seawall seven miles long and 17 feet high, designed to raise the level of the island. It now extends 54,790 feet, 10.4 miles and covers one-third of Galveston's Gulf side.

Galveston has four districts on the National Register of Historic Places: The Strand, East End, Silk Stocking, and Central Business Districts. The city claims almost 1,500 historic buildings on the National Register of Historic Places.

You will find Galveston a fascinating place for a reunion. Read about its attractions below and see what it has to offer you.

## ATTRACTIONS

### How to See Galveston:

There are just about as many ways to enjoy seeing Galveston as there are things to see. Enjoy a 1½ hour, 17 mile narrated tour around the island on a **sight-seeing train**. **Carriage rides** can take you for a tour of the city's historic districts and point out the interesting sites along the way. A unique way to see the city is on the **Duck Tour**. The Ducks offer an informative tour of 40 blocks on Seawall Boulevard, then enter the water for a cruise

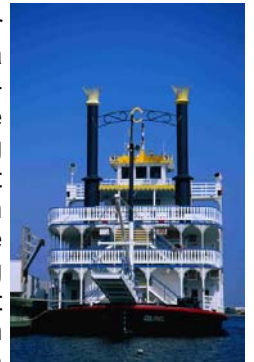
across the bayou. **Rail trolley rides** are also available in cars similar to those of the late 1800s to 1938, covering over 8 miles of sites. If a **paddle wheeler**

is more your style, catch a ride on a multi-decked, paddle wheeled floating museum that tours Galveston Bay. There are also hour-long excursions at sea for **dolphin watching**. With

so many options for sight-seeing, you can find something to your liking!

### Seawolf Park:

Here you can tour the **USS CAVALLA** (WWII Submarine) and the **USS STEWART** (destroyer escort—one of only three in the world). Housed in a three-story pavilion with a view of Galveston harbor, the *Cavalla* is a monument to the lost submarine *USS Seawolf*. The *Cavalla* was built in 1943 and on her maiden voyage on June 19, 1944, she sank the Japanese aircraft carrier *Shokaku* and earned the Presidential Unit Citation. Later, in 1952, she was converted to a new class of American sub—the SSK (hunter/killer). The *USS Stewart* began service as a "school ship" training stu-



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dent officers. In 1944 she joined North Atlantic convoy operations and had encounters with enemy submarines and aircraft. *Stewart* moved to the Pacific theater in 1945 and did training exercises out of Pearl Harbor until the end of the war.

### Lone Star Flight Museum:



This museum exhibits over 40 restored aircraft (most in working condition) including WWII Fighters, Bombers, Liaison Trainers, and Executive Planes. In one of the finest collections of restored aircraft and aviation exhibits in the nation, the museum is dedicated to the men and women who developed aviation and the memory of those who flew in our country's defense.

### Texas Seaport Museum/*ELISSA*:

The Texas Seaport Museum tells the story of the adventures of high sea commerce and immigration. Exhibited here are the history of the shrimping industry (gold of the Gulf), a one-of-a-kind computer database where you can search for the names of over 133,000 immigrants who entered the U.S. through Galveston, and the celebrated 1877 tall ship *Elissa*. This ship is designated as one of America's Treasures by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. *Elissa* is a three-masted, iron-hulled sailing ship, carrying over nineteen sails. She measures 205 feet in length, with a height of 99 feet, 9 inches at her main mast. Her story is told in a film



entitled *Passage to Galveston: The Story of ELLISSA*, shown in the theater of the museum.

### Railroad Museum:

The Railroad Museum is located in the former Union Passenger Depot and is home to more than 20,000 railroad items, including more than 40 engines and cars. The waiting room looks as it did in 1932, but with life-size plaster models of real persons (called "ghosts of travelers past") who might have been traveling through the terminal. Three theaters also depict the stages of Galveston history.

### Ocean Star Offshore Drilling & Rig Museum:

Located at Galveston's Pier 19, this is a completely refurbished jackup drilling rig, with all the day-to-day excitement of offshore drilling and production. Three decks of videos, equipment exhibits and interactive displays give visitors a glimpse at what a working drilling rig is like.

### Moody Gardens:

This is one of the most popular attractions in Galveston. Moody Gardens is a complex of three giant glass pyramids: the Rainforest Pyramid houses exotic plants, birds and fish from around the world; the Discovery Pyramid is a science museum; and the Aquarium Pyramid is one of the largest aquariums in the world. Outdoor gardens and walking trails along the white sand beach makes this a premier destination for visitors.

### Bishop's Place:

One of the many architectural jewels of Galveston, Bishop's Place is Galveston's grandest and best-known building. This Victorian castle was cited by the American Institute of Architects as one of the 100 most important buildings in America. Made of colored stone, it has intricately carved



ornaments, stained-glass windows and luxury furnishings throughout the home. One of the massive fireplaces is even lined with pure silver.

### The Strand Historic District:

Enjoy more than 100 shops in this beautiful landmark district, one of the largest and best preserved concentrations of Victorian, iron-front architecture in the country. There are 14 museums and historic homes open to the public for tours in this area. Maybe you will want to visit the Peanut Butter Warehouse where you will find an eclectic assortment of antiques and collectibles plus a peanut butter pantry with homemade treats. Many great restaurants line the streets, featuring a wide range of cuisine, with fresh Gulf Coast seafood being the among the favorite.

### Galveston Beaches and Parks:

Many visitors come to Galveston just for its beaches. The downtown



beaches of Seawall Boulevard are protected behind a ten-mile-long

seawall. **Stewart Beach Park** is the closest to downtown and is geared for the family. **R.A. Apfell Park** has live music some weekends and a lively bar scene. **East Beach** features activities for all ages, with live music and volleyball courts. **Delanera RV Park** offers 1,000 feet of sandy beach with full RV hook-ups. **Big Reef Nature Park** is for nature enthusiasts with an outdoor pavilion and game room. Campers can enjoy **Galveston Island State Park** which features picnic tables, barbecue pits and water and electrical hook-ups.

As you can see, Galveston has so much to offer for visitors—beaches, architecture, museums, shopping, restaurants and nightlife—all in one beautiful location. Making Galveston your next reunion site will be a great decision.



Bishop's Place

