Located on the Arkansas River, Little Rock, Arkansas, is the state’s capital and the seat of Pulaski County. Little Rock derives its name from a small rock formation on the south bank of the Arkansas River called la Petite Roche. Little Rock is the geographic, cultural, and economic center of the state.

Little Rock’s Neighborhoods

Downtown Little Rock’s River Market District is home to the William J. Clinton Presidential Center, America’s newest Presidential Library. Housing in this neighborhood consists primarily of condominiums and apartments. The Quapaw Quarter, the historic area of downtown, encompasses a nine-square-mile area and includes many businesses, restored 19th-century and early 20th-century houses, and apartments, as well as the Central Business District, MacArthur Park Historic District, Governor’s Mansion Historic District, and South Main. The city’s first park, MacArthur Park, is home to the MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History, which is dedicated to General Douglas MacArthur and preserves the contributions of Arkansas men and women who served in the armed forces. Also in the park are the Arkansas Arts Center, Firehouse Hostel & Museum, and historic homes and buildings dating to the 1800s. The Governor’s Mansion is open for tours and private events and is the centerpiece of this prime neighborhood dominated by Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Craftsman architecture from approximately 1880 to 1920. Other sites in downtown Little Rock include the Museum of Discovery: Arkansas’ Museum of Science & History, Old State House Museum, and Robinson Center Music Hall, home of symphonies, plays, concerts, and ballets.

Other Little Rock neighborhoods include the Hillcrest Historic District, one of the earliest residential areas of the city; the Heights, which dates from the 1920s and 1930s and features many houses built high on the bluff overlooking the Arkansas River; Riverdale, with its apartments, condominiums, and luxurious modern housing; and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock neighborhood, which is spread over an area west of downtown. Heading west are the neighborhoods of Pleasant Valley, Hickory Creek, and Chenal Valley with modern homes, golf courses, and country clubs.

Parks and Recreation

Riverfront Park stretches 11 blocks on the south bank of the Arkansas River in downtown Little Rock and provides large areas for outdoor events, leisure activities, and a glimpse of the state’s history. It is also home to many concerts (held at the Riverfest Amphitheatre) and the History Pavilion.

Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site, located across the intersection from Little Rock Central High School, contains interactive exhibits on the 1957 desegregation crisis at the school. Rangers offer guided tours of the school by reservation only as it is an operating high school.

The Little Rock Zoo is involved in many conservation efforts in addition to housing more than 725 animals representing 200+ species.

Education

Little Rock’s public schools educate over 26,000 students, ranging from prekindergarten to adults, in 49 facilities. Although students are assigned to a particular school on the basis of their addresses, students may apply to attend one of the six magnet schools or 13 magnet programs. Little Rock is also served by seven charter schools and over 30 private schools.

Little Rock has two universities and two colleges. The University of Arkansas at Little Rock is the largest and includes the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, with its medicine, nursing, pharmacy, public health, and health-related professions programs. The others are Philander Smith College, Arkansas Baptist College, and Webster University.

Health Care

Six hospital systems operate 10 hospitals in Little Rock. These hospitals include over 2,700 beds for adults and pediatric acute care, psychiatric, chemical dependency, rehabilitation, and extended care.