



# Waco, TX



**W**aco, Texas, is named after the Huaco Indians who were the first inhabitants of this area. Waco is situated along the Brazos River and encompasses Lake Waco. The completion of the Waco Suspension Bridge in 1870 attracted cattle drives to cross the Brazos River and led to great population growth for the city.

Museums in Waco include the Dr Pepper Museum and Free Enterprise Institute, which is located in the original 1885 bottling plant and celebrates the history of Dr Pepper. Exhibits at the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum feature the history and equipment of the Texas Ranger. The Masonic Grand Lodge and Scottish Rite Museum highlight the accomplishments and ideals of Freemasonry. The Red Men Museum and Library houses a collection of historic pieces related to the Improved Order of Red Men fraternal order and the Degree of Pocahontas women's auxiliary. The Texas Sports Hall of Fame also houses the Texas Tennis Hall of Fame, the Texas High School Football Hall of Fame, and the Southwest Conference exhibit. The Waco Mammoth Site is the nation's first and only recorded discovery of a nursery herd of Pleistocene mammoths.

Several museums are located on Baylor University's campus in Waco. The Mayborn Museum Complex features a natural science and cultural history museum. The Armstrong Browning Library celebrates the poetry of Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. The permanent collection of the Martin Museum of Art comprises approximately 1300 objects.

The McLennan Community College campus is home to Art Center Waco, which showcases the works of established artists.

Waco Civic Theatre produces six annual main stage productions and studio shows. Plays, dance performances, and concerts are performed at the Jubilee Theater. Waco Children's Theatre offers summer and holiday performances. Waco Symphony Orchestra, Waco Jazz Orchestra, and the Waco Community Band perform concerts throughout the year. Baylor University and McLennan Community College also offer venues, such as the Bosque River Stage and Waco Hall, for theater and musical productions.

## NEIGHBORHOODS

Downtown Waco is in the midst of a revitalization effort to increase residential neighborhoods. Several older buildings have been adapted for residential usage, including the conversion of upper stories of commercial buildings into rental lofts. In addition, new single-family and multi-family homes have been built.

Among the older neighborhoods, the Austin Avenue neighborhood is located near the downtown and features homes built between the early to mid-20th century in Colonial, Tudor Revival, Georgian, Mediterranean, and ranch styles. Twenty-eight homes are designated as architecturally significant local preservation properties. Most houses in Sanger-Heights were built between 1910 and 1950; housing styles include ranch and two-story construction. Many homes near Lake Waco in the Landon Branch, Mountainview, and Westside neighborhoods were constructed in a variety of architectural styles in the late 20th century and early 21st century. In addition, Waco has some master-planned communities, such as the Villages at Twin Rivers, which have newly constructed houses and lots available.

## PARKS AND RECREATION

Waco has 35 parks and five community centers. Park amenities include river docks; horseshoe pits; disc golf courses; fishing; fire pits; playgrounds; spray parks; basketball and tennis courts; a skate park; baseball, football, soccer, and softball fields; an off-leash dog park; and a public golf course.

The historic Suspension Bridge, which is open to foot traffic only, is surrounded by Indian Spring Park and Martin Luther King Jr. Park. Located west of the bridge, Cameron Park features scenic overlooks of the Brazos and Bosque Rivers, wildlife and playgrounds, and approximately 20 miles of trails. The park is also home to the Cameron Park Zoo. Carleen Bright Arboretum showcases formal gardens, the Todd Willis Memorial Nature Trail, and an amphitheater with gazebo. Veterans Park honors American veterans of all wars and features a 9/11 memorial. Hawaiian Falls Waco is a new water park located in the city.

The Bill and Eva Williams Bear Habitat at Baylor University provides a natural environment for the university's bear mascots.

Waco Thunder is a professional football team.

## EDUCATION

Waco Independent School District educates more than 15,000 students in 13 elementary schools, four middle schools, and two high schools. The district also has an elementary magnet school for fine arts and technology and offers elementary and middle school Montessori programs. Midway Independent School District, LaVega Independent School District, China Spring Independent School District, and Bosqueville Independent School District also serve portions of Waco.

Higher education is available at Baylor University, a private Christian university that offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs. The university also has a medical school, which is located in Houston. Tarleton State University Waco offers degree completion programs for selected undergraduate and graduate majors at the McLennan Community College University Center and the Region XII Service Center. McLennan Community College and Texas State Technical College offer associate degree and certificate programs.

## HEALTH CARE

Waco is served by two hospital systems with a total of 538 acute care beds. The Waco VA Medical Center provides inpatient psychiatric care, nursing home care to psychogeriatric patients, and a post-traumatic stress disorder residential treatment program. The city also has an acute inpatient rehabilitation facility and an inpatient psychiatric and substance abuse treatment center.

### CITY STATS

	2010
City Population	124,805
Metropolitan Statistical Area Population	234,906
Per Capita Personal Income, Waco City, TX, MSA	\$33,421