

Neighborhood Tour: Shopping, Kayaking and Tree Adventures in The Woodlands

We're touring neighborhoods around Houston and exploring all there is to do.

By [Stephanie Bartels](#) February 22, 2022



Experience Houston's best-kept-secret, The Woodlands.

IMAGE: [SHUTTERSTOCK/THIERRY DEHOVE](#)

TAKE A DRIVE 30 MILES FROM DOWNTOWN, and you'll find the city's best-kept secret; everything you love about the inner loop, but with seemingly less traffic and plenty of greenery. From the outside looking in, The Woodlands is just another posh suburb; but spend a day in this neighborhood, and you'll realize it's so much more than perfectly manicured lawns and an opulent shopping mall. The family-friendly area has over 130 parks, 220 miles of hiking and bike trails, and a [200-acre](#) freshwater lake, Lake Woodlands. Are you feeling like Tex-Mex for dinner or a sunset canoe ride on the lake? The Woodlands has both. In search of a chic lounge for date night? Take your pick from a Lake Como-Inspired lounge, or try out an Irish bar with Texas music and food influences.

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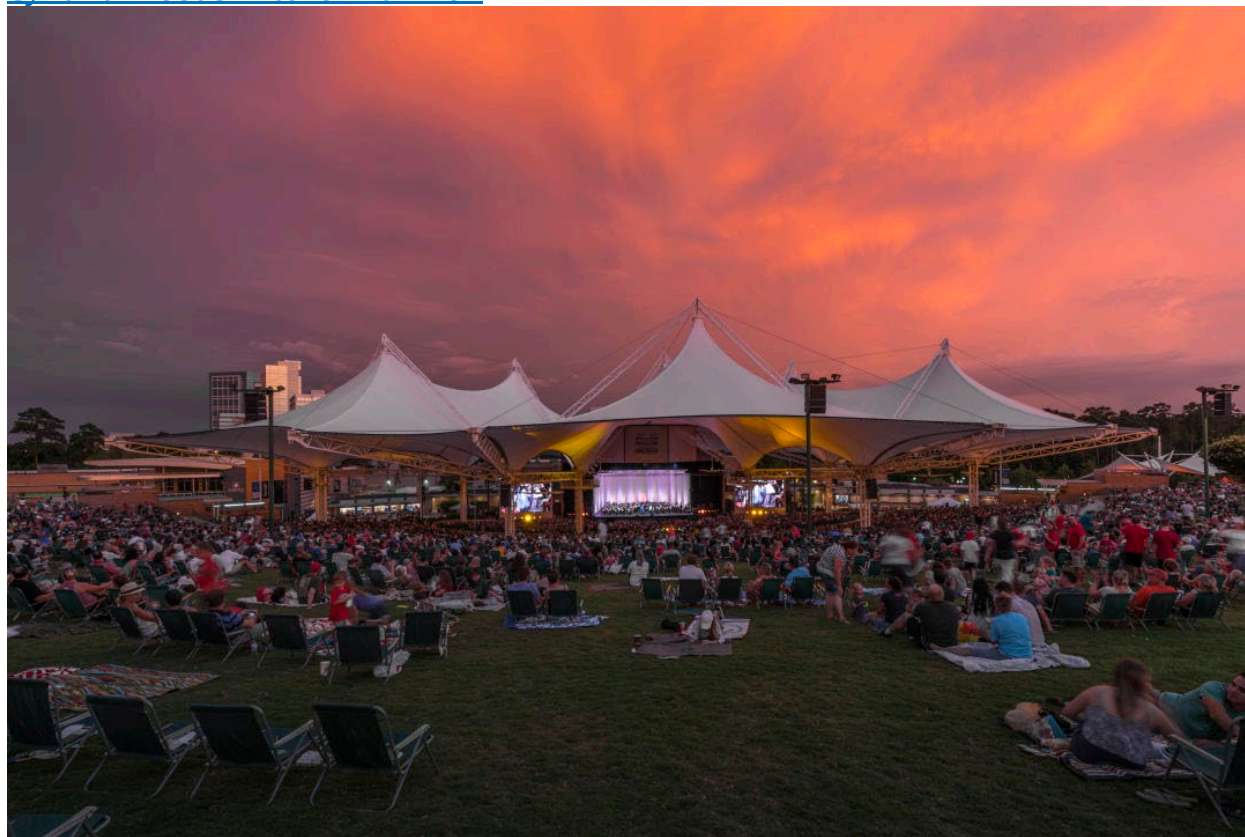
While *Houstonia* named it one of the best places to live, this neighborhood gem also ranked No. 1 for *Travel & Leisure's* [Best Places To Live](#). It doesn't get more family-friendly than this, from a Children's Museum and splash pads to live music and restaurants. As of 2022, [118,000](#) Houstonians call The Woodlands their hometown, with [27](#) schools in the Conroe Independent School District.

You can take our word for it, or you can venture around for yourself and experience the best the neighborhood has to offer.

Music Venues

If you thought Downtown was the only destination for concerts, you've been missing out on a massive lineup of shows. The Woodlands has its own large concert venue-with lawn seating, and several bars and restaurants in the area also host live music on the weekends.

[Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion](#)



Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion.

IMAGE: [CYNTHIA WOODS MITCHELL](#)

With 17,000 seats and general admission placed on a hill overlooking the main stage, Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion is a one-of-a-kind concert venue. Musical artists such as Journey, Chris Stapleton, Florence & The Machine, Drake, and many more have headlined the forum, and it serves as a performance space for the Houston Ballet and Houston

Symphony. The Pavillion is the summer destination spot to watch your favorite artist on a blanket under the sky.

2005 Lake Robbins Dr, The Woodlands, TX 77380

Como Social Club

This Lake Como-inspired bar has a covered patio overlooking The Woodlands Waterway while hosting live music on Friday and Saturday nights. Discover new artists to love every weekend and sip popular Italian cocktails like an Aperol Spritz or Strawberry Mule. Don't forget to grab a photo on the vintage Italian Vespa on your way out.

2 Waterway Square Pl, The Woodlands, TX 77380

Mahoney's

It's an Irish bar, restaurant, and live music venue, but make it Texas. Mahoney's is quickly becoming a favorite, serving great "Texish" (Texas and Irish) food, live music, and good times.

24 Waterway Ave Suite 100, The Woodlands, TX 77380

Local Pour

Good eats, drinks, and music all weekend. Local Pour offers a view of the lake at Hughes Landing and live music throughout the weekend. The industrial-chic interiors make it the perfect atmosphere for casual hangouts and celebrations.

1900 Hughes Landing Blvd Suite 350, The Woodlands, TX 77381

Interactive

Here's your chance to jump in and live The Woodlands life yourself. Spend a day kayaking around Lake Woodlands, where you can see a little bit of everything, from lakeside mansions and restaurants to ducks and weirdly tall birds called Great Egrets.

Texas TreeVentures

Adjacent to the 1,800-acre George Mitchell Nature Preserve, you'll find the aerial adventure course, Texas TreeVentures. The system is three levels and includes a series of thrill-based physical challenges. With 72 elements to try out, it's the perfect place to challenge yourself to sky-high adventures. TreeVentures also hosts private parties and offers private treehouses for rent.

6464 Creekside Forest Dr, The Woodlands, TX 77389

[The Woodlands Town Center Trolley](#)

If we didn't mention it, you might hear a cheerful "ding ding" while strolling Market Street. No, you're not in San Francisco, but you are about to hop on a ride on the charming Town Center Trolleys, which usher shoppers and diners to retail, dining, and entertainment locations around a 4-mile route. Avoid changing your parking spot with a ride to your next destination, or hop aboard for a spirited ride through town.

[The Woodlands Art League](#)

Founded in 1981, The Woodlands Art League is a volunteer-based organization of local artists throughout The Woodlands. You'll find monthly exhibitions, volunteer programs, and workshops for artists of all ages.

9595 Six Pines Dr Suite 1370, Spring, TX 77380

[The Woodlands Children's Museum](#)



The Woodlands Children's Museum has plenty of interactive fun for the little ones.

IMAGE: [COURTNEY COATS TOPINI](#)

For the little ones ages seven and under, The Woodlands Children's Museum has imaginative exhibits and experiences to entertain them for *at least* two hours. They'll either

love the Rainbow tunnel, Dig Pit or Fire House or spend most of their time playing in the sensory area with water and arts. The traveling Curious George exhibit is the latest setup offered and kicks off in February through May 14.

4775 W Panther Creek Dr #280, The Woodlands, TX 77381

Shopping

If luxury shopping is more your speed, the Woodlands is a must-visit. Market Street, specifically, is an absolute must when visiting The Woodlands. Picture a small-town feel, but with big-city shopping and brand names like Michael Kors, Tiffany & Co., Chanel, and various fine dining options. And if you're looking for somewhere to let the kids play, the center has a splash pad water feature and yard games in the square

Golden Gray Boutique

Trendy and fashion-forward is everything you'll find at this boutique in Market Street. The boutique opened in October 2020 with everything from jewelry, hats, and staple accessories to dresses and more casual ensembles. While located among the high-end stores at Market Street, everything here is at an affordable price.

9595 Six Pines Dr, The Woodlands, TX 77380

Diva Boutique

Diva Boutique is a specialty clothing and accessories store with career, casual, and cocktail attire. The boutique has been in The Woodlands since 1998 and is a one-stop shop for date night, vacation, and everyday fashion from brands like Buddy Love and Gigi Moda.

4526 Research Forest Dr, Spring, TX 77381

Pell 1990

While Pell 1990's location could technically be considered Spring, the neighboring town, its proximity to The Woodlands and fun atmosphere make it a must-mention on this list. The boutique opened in 2021 with a '90s feel that is ideally on-trend with today's fashion. Like shopping in your BFF's closet and getting a "you look cute" on your way out, Pell 1990 will help put together a killer outfit.

24811 Gosling Rd, Spring, TX 77389

Outdoor Activities

The great thing about this neighborhood is the balance of businesses and homes with nature. The Woodlands has over 160 miles of trails for biking, rollerblading, walking, and running, all of which connect to schools, parks, and villages. The greenery and openness surrounding the woodlands create more than a few options for outdoor fun.

[Northshore Park](#)

If you have a kayak or canoe, you can bring it to Northshore Park to access Lake Woodlands. There's also a playground, picnic area, sand volleyball, and a free concert series in the late spring through early fall.

2505 Lake Woodlands Dr, The Woodlands, TX 77380

[Riva Row Boat House](#)



Kayak from Riva Row Boat House through a canal that leads to Lake Woodlands.

IMAGE: [SHUTTERSTOCK/MARIO A PEREZ SANTOS](#)

One of the most serene and relaxing ways to tour The Woodlands is by Kayak. Stop by the Boat House to rent either a single or tandem kayak, then paddle through a canal that leads to Lake Woodlands. Once on the lake, take in the sounds and sights surrounding the water. You'll float past tall grass and trees and the mansions that line the lake-perfect for daydreaming.

2101 Riva Row, The Woodlands, TX 77380

Water Playgrounds

There are five water playgrounds, also known as spraygrounds around The Woodlands, [May Valley Sprayground](#), [Timarron Sprayground](#), [Sawmill Sprayground](#), [Shadowbend Sprayground](#), and [Village Green Sprayground](#). The

spraygrounds are open March through October and are creative and water amenities for kids (and adults!) to cool off without jumping in a pool.

The Woodlands Waterway

Like a mini-San Antonio River Walk, The Woodlands Waterway is a 1.5-mile-long stretch of restaurants, bars, hotels, parks, and homes. The homes along the waterway are amazingly charming, with front entryways reminiscent of New York Brownstones.

Dining

You'll find a little taste of Downtown in The Woodlands, with several restaurants choosing this neighborhood for expansions. Downtown staples, El Tiempo, Sweet Green, Velvet Taco, Flower Child, Snooze, and even Killen's BBQ live the suburban life.

Mastro's Steakhouse and Ocean Club

The renowned Mastro's Steakhouse and Ocean Club, a well-known name in Beverly Hills, Manhattan, and Las Vegas, has recently joined the upscale lineup of dining options at Market Street. If you're feeling extra fancy and in the mood for high-quality steak and seafood, check the website for reservations and guidelines on the strict dress code.

9595 Six Pines Dr Suite 100, The Woodlands, TX 77380

Tommy Bahama

With more Houstonians opting for staycations right here in Texas, Tommy Bahama offers the feel of an island vacation with tropical dishes and hand-crafted cocktails. The Market Street location also happens to be Texas' only Tommy Bahama restaurant. There's a large selection of apparel and accessories, so you feel like you hit the island gift shop before heading home.

9595 Six Pines Dr #700, The Woodlands, TX 77380

Fielding's Wood Grill

Fielding's Wood Grill is a Woodlands favorite on the more casual side. Sourcing its food from Texas farms and ranches, the restaurant makes its bacon, sides, and sauces. Open for lunch and dinner all week and brunch on Saturday and Sunday. The highlight of a brunch visit, though, will be your choice of Mimosa or Bloody Mary flights-or both.

1699 Research Forest Dr Suite 130, Shenandoah, TX 77380