

{trip planner}

Kansas City, MO

With delicious food, a lively arts scene and cozy coffee shops, this friendly city offers plenty to do is a must for a romantic escape

By Tina Smithers

There's no place like Kansas City, MO. Split between two states (to form two entirely different cities, mind you), Kansas City is home to a vibrant arts scene, delicious dining options, exceptional culture and several under-the-radar hidden gems. Complete with its friendly, Midwestern hospitality, the home of the 2015 World Series champions (ahem, the Royals) is a wonderful place to visit when you need a mini vacation with your significant other.

The Great Outdoors

With over 200 parks in the metro area, Kansas City can be a haven for outdoor enthusiasts (when the weather is cooperating). Grab a coffee from one of KC's many local joints ([Thou Mayest](#) and [Mildred's](#) are a couple of favorites) and go explore! The 75-acre [Loose Park](#) is a must for couples with its romantic rose garden, charming bridges and koi pond. For the activity-driven, the [Kansas City Zoo](#) and [Worlds of Fun](#) amusement park offer a more hands-on approach. And last but *never* least, don't forget to catch a Royals game at [Kauffman Stadium](#).

Arts & Culture

Take in a ballet at the [Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts](#) with its astonishing architecture, savor a stroll through the art galleries during a Crossroads' [First Friday](#) or enjoy wine and cheese on the sprawling lawn of the [Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art](#). Recently ranked first in Yelp's Top 20 Museums list, the Nelson-Atkins features work by Vincent van Gogh, Claude Monet, Jackson Pollock and Andy Warhol, alongside unparalleled outdoor sculptures and seasonal exhibitions. History buffs will enjoy the [National World War I Museum](#), the iconic and beautiful [Union Station](#) or the nearby [historic site and home](#) to 33rd President Harry S. Truman.

Retail Therapy

No trip to Kansas City is complete without an afternoon spent shopping on the [Country Club Plaza](#), with its Seville-inspired architecture, mosaic detailing, historical statues and sprawling fountains. Home to several retailers from Madewell to Michael Kors, the Plaza literally sparkles during the holiday season with thousands of colored lights lining its Spanish-style rooftops. Opt for a horse-drawn carriage ride for a truly romantic end to your Plaza shopping excursion. If antiquing is more up your alley, the [West Bottoms](#) offers more than a dozen vintage and restoration shops, which is especially bustling the first weekend of every month. For indoor shopping, consider [Crown Center](#) — with its adjacent ice-skating rink — near Hallmark's national headquarters.

Good Eats

While Kansas City will forever be a major barbecue destination (Oklahoma [Joe's Kansas City](#), [Jack Stack](#) and beyond), pulled pork and burnt ends aren't your typical representation of romance. Consider [Bella Napoli](#) in Brookside or [Garozzo's Ristorante](#) for authentic Italian cuisine in an intimate atmosphere. The historic River Market district offers quaint eateries [Le Fou Frog](#) (French delicacies) and [The Farmhouse](#) (farm-to-table fare), while the nearby [American Restaurant](#) showcases an upscale setting with beautiful skyline views. Other opulent dining options include [Webster House](#) overlooking the breathtaking Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, the rustically charming [Novel](#) and the delectable [Bluestem](#) restaurant.

Out on the Town

For post-dinner drinks, the Crossroads Art District is home to [Manifesto](#), a subterranean speakeasy located underneath [The Rieger Hotel Grill & Exchange](#) (reservations suggested), and [Tannin](#), a restaurant and lounge with an extensive, eclectic variety of wines. In the heart of Westport lies [Ca Va](#) with its specialty of bubbly and sparkling wine, and [Julep](#), a basic requirement for any cocktail connoisseurs. You can't beat [The Phoenix](#) and [Green Lady Lounge](#) for good jazz, and for the 30-going-on-13 couples, there's [Up-Down](#), an arcade bar that boasts over 50 beers on tap.

Where to Stay

For the quintessential bed & breakfast experience, you can't go wrong with [The Jefferson](#) in KC's vibrant Westside neighborhood or [Southmoreland on the Plaza](#), where each unique room boasts a special feature such as a treetop deck, wood-burning fireplace or Jacuzzi. If a lavish setting is more your style, the historic [Hotel Phillips](#) and [The Raphael Hotel](#) offer luxurious romance packages with complimentary wine, flowers and sweets. For a truly relaxing getaway, [The Elms Hotel & Spa](#) is just a short drive from the city and exhibits plush guest rooms, a full-service spa, Roman bath-inspired amenities and several dining options.