



ZIP 37402

With its blooming arts district, spectacular natural landmarks and deeply ingrained historical memory, Chattanooga offers a wealth of attractions for the culture-minded.

One fateful night in 1969, legendary news anchor Walter Cronkite cited a federal report that branded Chattanooga as “the dirtiest city in America.” City officials and community members alike responded immediately, striving to revitalize the struggling southern city.

Today, visitors to Tennessee’s “Scenic City” would never know this thriving metropolitan area sprang from a less-than-pristine history. Aside from being a major center of commerce in the South, the vibrant city offers any number of historical, educational and cultural attractions that draw visitors from all over the nation.

Living History

Located 25 miles from the intersection of Georgia, Alabama and Tennessee, the Chattanooga region saw heavy combat during the Civil War. The Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park now preserves many of the

battlefields made sacred by the fighting, and visitors can witness living history demonstrations and reenactments throughout the year.

Fans of the city’s industrial heritage won’t want to miss the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum or the Chattanooga Choo Choo Hotel and Terminal Station, the latter made famous by the 1940s Glenn Miller hit.

Waterfront Reawakened

A major piece of Chattanooga’s waterfront renewal plan, the Tennessee Aquarium features the world’s largest freshwater aquarium as well as a high-speed catamaran tour of the Tennessee River and has continually received top ratings in educational programs and customer satisfaction since it opened in 1992.

“High society” takes on new meaning when applied to the city’s renowned Bluff View Art District. Situated high above the river, the European-inspired neighborhood

features a variety of elegant restaurants, gardens, museums, cafes, inns and galleries. Artisanal bakers, confectioners and chefs create a wide variety of delectable treats you won’t find anywhere else.

Natural Attraction

For visitors looking for some out-of-the-ordinary excursions, a trip to Lookout Mountain is a must. A ride to the top on the Incline Railway, the world’s steepest passenger railway, offers the breathtaking experience of traveling on a heart-stopping 72.9-percent grade, nearly a mile above the city.

Mountaintop tourist attraction Rock City Gardens, popularized by now-nostalgic roadside barn-roof advertisements, features a 4,100-foot walking trail through a maze of fascinating rock formations and lush gardens. And deep in the heart of the mountain, thundering Ruby Falls is a (human-enhanced) natural wonder that is not to be missed. Although man-made pathways allow tourists to travel easily within the cave, the awe-inspiring 145-foot waterfall found more than 1,100 feet underground can only be attributed to Mother Nature.

No longer the industrial center of yesterday, Chattanooga is relishing the new identity it has taken years to create and perfect. Large enough to keep you engaged but small enough to still be friendly and accessible, it may be the perfect destination for your summer getaway or retirement.

—Danielle Taylor

Timber Refuge

In 1990, when the folks at Ronald McDonald House Charities of Greater Chattanooga sought to build a “home-away-from-home” facility for families of hospitalized children, they wanted to create a comforting respite from the stress and sterile feel of the neighboring medical center. Riverland Timber (now defunct) stepped in and built a relaxing and open timber-framed great room that now provides the heart of this inviting refuge.

“We want them to feel they have left the hospital,” explains executive director Jane Kaylor. “I can’t tell you how many people have said you can feel the warmth of this space.” Located right across the street from the T.C. Thompson Children’s Hospital in downtown Chattanooga, the House hosts approximately 600 families each year.

DANIELLE TAYLOR PHOTOS

VITAL STATS Chattanooga, TN

Population: 169,243

Household median income: \$37,260

Average house value: \$126,500

For more information: Chattanooga Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, 800-322-3344; chattanooga.fun.com