

EUREKA SPRINGS

ARKANSAS

People say the most curious things when they visit Eureka Springs, and we can't blame them.

Secluded and peaceful with winding mountainside streets, the city has a flair like no other. Chosen as one of America's "Dozen Distinctive Destinations" by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, this Victorian village boasts the country's only entire downtown on the National Register of Historic Places.

Nestled in the Ozark Mountains of Northwest Arkansas are painstakingly preserved Victorian homes that hug the slides of cliffs and hillsides. The city has block after block of one of a kind shops, boutiques, fine art galleries, spas, and restaurants.

Eureka Springs is a small town and proud of it! The absence of traffic lights, malls, and giant discount stores is a big part of the lure. Less than 2,500 folks live in this magical, friendly village, and yet there's as little or as much to do as you like. While many come to Eureka Springs to enjoy the slow-paced, peace and quiet, but those who are looking for an adventure can find plenty to do as well.

More than 20 million have seen the Great Passion Play, America's largest-attended outdoor drama, a depiction of Jesus's last days on earth. One of the country's largest sanctuaries for big cats, Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge, rescues large felines and places them in natural habitats. Visitors can enjoy nightly music shows, festivals, opera, and the country's oldest folk festival. There are free outdoor concerts every 2nd Saturday, shows at the city auditorium and colorful parades for every occasion!

Other attractions include zip lines, a steam train, ghost tours, and illusionist shows. Trolleys are a preferred way to get around the winding, crisscrossed streets. Trolleys run year-round, though fewer days and hours during the winter months, and there are over 115 stops around town, making it convenient for all.

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Lodging options include something for everyone. There are numerous family-owned motels, historic hotels, and Victorian homes turned into bed & breakfast and nightly rentals. Unique treehouses, rustic cabins, and quaint cottages are tucked into the hillsides and woods. You can even sleep with tigers outside your window at Turpentine Creek!

Eureka Springs can satisfy anyone's appetite for everything from down-home southern food to romantic, candlelit dinners. Award-winning restaurants serve savory Czech-German dishes, authentic Italian cuisine and spicy East Indian fare. You'll find Mediterranean, Chinese, Irish, Mexican, Cajun, and Thai as well. You can also dine on a dining car at Eureka Springs & North Arkansas Railway.

Despite Eureka Springs's small population, more than 300 residents are working artists, helping the town make the list of "Top 25 Arts Destination" by American Style Magazine for the past several years. The entire month of May is proclaimed May Festival of the Arts—dedicated to all the arts including theater, performing arts, and music. Other events like a monthly gallery stroll and artists' studio tours celebrate these artists' works on a regular basis. For those who wish to expand their own personal creative art expression, the Eureka Springs School of the Arts offers a variety of art workshops for adults and children throughout the year.

Outdoor adventures abound. The city is surrounded by two rivers and three lakes. On Table Rock Lake or Beaver Lake, there is great fishing, smooth water for canoe/kayak float trips, take a guided cruise, rent a boat or jet ski, or even paddleboard! The 1600-acre Lake Leatherwood City Park is crisscrossed with hiking and biking trails, and the 85-acre spring-fed lake is perfect for a day of swimming, boating, or fishing. Nearby caves and caverns are perfect for exploring on a hot summer day.

The town's history is colorful and lengthy. Artifacts of Eureka Springs' rich past are displayed in the Historical Museum. Eureka Springs first drew visitors in the late 1800s because of the healing powers believed to be present in over 60 natural springs there. The healing tradition spawned by the springs in the early days lives on today in the abundance of day spas, massage therapists, herbalists, and alternative healers. While the springs today are not potable, they are wonderfully landscaped & lushly gardened. They provide excellent picnic and rest areas as well as giving a beautiful arboretum-like feel.

Fact is, the more you see, taste, do, and experience, the more you realize that this wonderfully weird section of Arkansas can inspire reactions that are as perplexing as they are pleasing. But that's what makes it great. After all, this is Eureka Springs. And this is a place that is curious, indeed.

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