

The Gardens of Houston, Texas

featuring private spaces and public places

Arranged by Classical Excursions

March 14 to 17, 2023 – Tuesday to Friday



Highlights of some of our plans:

- Tours of private gardens (images above)
- Lunch at home and garden of Interior Designer Lucia Benton
- A curatorial tour of Bayou Bend Collection and Garden
- Special tour of the Houston Botanic Garden
- A guided tour of Memorial Park
- Visit to the Museum of Fine Arts Houston
- Dinner at the Tiny Boxwoods restaurant in River Oaks
- An authentic Tex-Mex dinner

While Houston is often associated with oil and energy companies, big business, and NASA's Houston Space Center, it is also home to many cultural institutions. The Museum District comprises nineteen museums, galleries, and community spaces – including the world-famous Rothko Chapel and Menil Collection.

We will enjoy a three-night stay at **The Lancaster Hotel**, in the heart of the Theater District. This historic hotel from the 1920's has been fully updated as a contemporary boutique hotel, and today is a member of Preferred Hotels.

The City of Houston was founded in 1837 after Augustus and John Allen had acquired land to establish a new town at the junction of Buffalo and White Oak bayous in 1836. Houston served as the temporary capital of the Republic of Texas. In 1912, the Rice Institute became the first institute of higher learning in the area. Also, by 1912, Houston was home to twenty-five "tall buildings" ranging from six to sixteen stories. An interest in gardening swept the country during the 1920s at the height of the "City Beautiful" movement, which promoted urban planning and beautification. In accordance with this concept, 27 women formed a neighborhood garden club, whose objectives — as described in a 1927 newspaper article — were "the study of flowers and their cultivation, beautification of backyards, conservation of wildflowers, presentation of flower shows and competitive garden designs." The most famous residential section of town is River Oaks, where that garden club was founded.

Further details on our Houston touring:

A SELECTION OF PRIVATE GARDENS

Visits will include three or more private gardens to complement our exploration of Houston. One of the visits will include lunch at the home of Interior Designer Lucia Benton – Lucia has been in practice since 1999; she studied Studio Art and Filmmaking from Occidental College, Los Angeles; an AAS in Interior Design from Parsons School of Design, New York; and a Masters in American Fine and Decorative Art from Sotheby's Institute of Art, New York.

BAYOU BEND COLLECTION & GARDENS

In 1925, Miss Ima Hogg and her brothers, selected 14-acres of natural woodlands and winding ravines for their home in the newly developed neighborhood of River Oaks. She began planning the gardens even before the construction began on the home in 1927. The gardens at Bayou Bend reflect her love of beauty, flowers, and natural woodlands; her passion for history and all things classical; her meticulous eye for detail, proportion, and scale; her keen sense of color; her hands-on, experimental approach to gardening; and her continuous personal supervision. The 1927 house showcases a collection of decorative art, paintings, and furniture, and presently consists of approximately 4,700 objects that reflect historic and stylistic periods from 1620 to 1870 installed in 28 period room settings that showcase American decorative arts. The property is now maintained by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.



HOUSTON BOTANIC GARDEN

With a bayou running through and around the northern edge of the site, it creates two distinct spaces, the Island and the South Garden, connected by a bridge over the Sims Bayou. The HBG features 132 acres of horticultural displays, natural ecosystems, and walking trails. The Garden consists of the following areas: A Global Collection Garden, Culinary Garden, Pine Grove, Woodland Glade, Stormwater Wetlands and Coastal Prairie Gardens.

The Sims Bayou is one of the four major bayous in Houston, the others being Buffalo Bayou, Brays Bayou and White Oak.

HOUSTON ARBORETUM

Located on the western edge of Memorial Park, the arboretum and nature center is a 155-acre urban nature sanctuary providing education about the national environment. It plays a vital role in



protecting native plants and animals in the heart of a major city.



MEMORIAL PARK

Memorial Park (image right) is a municipal facility that is one of the largest urban parks in the United States. Opened in 1924, it covers 1,466 acres and benefitted from the visionary leadership of passionate conservationists, beginning with Miss Ima Hogg, sister to the Park's benefactors, Will and Mike Hogg. The Park was to be named to honor the soldiers who fought in World War I and trained in Camp Logan, now today known as Memorial Park. For fifty years, Miss Hogg served as guardian of the park, saving it from numerous potential encroachments, including proposals for oil wells and construction of the once-famous Astrodome stadium. It is now maintained by the Memorial Park Conservancy focusing on recreational needs and conducting public education about green space preservation.



MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, HOUSTON

(image: Steven Holl, architect – design of new expansion, recently completed)