

Downtown is a great place to start exploring the sites of Waco. This approximately three mile walking tour will take you past many historic sites as well as great shopping, restaurant and entertainment venues.



Downtown Waco Walking Tour

Waco has many exciting things to see and do. Be sure to visit the Tourist Information Center, conveniently located at Fort Fisher at I-35 and University Parks Dr., for information on additional tours, attractions and maps.



Waco Convention & Visitors Bureau
Waco Tourist Information Center
I-35 @ University Parks Dr.
800-WACO-FUN (922-6386)
254-750-8696
www.wacocvb.com
visitus@wacocvb.com
Open 7 days a week.



Heritage Square

Heritage Square is a beautiful downtown park located in front of City Hall. Complete with shaded walkways, seating areas, water-play fountains, and a beautiful sculpture depicting children at play, Heritage Square offers visitors a great place to walk, play games, or just relax. The original Heritage Square was destroyed when the tornado of 1953 ripped through downtown. The square also features the Waco Tornado Memorial located at the corner of 4th St. and Austin Ave.



down Franklin Ave. to

Historic Waco Suspension Bridge

Completed in 1870, with almost three million bricks covering a span of 475 feet, the Waco Suspension Bridge became the first single-span suspension bridge west of the Mississippi. Today, the bridge stands as an icon of Waco history and is the centerpiece of many community festivals and events including the 4th on the Brazos celebration and Brazos Nights concerts.



University Parks Dr. (NW) to

Vietnam Veterans Memorial

The first sight is a quarter circle concrete wall with the inscription VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL. Veterans Plaza located beyond the wall is dedicated to veterans—past, present and future. A walkway leads you through a grove in memory of 64 servicemen from Waco and McLennan County. One tree ring stands empty in recognition of those still missing in action. Three pavilions are located within the trees: Pavilion I, The Beginning; Pavilion II, The Conflict; Pavilion III, The Honor. The memorial concept and design are the work of Mr. Don Matthews, winner of the design contest, which was held in 1988.



University Parks Dr. (NW) to
Jefferson Ave. (SW) to

St. Francis Catholic Church

The church is a replica of the historically important San Jose Mission in San Antonio. Established by Franciscan Missionaries of the Third Order Regular, the building was completed in November 1931. In later years the walls were decorated with almost life size paintings, representing the Stations of the Cross, the Glorification of St. Francis and scenes of the arrival, predication and martyrdom of the first Franciscan Missionaries in Texas.



Continue down Jefferson Ave. to 4th St. (SE) to

St. Paul's Episcopal Church (SW corner of 4th and Jefferson)

First organized in 1868, the current church building was completed in June 1879.



Continue down 4th St. (SE) to

McCulloch House

Josiah Caldwell and his wife Maria built the east wing of the house in 1866. But prominent Waco merchant Champe Carter McCulloch and his wife Emma had grander ideas in mind. They added a west wing, completing the Greek Revival home in 1872. Besides raising seven children here, the McCullochs made sure their home was known as the epicenter of the Waco social scene where dances and parties occurred frequently. Open on weekends only.



Take Columbus Ave. (SW) to 5th St. (SE) to Washington Ave. to

McLennan County Courthouse

The Beaux-Arts style building is said to have been inspired by St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome. This massive structure, surmounted by a dome suitably decorated with eagles and statues, is laid out on a rectangular four-story plan with an impressive main entrance.



Washington Ave. (SW) to 7th St. (NW) to Columbus Ave. to

Masonic Grand Lodge

The Masonic Grand Lodge includes both a library and a museum loaded with historic artifacts ranging from a lock of Sam Houston's hair to Ben Milam's gun. Their other installations include a large military exhibit, Masonic relics, railroad artifacts, and an exhibit dedicated to the Nazi persecution of Free Masons during the Holocaust. Open weekdays only.



Columbus Ave. (SW) to 8th St. (SE) to Austin Ave. (NE) to

Waco Hippodrome Theatre

Built in 1914 in the heart of downtown as a vaudeville and movie house and restored to a 1930s Spanish Colonial style in the 1980s, the Waco Hippodrome Theater hosts local and national shows alike. With its ornate domed ceiling, gold leaf trim and proscenium arch, the Waco Hippodrome is an architectural treasure. The Theatre has received designation as a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark, and is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places.



Austin Ave. (NE)

Austin Avenue

Austin Avenue is home to antiques, gifts, and many other unique shops and restaurants. Take your time and explore some of the quaint little stores up and down Austin Avenue while enjoying the restored architectural details of these beautiful downtown Waco buildings.



Austin Ave. (NE) to 5th St.

Alico Building

Waco's Amicable Life Insurance Company's Alico Building was once the tallest skyscraper west of the Mississippi. The building height is 282 feet to the observation tower, and 303 feet to the flagpole. The building was built for strength, which became apparent when it was able to withstand the devastating tornado of 1953



5th St. (SE) to

Dr Pepper Museum

The world's oldest major soft drink, Dr Pepper, was invented in Waco in 1885. The Museum, housed in the first Dr Pepper bottling plant, serves up history, nostalgia, and favorite authentic soda fountain drinks. Most people agree—there's nothing like a cold Dr Pepper float on a hot summer day, especially when enjoyed in the ambiance of a restored turn-of-the-century soda fountain.



5th St. (SE) to Webster to

First Baptist Church

Completed in 1883, the original portion of the church building is an attention-getting, though somewhat bewildering, mixture of byzantine, Greek, and gothic architectural styles. The result of this diverse blend is certainly an imposing sight well worth the trip for visitors.



Webster (NE) to 4th St. to

Fort House

This Greek Revival-style home was built by wealthy Alabama planter, William Aldridge Fort. In 1854, he packed up his family, four other families, their relatives, and their slaves—500 people in all—and moved to Waco. Today, the Fort House is used primarily to showcase Victorian furniture and artifacts from Waco's prominent early settlers. Open weekends only.



4th St. (NW) to Mary (NE) to 2nd St. (NW) to

River Square Center

With restaurants on the bottom and shops on the second floor, this renovated warehouse district is the heart of Waco's downtown entertainment.



2nd St. to Franklin Ave. (SW) to 3rd St. (NW) to Heritage Square