

The Lone Star state has a lot to offer and visitors can enjoy the best of Houston entertainment and cultural activities. Different cultures are represented and there are several venues for live music, including blues, country and rock. There is also a thriving hip hop scene. The downtown theatre district includes the Alley Theatre, which has gained a favorable reputation. The city is also host to the Houston Grand Opera, Houston Ballet companies and the Houston Symphony Orchestra.

The theatre district also contains the Bayou Place complex with restaurants, bars, live music and movies. There is a Hard Rock Café and the Rocbar is a rock and roll themed bar with live acts and a giant video screen. A theatre presents cabaret shows and there is a pool hall. Restaurants include an Italian trattoria and a Sushi and Sake bar.

The Marq\*E entertainment Center is a large complex with a 22 screen Edwards Cinema and Imax Screen, a Sport Bar, the Improv Comedy Theatre, the Drink Houston night club containing three themed areas and karaoke bar, dinner theatre and venue for concerts. Several restaurants are also in the Houston entertainment complex, including a Mexican restaurant, video café and cafes selling pizzas, shakes, burgers and ice cream.

Annual events are also popular with local residents and visitors. The Annual Houston Greek Festival celebrates Greek culture with live music from Greece, folk dances and Greek cuisine. Tours round the cathedral are part of the festival agenda. Japanese culture is showcased at the Japanese Festival in the Japanese Garden at Hermann Park. Highlights include music acts, traditional dance, flower arranging, origami and martial arts demonstrations.

The Houston Livestock and Rodeo is the world's largest event of its kind. It takes place at Reliant Park and lasts for three weeks. Bull riding thrills audiences and there is a parade, carnival, barbecue and wine contests. The Houston entertainment scene attracts internationally known stars to this event. The 2007 event included performances by Natalie Cole, Beyonce, Sheryl Crow and the homegrown band, ZZ Top. The Independence Day celebrations take place at the Sam Houston Race Park with children's activities, quarter horse racing and a fireworks display.

Jazz fans enjoy the Annual International Jazz Festival and lovers of the Bard flock to the Houston Shakespeare Festival. This is one of the highlights of Houston entertainment and presents free admission to Shakespeare plays in the lovely outdoor setting of the Miller Theatre in Hermann Park.