

All Roads Lead to Leavenworth



The First City of Kansas Promises a Delightful Daytrip

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Photography Brian Turner

Camping Out with Lewis & Clark

In July 1804, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark proclaimed that their Missouri River campsite would make a fine place to found a city. In August 2011, Lewis and Clark reenactors from the Corps of Discovery Expedition of St. Charles will land at that campsite and offer visitors a peek into the past. Visit their open camp on August 11, 10 a.m.–3 p.m., at the south end of Landing Park, at Esplanade and Choctaw streets.

Does the name Leavenworth conjure up a grim image of the federal state penitentiary? What about a friendly downtown walking tour, a seat at an old-fashioned soda fountain or swilling an award-winning microbrew? It turns out that the First City of Kansas has a lot more to offer than most people realize.

History

Before the days of statehood, Kansas Territory was home to a few pioneers and Native American tribes like the Kansa, Osage and Delaware. In that wilderness, in the shadow of a U.S. Army fort, the city of Leavenworth was founded in 1854—the first city to be incorporated in what is now the state of Kansas. This Gateway to the West served as the last point of civilization for many a pioneer heading to the open frontier via the Santa Fe and Oregon trails.

The city gained more notoriety in 1906, when the first cell house of the Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary opened. Scores of infamous criminals did time here, including Al Capone, George “Machine Gun” Kelly and Robert Stroud, the Birdman of Alcatraz.

Today, this colorful town is home to more than 35,000 residents who enjoy its vibrant downtown, many restaurants and historic attractions.

Going Downtown

Leavenworth’s Main Street Association works hard to preserve the many shops and restaurants that make up the bustling old town center. While the city lacks an actual Main Street, the centrally located Cherokee and Delaware streets act as main street corridors for shopping and dining. Free municipal parking is abundant in corner lots all over town, so leave the car and start your walk at the east end of Delaware, such as 2nd Street, and head west for an easy stroll.

Just west of 2nd Street, you’ll find **The EuroPottery Shop**. Owner Kiki Nohmer imports colorful place settings, teapots, bakeware and more from Boleslawiec, Poland, to sell in her shop. These intricately hand-painted pieces, some designed by Nohmer herself, add an Old World feel to the table.

A few doors down, peek into **Artistic Works by Lu**. Browsing here is like discovering long-lost treasures in your grandmother’s attic. From delicate necklaces to chunky bracelets, Lu’s unique jewelry designs help create a look that’s part vintage, part funk. The shop also offers distinctive and well-priced women’s clothing.

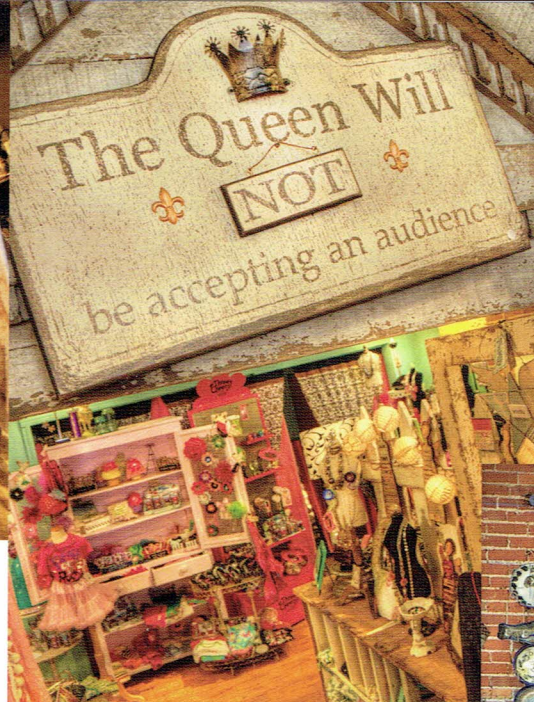
An old-town stroll feels incomplete without bookstore browsing. Try the **Book Barn**, west of 4th Street, where



books of every variety are piled to the rafters. Barb Spear will likely be at the counter to give you the colorful history of the place (the building housed the first funeral parlor opened in Kansas). Tucker, her elderly yellow lab and shop mascot, is always game to show off a few tricks for store patrons.

Turn north up 5th Street to Shawnee Street, where on the corner you'll find the **Candle Queen Candles and Gift Boutique**. This gorgeous shop offers hand-poured candles with scents like Monkey Farts and Butt Naked (they really do smell good!) as well as beautiful pashminas, scarves and unique handbags.

If you happen to be in town on a Wednesday afternoon, head south past Delaware to Cherokee. Haymarket Square, between 6th and 7th streets, is the site of the town's farmer's market, held Wednesdays 3–6 p.m. and Saturdays 7–11 a.m. Buy your fill of local crafts and produce, and then head across the street to the **Pot Rack**. Once the town's Savings and Loan back in 1854, the space now offers Ollie and Kathryn West's vast array of kitchenware, spices and gourmet sauces.



Love Antiques?

Try the **Leavenworth Antique Mall** on Delaware between 5th and 6th streets. Also popular are **Reunions Antiques**, just east of 5th on Delaware, and two on Cherokee between 6th and 7th streets: **Weakley's**, 618 Cherokee, and **Stevie's**, 612 Cherokee.



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Thirsty yet? **The Corner Pharmacy** at 5th and Delaware serves up malts, sundaes and sandwiches at the Old Fashioned Soda Fountain and Grill, a town fixture since 1871. Where a slice of pie costs \$2.35, more than just the homey décor will make you feel like you've stepped back in time.

Attractions

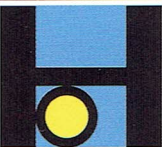
Founded by Colonel Henry Leavenworth in 1827, Fort Leavenworth's purpose was to maintain peace among various Native American tribes and new pioneer settlers. Today, history buffs can take a self-guided driving tour to 16 different sites around the fort, including the National Cemetery. To

begin, head north of downtown on 7th Street past Metropolitan, where it becomes Grant Avenue. Three blocks later, turn right on Reynolds to the Frontier Army Museum, where the tour begins. The museum itself includes many artifacts from the 1800s. Open weekdays, 9 a.m.–4 p.m.; Saturdays, 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Find more info under the Visitors-Attractions menu at the city website.

A guide to Leavenworth's most historic architecture is available at the Convention and Visitor's Bureau office and at the Visit Leavenworth website. The bureau's self-guided walking tour covers more than 80 buildings and 50 homes. Of particular interest is the city's Carroll Mansion. This lavishly furnished Victorian home at 1128 5th Avenue is open for touring Tuesday through Saturday, 10:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. For more information, visit LeavenworthHistory.org.


Good Eats

Leavenworth's surprising variety of restaurants range from Thai, Italian, Chinese and Mexican to good old home-style Midwestern cooking. For an Old West feel, try the **High Noon Saloon and Brewery** (206 Choctaw Street). Its rustic dining room and busy pool table area serve six award-winning handcrafted beers as well as a full menu of burgers, steaks and more. Another local favorite is the **Santa Fe Depot Diner**, housed in the town's 1887 train depot (781 Shawnee Street). Here patrons dine on salads, barbecue or breakfast items ("served all day"). For a full list of Leavenworth eateries, check the Visit Leavenworth website. *—JCL*




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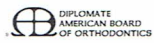



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