

TREK TX NOW



Once outdoors, the trek begins

Houston, Spin Your Wheels Edition

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Cycling Houston

Discover locations of the greenest strips of the city, how to avoid dangerous roads, and crucial tips for cyclists new to the metro area.



ADDITIONAL ADVENTURES



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May 2016
Issue #1

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TREK TX NOW

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Brays Bayou - Greenway Trail

by Will Beard



Houston's expansive Brays Bayou is a winding channel cutting through the medical center with total pedestrian and cyclist access.

From the Sam Houston Parkway to the Gulf Freeway, the Brays Bayou connects a swath of Houston the width of Interstate HWY 610. All along the route, trekkers can enjoy green byways, diverse neighborhoods, and occasional waterfowl. The unbroken nature of the bayou is a must for the trekker with an iron will to keep momentum up throughout their journey.

However, hikers, cyclists, and commuters must all heed flood warnings and stay clear of the bayou until the water level has had a chance

to go down. Water levels can rise 20 feet or more in minutes to hours depending on the severity of the storm. In these scenarios, remember the old adage: turn around, don't drown!

Even though Houston gets ample rainfall compared to many other Texas trekking locations, flooding is not as common here as it is in central Texas. With that in mind, plan to spend countless hours on the Brays Bayou Greenway Trail.

Sidewalks along the adjacent roads may offer more greenery and landscaping, but the trail lets you bypass every traffic light.

Because the trail doubles as a water channel, during the aforementioned times of flooding, the trail completely fills up with water. No barriers means that cyclists should slow down when approaching curves, but remember—at any speed—enjoy the ride, and be careful not to run over any toads!



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REI hybrid trampoline back panel conforms to your body for a comfortable fit, while the ventilation helps keep your back dry even when you're working up a sweat

Adjustable torso ensures the pack can fit a range of back lengths
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Padded mesh shoulder straps with body-mapped ventilation windows and clean bonded construction offer all-day comfort and breathability

J zip pocket on the front panel plus a drawstring opening on top offer easy access to items throughout the pack

Lightweight 210-denier nylon Cordura body and 630-denier nylon bottom fabric offer heavy-duty protection and durability

Integrated rain cover can be deployed in wet weather to help keep the pack and its contents dry

Hydration-compatible design features a tube holder on the shoulder strap (reservoir sold separately)

Mount McKinley, Denali National Park & Preserve | Kent Miller photo, Will Beard adaption | [CC BY 2.0, Wikimedia Commons](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/)

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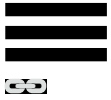
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Hermann Park

by Will Beard



The medical center has another gem near the Brays Bayou Greenway Trail—Hermann Park.

City-dwellers should take advantage of city parks more often, because trekkers will whether or not they are invited! Hermann park is quite the exception city park that boasts a multi-million dollar Houston Zoo, the Miller Outdoor Theater, Houston Museum of Natural Science, Japanese Garden, rose garden, and Hermann Park golf course along with ample green space for countless other leisure activities.

When you decide to visit the park, consider additional activities like geocaching—a popular treasure hunting activity that turns hiking into a

mysterious adventure. For the spory trekkers, bring a frisbee or soccer ball and enjoy the countless shade trees. Still others will enjoy trekking to a secluded green space and having a picnic, reading, or studying. Though be warned if standing still in many of Houston's months. Mosquitos take advantage of the idle human.

If the park itself didn't have enough adventure to offer, the surrounding areas offer even more as well.

Rice University is a prestigious private college located right next to Hermann Park, and offers spectacular architecture, shade, and landscaping. Remember that a school campus can get busy when

classes get out, so avoid trekking solely on campus!

Shopping might be the last thing on a trekker's mind, but Rice Village has quite the selection of boutiques, high-end retail, unique local cuisine, and even has some great deals.

You can find the park between Fannin Street and Cambridge Street near the medical center. It's location makes it a hotspot for community college and university students, medical staff, downtown business professionals, and trekkers targetting a favorite greenspace. The first visit surely won't be your last.

Happy trekking.

Cycling Houston

by Will Beard



Houston is not well-known for its cycling accessibility in Texas, at least compared to Austin. However, bike lanes still exist in Houston, and finding the right areas to cycle in are not as challenging as it used to be. Truly, Houston is becoming more and more bike friendly. The question is: Where do we begin?

While Brays Bayou might be a great option for Houstonians who know the curvy route,

non-local trekkers will want to check out Rice University neighborhood.

Close to Hermann Park, the neighborhoods around Rice University are littered with mansions, townhouses and smaller but still architecturally unique multi-million dollar homes. This area has quite a few bike lanes, electric car charging stations, quiet streets, and more trees than an arboretum. This is a

great place to start your trek because the whole area is relaxed, classy, and full of shaded greenspaces. Check it out!

Houston is enormous, so there are plenty of neighborhoods to visit during your cycling adventures here. Whether it is around Rice University, along the Brays Bayou, or in areas outside the loop, Houston has paved places to cycle.



Bicycles at Rice University

Helmet Features



The issue with Houston cycling is the construction that plagues the city. Due to a wetter climate and a huge motorist population, Houston experiences near-constant bombardment from the elements—both nature and human. The ongoing construction of new or expanded freeways coupled with the eroding water-logged streets means a potentially scary or standstill trek for unprepared cyclists.

What's the solution? Plan ahead before you ride.

Scout an area before you cycle through it. If you happen to find major potholes, lack of bike lanes, and high-

speed roads, avoid these areas at all costs. On the other hand, if you happen to find a trekker's paradise of smooth bike-friendly roads, get ready to ride!

The Google Maps mobile app can provide current traffic updates for cars and will let you know when an area has a traffic-jam. Take note of these areas, as avoid them when cycling will surely be your highest priority.

Get out your paper map or peruse the online maps on Google, MapQuest or elsewhere to find the neighborhoods where you will be doing some major trekking. Find a cul-de-sac or a dead-

end? See neighborhood parks nearby? Yup, you've found a potential low-risk low-speed cycling zone. If the neighborhood is far enough away from a major intersection or major highway, you will find that cycling will be comfortable in this area most of the day. Unfortunately, most areas get swamped for up to three hours during the morning and evening rush. Lunch rush calms considerably, but beware of Fridays like any other major city.

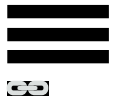
However, Houston hosts major events all the time. Whether it's at NRG Stadium for the annual rodeo, an NBA game with the Rockets at Toyota Center, or

Bicycle Safety Lights



Cycling Houston

continued



Minute Maid Park for some MLB with the Astros, Houston is ready to entertain.

This ample entertainment can mean perilous weekends for cyclists and dangerous weekdays as well. Again, plan ahead before you ride!

Check Houston events in the local newspapers or online before trekking with your bike—especially near the medical center as it is so close to NRG Stadium. In 2017, Houston will host the Superbowl at NRG, so much of Houston will be snail-paced cycling or too dangerous to ride while the medical center and adjacent NRG area will be completely chaotic. Friendly advice to cyclists in early 2017 is to steer clear of that

area at all costs—unless your trekking turns into a job and you start carting pedestrians around in your bicycle cab. Those brave souls might be the only cyclists on the road for quite awhile in 2017. Trek TX Now hopes they take the safest precautions for their cabs. You should too!

The most important rule of the road in Houston and every other place on Earth is to use your front lamps and tail lights and always wear a helmet.

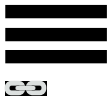
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What about speed bike trekking?

Racing your speed bike through Houston's best-kept streets can be tricky.

Daredevils might consider speeding down Brays Bayou Greenway Trail due to its flat nature and lack of stoplights, but the risks are not worth these rewards. Crashing your expensive bicycle into a wet bayou or dry concrete 15 feet down is a terrifying thought, and extreme speeds should not be attempted on this trail.

However, there are places to catch up to some car speeds if you and your bike can handle it. Houston has been experimenting with bike lanes next to faster and faster cars, and this city is not known for its hills. This makes speed biking possible, but not everlasting. Remember, the construction and



water-logged potholes along with major motorist congestion mean that extreme speeds should be attempted by trekking cyclist veterans only. If you have the gear, the momentum, and the muscle, you can go for broke. We here at Trek TX Now support your high-speed endeavors fully when you are well prepared.

That being said, there is no recommended area for such extreme biking. The risk is entirely on you, the adventurous trekker. We will not endorse any specific area for such a sport and insist on you taking the most well-informed

precautions before and during such a trek.

High speeds kill, so remember to plan ahead. We cannot stress this enough. Always plan ahead!

Your safest bet for high-speeds is to check out a local Houston gym, pop on your headphones or virtual reality headset and take your trek to a virtual world. When you ride on a stationary bicycle, the majority of the trekking adventure is lost. However, as the Oculus app store grows, more adventure can be had that represents real trekking experiences without the dangers inherent in the journey.

When using a stationary bike or cycling in the real world, remember to take breaks every 30 minutes to an hour. Houston can get very humid and you could potentially pass out if you are not cooling down properly.

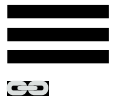
We highly recommend HTX Shox cycle for all your cycling needs. Need a mud guard for wet Houston? Check! Want advice on how to upgrade to ride the wilderness trails up in Sam Houston National Forest? Definitely! Mention this magazine edition to Shox for a 5% discount all month!



Refurbished bicycle at HTX Shox

Sam Houston National Forest

by Will Beard



About an hour north of downtown Houston, Sam Houston National Forest offers trekking of all kinds: camping, hiking, cycling, and even boating and hunting.

Wear orange vests during hunting season in November and December and talk to your park staff before getting into any dangerous situations.

Going wild is how to truly trek the forest though. The forest is home to Little Lake Creek Wilderness which boasts 3,855 acres of designated wilderness from the 1984 Texas Wilderness Act.

This park and the wilderness area in

particular are not crowded places, best for major nature-loving trekkers ready for a night under the stars without constant zooming cars.

With an adventure that starts in this forest, you open up your trek to a serene pineywoods environment with rivers, creeks, and lakes that snake through the area. The wildlife is typical of forested east Texas with white-tailed deer, Eastern gray squirrels, quail, dove, red-cockaded woodpecker, wood ducks, bluebirds and more.

Journey down old logging paths and an abandoned pipeline right-of-way to see

nature taking back what is rightfully its own. Off-road vehicles are not allowed in much of the forest trails but some areas do offer small 4-wheeler and dirt bike access as well as horseback riding.

Be sure to check out the Lone Star Hiking Trail, which may be hiked year round. Where else can you find bayous, evergreens, and mild climate at such a low cost? The United States's Department of Agriculture (USDA) runs the Forest Service, which governs this great greenspace.

Trekkers should find the park uncrowded and ready to embrace them with comfort.



Yellow-crowned Night-Heron at Sam Houston National Forest



HERMANN PARK

GO



GO

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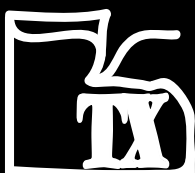
Hermann Park/Rice U
Northbound Rail Line

convenient
and scenic

You'll find it all at
Hermann Park.
Fitness, relaxation,
science, shopping,
and more.

Happy trekking.

GO



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