

Great Bend

It's in our nature...
to Explore!

Plan A Great Bend Migration!

Get ready for a journey. Migrate through Great Bend, Kansas on the Wetlands & Wildlife National Scenic Byway. Sample local food and find a comfortable overnight "nest." Fly by huge Cottonwood trees (and a Lustron home) at the Historical Village & Museum, hike or bike a paved trail on the Arkansas River, check out the Santas Around the World, see vintage neon at the Crest Theatre & the Eagles Lodge, walk along the Santa Fe Trail in the historic Downtown & Courthouse Square (Jack Kilby Memorial, Song Bird Habitat, Big Birdhouse Project). Your migration will end at Great Bend's little jewel, the Great Bend Raptor Center and Brit Spough Zoo.

1. Barton County Historical Village & Museum. The Museum (a Santa Fe Trail interpretive site) sits among rescued and restored buildings from the past, including a post World War II prefab Lustron home, an 1898 church, and a 1915 one-room school house. (Insiders tip: Pick up a self-guided tour of Lustron homes in Great Bend at the Museum.)

2. Arkansas River Hike & Bike Trail. Access to this wide, paved trail is located next to the Historical Village & the Arkansas River bridge. On foot or by bicycle, this is an outstanding river/nature/exercise experience.

3. Crest Theatre & Eagles Lodge. The modern-style Crest Theatre has been renovated and is the home for performances of all types. The lighted marquee is one of the best in the state. Around the block on Main Street you'll find an iconic neon eagle on the mid-century Eagles Lodge. (Insiders tip: Call ahead for a Crest tour & they'll turn on the marquee lights!)

4. Santa World. These 23 life-size Santas are handcrafted by a local artist. Each Santa has his (or her) own unique story and elaborate costume. Italy's ethereal female Santa, La Befana carries a hand bell and wears a sparkling blue gown. The Irish Santa has emerald robes and holds a birds nest. Open year round by appointment.

5. Courthouse Square/Santa Fe Trail. When you walk the Santa Fe Trail here on the Square, quilt patterns embedded in the sidewalks tie you to Kansas history & the Square is dominated by a beautiful and historic Courthouse. A Civil War statue commemorates the soldiers (black & white) who defended the Union. He looks south to safeguard the town.

6. Jack Kilby Memorial. Nobel Laureate Jack Kilby (inventor of the integrated circuit) graduated from Great Bend High School and is honored by this Plaza where his bronze likeness stands. Kilby's 1958 invention is now hailed as the 'birth of the digital age.'

7. Birdhouse Art Tour & Songbird Habitat. The north side of the courthouse square is home to a songbird habitat. You can sit on a bench and enjoy the Square and the birds! Stroll Main Street to see 5-foot artist-decorated birdhouses outside many businesses. The community-wide tour consists of over 70 birdhouses.

8. Downtown Great Bend. Downtown is full of great shops, local restaurants & coffee shops. (Insider's Tip: The CVB has a self-guided walking tour of Downtown's historic buildings.)



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9. Raptor Center & Zoo. The Great Bend Raptor Center is the entrance to the Zoo. The Center specializes in the medical rehabilitation of eagles, hawks, owls, falcons, and vultures. Visitors can enjoy the interpretive and educational displays. Founded in 1952, Brit Spauagh Zoo is home to over 100 mammals, birds, reptiles, and insects. From elegant tigers to regal lions, the Zoo shelters animals and gives visitors a chance to observe and learn about the natural world.

Now enjoy dinner at one of the local favorites, then get some sleep at your comfortable Great Bend hotel. Full day tomorrow! (*Insiders tip: The Raptor Center is also an interpretive center for the Byway to prepare you for a day of Byway exploration.*)

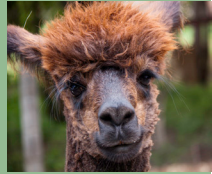


Migrate More!

Great Bend is full of charming opportunities to rest & refuel. These are a few of our favorites:

Retreat with the Alpacas

Heartland Farm offers handmade gifts, free trade chocolate, lodging, a labyrinth, massage & Alpacas!



Sample the Wine!

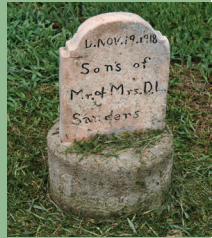
A visit to either the Rosewood Winery or their downtown Wine Cellar is a treat.

Coffee & History Downtown

Perks in the Historic Zarah Hotel
Great Bend Coffee - Masonic Lodge

Lustron Homes & Gravestones

Self-guided tour of mid-century Lustrons & Great Bend Cemetery.



The Art of Shopping

Beautiful Beginnings, High Call Outfitter, and Refined Medley

Find Your Nest in Great Bend

Great Bend is the perfect place to nest while you explore the Wetlands & Wildlife National Scenic Byway. You'll find local flavor in our restaurants and comfortable lodging at Great Bend's nine hotels/motels. Contact the GBCVB for a restaurant and lodging list or visit our website: www.VisitGreatBend.com



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