

# Great Bend..Naturally!

KANSAS

There are definitely four seasons in Kansas, and Great Bend celebrates each of them with special events and community traditions.



## Spring

Great Bend explodes with spring bulbs all across town and hosts special events that celebrate the beauty of nature in the spring. Every other year, Great Bend showcases its world-class birding with the Wings & Wetlands Weekend. New and experienced birders spend a spring weekend bird-watching in two of the hottest birding spots in the world, Cheyenne Bottoms & Quivira National Wildlife Refuge. There are also various celebrations that feature parades, amazing food, dancing, singing, traditional crafts, and games to Main Street in the Downtown area.



## Summer

Summer in Great Bend brings crystal blue skies and clear starry nights that are perfect for star-gazing. You can spend your weekend listening to the roar of dragsters at the S.R.C.A. Drag Strip or indulge in real small-town treats, such as the annual Sidewalk Sale, the Barton County Fair, the K-96 June Jaunt and the free 4th of July fireworks extravaganza. Summer glows here with friends at green golf courses, a Water Park full of splashing kids, and cheering crowds at the Great Bend Sports Complex and ball fields all over town.



## Fall

Great Bend's natural gifts are on display during this beautiful season. With the fall migration, brings an abundance of beautiful and rare birds for bird watching and perfect waterfowl for hunting. Birders will get the rare opportunity to see the lifestyle of a Whooping Crane. Everyone enjoys warm days and cool nights in this surprising community. The Great Bend Brit Spaugh Zoo gets scary with its Zoo Boo the weekend before Halloween.

## Winter

Come home to Great Bend for the Holidays. The Trail of Lights is an award-winning combination of lighted displays, life-sized Santas Around the World, an "iceless" ice skating rink, parade, special events, a multitude of shopping, and attractions that will make for an unforgettable holiday memory. From the Twelve Days of Christmas light display at Vet's Park to the Wild Lights at the Brit Spaugh Park & Zoo, Great Bend is the place to celebrate Midwestern holiday. Winter in Great Bend also brings opportunities for nature lovers too. The wetlands are alive and compelling with Eagles often appearing in an icy blue sky over Cheyenne Bottoms.



## All Year

There's always something going on in Great Bend, regardless of the time of year. The Shafer Art Gallery brings traveling shows to its beautiful galleries. The Barton County Arts Center features guest artists and a flow of surprising art from local artists. Both galleries highlight their shows with artists' receptions open to the public. The BCAC hosts frequent concerts in the Back Room, the Community Theatre presents a well-rounded season of plays, and the Community Concert association brings professional musicians to Great Bend. 🍀

## FOR NATURE LOVERS

If your inspiration comes from biking, hiking, paddling, outdoor photography or birding . . . then Great Bend is your natural wonderland.

Fashioned from whole Kansas cloth and deeply-held Midwestern values and motivated by perseverance and resolve, Great Bend is a blend of 19th century pioneer spirit and 21st century vision. It is a city that has made peace with,

and thrives by the environment in which

they live, while embracing their role as the guardian of one of nature's most inspiring habitats. You will find rural charm, amazing natural resources, and true Midwestern hospitality combined with all the amenities travelers need and expect for an "inspiring" visitor experience.

### Biking Opportunities

There are plenty of biking trails around Great Bend that offer great scenic views and accommodate

for different ages. Off-Road biking trails include the Cheyenne Bottoms, Lake Barton Mountain Bike Trail, and the Arkansas River. Several paved bike routes follow county roads through flat and gently rolling terrain. These are two lane roads with low traffic flow. Trail maps available at the Great Bend CVB.

### Hiking Opportunities

Breathe in that fresh air and get your body moving on one of our delightful hiking trails that offer something for everyone. Locations include:

- Cheyenne Bottoms and the Nature Conservancy
- Arkansas River
- Lake Barton

### Birding Opportunities

Our location on the Central Flyway brings a diversity of birds that make this region the major "stop-over" on their migrations. Bird watching locations include:

- Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area
- The Nature Conservancy Cheyenne Bottoms Preserve
- Quivira National Wildlife Refuge
- Arkansas River Nature Trail (entrance at Stone Lake)
- Hike/Bike Trail at Stone Lake
- Dominican Sisters Convent
- Brit Spaug Park & Zoo
- Wetlands & Wildlife National Scenic Byway

### Photography Opportunities

Capture beautiful scenic shots from the abundance of the amazing and attractive wildlife environment surrounding the area including:

- Arkansas River Paved Hike/Bike Trail
- Arkansas River Unpaved Hike/Bike Trail
- The Raptor Center in Great Bend
- Brit Spaug Park and Zoo
- Courthouse Square Songbird Habitat
- Veteran's Memorial Park
- Dominican Sisters Convent
- Great Bend Cemetery

Contact the Central Kansas Photography Club at [email@cenkanphotoclub.org](mailto:email@cenkanphotoclub.org).

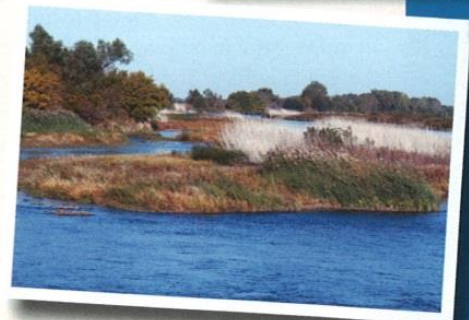
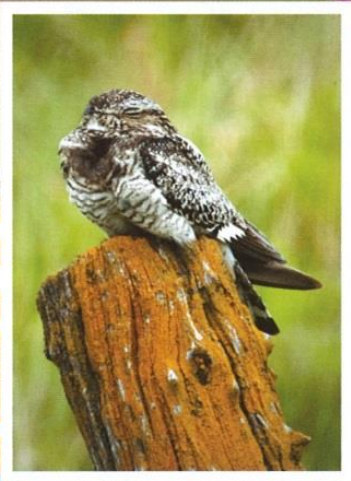
### Paddling Opportunities

Take a paddling adventure along the river and discover the sights of the riparian woodlands, wildlife, and marshy areas and enjoy city locations including:

- Arkansas River
- Cheyenne Bottoms
- Stone Lake
- Veteran's Lake

For more information or to receive a copy of the biking, hiking, birding, photography, and/or paddling brochures (includes a map of routes and tips) call the Great Bend Convention & Visitors Bureau at 620.792.2750 or download them electronically at [www.visitgreatbend.com](http://www.visitgreatbend.com).

You can also come by our 24/7 brochure rack at 3007 10th St.



# PLAN A GREAT BEND MIGRATION

## Get Ready For a Journey...

Not sure what to do first in Great Bend?

We've put together an itinerary to get you started!

In this tour you'll migrate through the area just like the thousands of birds that visit our area every year. 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, Birdhouse Art Tour**). Your migration will end at Great Bend's little jewel, the **Great Bend Raptor Center** and **Brit Spaugh 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. (*Insider's 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 moderne-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. (*Insider's 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 (*both 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."



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### 7. Song Bird Habitat & Birdhouses.

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-tall, artist-decorated birdhouses outside many businesses.

### 8. Downtown Great Bend.

Downtown is full of great shops, local restaurants & coffee shops. Note the Barton Arts Gallery featuring local art for sale and see live music featuring nationally-known folk & blue grass artists in the Back Room at least once a month. *(Insider's Tip: The CVB has a self-guided walking tour of Downtown's historic buildings.)*

**9. Raptor Center & Zoo.** The Raptor Center is the entrance to the Great Bend Brit Spaugh Zoo. The Center specializes in the medical rehabilitation of eagles, hawks, owls, falcons, and vultures. Visitors can observe medical procedures and enjoy the interpretive and educational displays.

Founded in 1952, the Great Bend Brit Spaugh 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. *(Insider's tip: The Raptor Center is also an interpretive center for the Byway to prepare you for a day of Byway exploration.)*

**10. Enjoy dinner at The Page or one of the local Mexican restaurants,** then get some sleep at your comfortable Great Bend hotel. Full day tomorrow!



## Migrate More!

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

### RETREAT WITH THE ALPACAS

Heartland Farms offers handmade gifts, free trade chocolate, lodging, a labyrinth, massages & Alpacas!

### COFFEE & HISTORY DOWNTOWN

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

### BBQ ON THE SANTA FE TRAIL

Johnsons Smokehouse & BBQ

### LUSTRON HOMES & GRAVESTONES

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

### THE ART OF SHOPPING

Barton Arts Gallery, Cornerstone and The Gallery (Santa Artist)

### MIGRATE THE HIGH TECH WAY

Get a GPS tour of Cheyenne Bottoms & the Byway at your hotel or the Great Bend CVB.

### PAMPERING ON THE SQUARE

Renue Salon & Hollywood Nails offer welcome retreats downtown for pedicures, facials and massages.



Scan this QR code with your smart phone for the latest Calendar of Events!

# Great Bend

CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

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