

OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Lions at Greenville Zoo; Diners eating at Soby's outdoor seating patio; Waterfall located below Liberty Bridge; Liberty Bridge and Falls Park; Downtown Greenville skyline; Fluor Field on Opening Day; Kiko, Greenville's most famous baby giraffe.

WORDS/ **SHERRY JACKSON**

Getaway to Greenville, South Carolina

Nestled against the Foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the city of Greenville has a vibrant, revitalized and award-winning downtown. While every destination promises something for everyone, few can deliver like Greenville.

From fabulous restaurants, incredible museums, unique shops, an award-winning baseball stadium and a plethora of outdoor activities, Greenville is a great getaway.

It would be impossible to list everything worth seeing in the space available, but here are some suggestions for starters.

Falls Park and its **Liberty Bridge** are the crowning achievements of Greenville's revitalization. Warm summer days are filled with activity in the 40-acre downtown park which is located in the heart of the West End District and sits on the site of an old sawmill. The Liberty Bridge is a pedestrian-only bridge spanning the Reedy River. It is one of only two single-sided suspension bridges in the world and provides a spectacular view of the 30-foot waterfall below.

Falls Park connects to nearby **Cleveland Park**. This 126-acre park offers access to the Swamp Rabbit Trail, an abandoned rail-line-turned-greenway, now an 18.9-mile bike and walking path. It's also home to the **Greenville Zoo** where a famous baby giraffe named Kiko was born last year and can be seen eating leaves alongside Mommy and Daddy.

Baseball season is in full swing during the summer, and Fluor Field, Greenville's award-winning stadium, is a great place to catch the **Greenville Drive**, the city's Minor League team, in action.

In addition to art galleries and boutiques, the West End is also home to the **Peace Center for the Performing Arts**. This venue recently got a facelift and hosts local and Broadway shows along with showings of local and independent films.

Not to be outdone, the North End of Main Street, dubbed NOMA, continues to thrive as the city expands. The Hyatt Hotel, with its recent renovation,

serves as a majestic landmark, and its newly opened **Roost Restaurant**, a soil-to-city, open-kitchen concept, has a huge outdoor patio and a community chef's table.

A block away is **Mast General Store**. This old-time general mercantile has a little bit of everything. Kids like the candy barrels while Mom and Dad appreciate the huge selection of outdoor wear, equipment and locally made food items.

While Greenville's museums are not located directly on Main Street, they are still within walking distance and not to be missed. **The Greenville County Museum of Art** is home to the world's largest collection of Andrew Wyeth paintings and is among the country's premier art museums. Best of all, admission is free.

Also worthwhile is the **Upcountry History Museum**, which showcases the unique textile and mill history of South Carolina's Upstate, known as "the textile center of the South." Interactive and multimedia exhibits provide interesting history lessons from some of Greenville's most prominent citizens.

While **The Children's Museum of the Upstate** caters to the younger set (ages 0-12), older kids will have fun, too. Even adults are encouraged to climb, slide and crawl on the Kaleidoscope Climber, a three-story climbing structure. "As the seventh largest children's museum in the country, our exciting hands-on exhibits and outstanding programming make the museum a perfect destination for visitors to the Upstate," says Nancy Halverson, president/CEO of the Museum.

Kids of all ages will also enjoy searching for the **Mice on Main**. Started as a project by a student at a local school and inspired by Margaret Wise Brown's

book, "Goodnight Moon." There are nine small bronze mice hidden along Main Street. Either go it on your own or get a hint sheet available at most of the downtown hotels and retailers.

Although Greenville is a very walkable city, it's still fun to take a free ride on the **Greenville Trolley**. The trolley runs on weekends and for home baseball games. Schedules are posted at several locations. Just wave your arms at any intersection when the trolley is near to hop onboard.

"There's a buzz in the air in Greenville in the summer. Between outdoor music festivals and our weekly Farmers' Markets, there is always something going on and people are seemingly everywhere.

There's a great energy and you just want to be a part of it," says Chris Stone, president of the Greenville Convention & Visitors Bureau. Top all that off with Southern charm and friendly smiles and you'll be surprised that you waited so long to get away to Greenville. ☉

DETAILS

For more information, contact the Greenville Convention & Visitors Bureau at 864.233.0461 or 800.717.0023 or check out the bureau's website at www.visitgreenvillesc.com. You can also send an e-mail to visit@greenvillecvb.com.