

READY, SET,
GET OUT THERE:
AFAR'S ULTIMATE
GUIDE TO
TRAVELING THIS
YEAR

Portuguese bluefin tuna collar and tempura lobster. The Gantry London, Curio Collection by Hilton sits just two minutes from the bustling Stratford International Station and has 291 rooms and suites, as well as a Colombian coffee shop, a steak house, an Afro-Caribbean restaurant and music venue, and a "sparkling bar" serving U.K.-made sparkling wine and other fizzy drinks. —Nicholas DeRenzo

FORT WORTH, TEXAS

From cowboy culture to Black history, Cowtown is putting its heritage front and center.

Thanks to Beyoncé's *Cowboy Carter* album and shows like *Yellowstone*, Fort Worth's Western roots feel more current than ever. The city's legendary Stockyards, a National Historic District since 1976, have been reimagined with boutiques and restaurants taking up residence in the area's former mule and horse barns. Even *Yellowstone* creator Taylor Sheridan has gotten in on the action, purchasing and remodeling the renowned Cattlemen's Steak House in 2025. (Now he's at

work on a private members' club downstairs.) The spirit of Cowtown lives on with year-round rodeos at the Cowtown Coliseum; the annual Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo (including the Cowboys of Color Rodeo on January 19, 2026); honky-tonking at Billy Bob's; and the world's only twice-daily cattle drive along East Exchange Avenue.

In November of 2026, the National Cowgirl Museum will debut a 16,000-square-foot expansion; one of the new exhibits will feature a number of outfits from country singer Miranda Lambert's *Velvet Rodeo* residency in Las Vegas. Until then, visitors can take in *Soldaderas to Amazonas: Escaramuzas Charras*, an exhibit that brings Mexico's all-female equestrian tradition to life through vibrant dresses and embellished saddles.

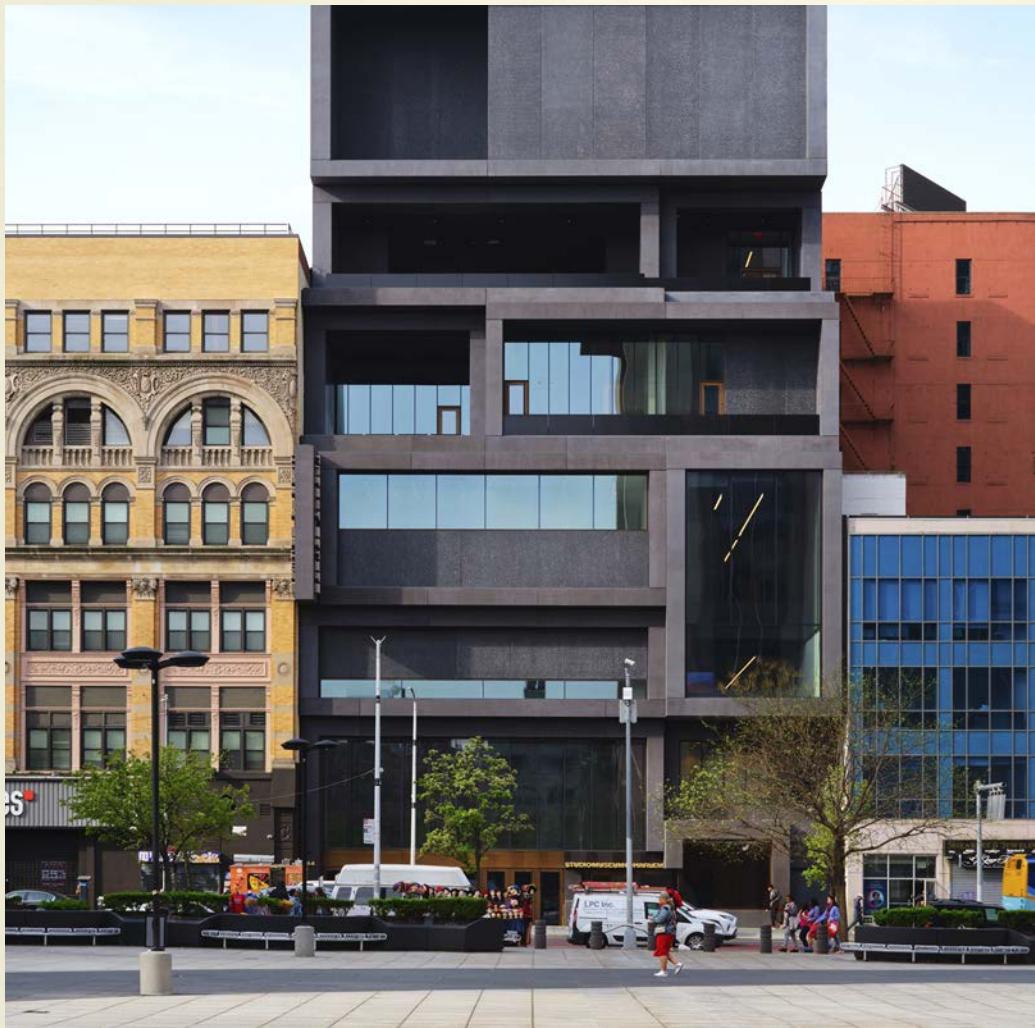
But there's more to Texas's fourth-biggest city than rodeos and honky-tonks. Groundbreaking for the National Juneteenth Museum is slated for early 2026 in the historic Southside neighborhood. The museum—whose founding board member, 99-year-old Opal Lee, was instrumental in making Juneteenth a federal holiday in 2021—will focus on the legacy of emancipation and the ongoing struggles for equality, justice, and unity. "We're located in an area that was somewhat of a Black Wall Street in the early 20th century," says Christopher Blay, director of public programs. "We are part of what's bringing this community alive again." Designed by the Bjarke Ingels Group, it will feature immersive exhibitions, a 250-seat theater, and a food hall spotlighting diasporic cuisine. The

WHERE
TO GO IN
2026

Fort Worth's Cowtown Coliseum hosts weekly rodeos, as well as major events like the Premier Women's Rodeo World Championship.



ZIGY KALUZNY



Harlem's Studio Museum reopened its doors in November 2025 after a seven-year renovation.

building will have a courtyard designed in the shape of a nova star, which is at the center of the Juneteenth flag, symbolizing a new path forward.

WHERE TO STAY: The Nobleman Fort Worth opened in May 2025, incorporating the facade of an old firehouse in the Near Southside neighborhood. Inside, an original fireman's pole and staircase lead to art-lined walls and a brasserie, Duchess, serving rib eyes, roast chicken, and fried eggplant schnitzel. Sandman Signature Fort Worth Downtown Hotel is set to reopen in 2026, bringing fresh life to the 1920 W.T. Waggoner Building, a neoclassical marble, brick, and terra-cotta tower. —Nora Walsh

HARLEM, NEW YORK CITY

As iconic institutions reopen after major renovations, the upper Manhattan neighborhood and Black cultural capital is ready to share its rhythm and resilience with visitors.

The heady swing of jazz legend Duke Ellington and his contemporaries still reverberates in the storied Manhattan blocks from 110th to 155th streets. And now, the stretch—which contains multiple historic districts—is poised to offer residents and visitors reasons to explore more deeply.

Its revitalization will be especially visible in some of the neighborhood's most famous institutions. The Studio Museum in Harlem—which reopened in November 2025 with seven floors of galleries, workshops, artist studios, and education centers—represents the street, the stage, and the sanctuary. And under the longtime direction of chief curator Thelma Golden, the new museum edifice also represents a fourth social sphere with the “inverted stoop” inspired by Harlem brownstones, which invites people to sit and find community.

Less than a five-minute walk west of the museum is the legendary Apollo Theater on 125th

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Street. Originally a burlesque venue, by the 1930s it became a home for some of the world's most transformative Black artists, helping launch the careers of James Brown, Luther Vandross, H.E.R., and many more in its long-running Amateur Night competition. As the main Apollo Theater undergoes a major renovation and preps for its grand reopening in late 2026, live performances continue at Apollo Stages, next door in the Victoria Theater.

Also set to reopen in 2026 is the National Black Theatre, which is located at the corner of 125th Street and Fifth Avenue. It was founded by the late actress Dr. Barbara Ann Teer in 1968 to provide a platform for new and emerging Black voices. From here, head south to the Harlem Meer in Central Park. In April 2025, the \$160 million Davis Center debuted with a massive swimming pool, winter skating rink, turf field, and pavilion, completely transforming the north end of the park.

WHERE TO STAY: Renaissance New York Harlem Hotel opened in 2023 at the Victoria Theater on 125th Street with a Cajun-inspired restaurant, lobby lounge, and 211 rooms and suites, many with stellar city views. For a homier stay, consider the Mount Morris House, a fully restored 1888 Victorian townhouse that has two spacious suites overlooking Marcus Garvey Park.

—Shannon J. Effinger