ACL 2023 (St. Louis) Local Guide

Arriving and getting around
The main ("Danforth") campus of Washington University (wustl.edu/about/campuses/), where ACL will be held, is located at the border between St. Louis City and St. Louis County, about a 20-minute drive from the airport. The Clayton Plaza Hotel is 1.5 miles west of campus.

Lambert Airport is to the northwest of St. Louis. Southwest operates out of Terminal 2, all other domestic carriers out of Terminal 1. Both terminals are on the local light rail line, MetroLink (see below). The main Amtrak and Greyhound station (also on a Metrolink stop) is downtown on South 15th St.

Public transportation (www.metrostlouis.org/) isn’t impressive, but Wash U is well-positioned for easy Metrolink trips to the airport, downtown, and points between. Two MetroLink “Blue” line stations bookend campus: Big Bend (northwest corner, nearer the dorms and ACL sessions) and Skinker (northeast corner, off Forest Park). Clayton is a couple of stops west. The airport is on the other (“Red”) line, however, so to get to campus or Clayton from the airport, you need to travel east to Forest Park/DeBaliviere Station, then switch to the westbound Blue Line. System info here: www.metrostlouis.org/metrolink/. At MetroLink stations, you can buy ticket for light rail only, or a pass for unlimited use of both rail and busses for a set period.

Campus basics and nearby walks
Dining and coffee spots are listed at diningservices.wustl.edu/. There are two campus stores with necessities and swag, by the dorms (bearnecessities.wustl.edu/) and nearby off Forsyth Blvd. in Mallinckrodt Center (wustl.edu/about/campuses/danforth-campus/mallinckrodt-center-samuel-b-edison-theatre/). There is a pharmacy near the northwest corner of campus (www.millbrookrx.com/), a Walgreens and an Urgent Care a mile to the south (Big Bend and Clayton Rd.), and a CVS a mile to the north (Delmar and Skinker).

For indoor breaks during a stroll, stop at Olin Library (mid-campus) to view a copy of the Declaration of Independence and assorted other mini-exhibits, and/or at the Kemper Art Museum (east end), whose eclectic permanent collection includes a great group of Greek vases in their own little space. Free admission; check hours (www.kemperartmuseum.wustl.edu/).

North of campus, the Delmar Loop is packed with small businesses including a bookstore, record and comic shops, restaurants, a specialty grocery store, a movie theater, people-watching, and the St. Louis Walk of Fame honoring local notables (explorestlouis.com/things-to-do/neighborhoods/the-loop/). The Loop’s biggest claim to fame is Blueberry Hill’s Duck Room, where Chuck Berry played for many years. Google the quickest (and quietest) walking route to
the Loop from campus, via a pedestrian bridge and the pretty Parkview neighborhood. The entire Loop is longer than campus west to east, including several blocks east of Skinker.

South of campus, DeMun Ave. has a pretty strip of cafés and restaurants facing the lawn of Concordia Seminary. Google the walking route there (through a residential neighborhood).

Go east for a longer and truly beautiful walk (or run). Starting at the east end of campus, the 1300-acre Forest Park contains miles of trails and several of STL’s major attractions (www.forestparkforever.org/visit; more info below).

Sightseeing (Best done via car – most places are within 15 minutes’ drive)

St. Louis’ great free cultural institutions: In different areas of Forest Park you’ll find the St. Louis Art Museum (www.slam.org/), the Missouri History Museum (mohistory.org/society), and the St. Louis Zoo (www.stlzoo.org/). For only $1, check out the Jewel Box (a giant greenhouse; www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/parks/parks/Jewel-Box.cfm).

More art: in the Central West End northeast of Forest Park (site of CAMWS 2024! cwescene.com/) you’ll find not just great dining, a movie theater, and a beloved independent bookstore, but art galleries and the Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis, open to visitors who come to see its stunning mosaics (cathedralstl.org/). For something more hands-on, visit the beloved City Museum, an all-ages playscape (or museum, if you skip the slides and rides) whose every beautiful nook and cranny is made of repurposed scrap and salvage (www.citymuseum.org/).

Nature in the city: Our top recommendation for a few hours’ getaway is the fabulous 79-acre Missouri Botanical Garden (www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/), in the Shaw Historic District in South City. $14 admission; very much worth it. For a longer drive but a lovely free walk, the 314-acre Bellfontaine Cemetery and Arboretum north of downtown is full of significant monuments and offers tours (www.bellefontainecemetery.org/).

Music and theater: In Forest Park, the Muny theater stages musicals outdoors all summer (muny.org/). Lots more entertainment is found in Grand Center near St. Louis University: big and small theaters, jazz venues, and the St. Louis Symphony’s ornate Powell Hall (www.grandcenter.org/). For some music history, continue east to Midtown’s Scott Joplin House State Historic Site and Museum (mostateparks.com/park/scott-joplin-house-state-historic-site).

Eye-candy neighborhoods: lovely old houses line the narrow streets of the Central West End (see above), Lafayette Square Historic District (www.lafayettesquare.org/), and Soulard Historic District (www.explorestlouis.com/things-to-do/neighborhoods/soulard/), where you can also tour the huge Anheuser-Busch brewery (www.budweisertours.com/).
**Popular attractions, downtown/riverfront** (cf. [www.gpsmycity.com/tours/saint-louis-downtown-walking-tour-1854.html](http://www.gpsmycity.com/tours/saint-louis-downtown-walking-tour-1854.html)): The Gateway Arch sits inside a very nice park on the bank of the Mighty Mississippi. Going up in the Arch is a fun experience for the non-claustra- or acrophobic, but it’s also beautiful from the outside, and has a museum underneath ([www.gatewayarch.com/](http://www.gatewayarch.com/)). Nearby are the oldest cathedral west of the Mississippi, the old courthouse where Dred Scott and his wife first sued for their freedom, the Cardinals’ Busch Stadium, and the pretty CityGarden sculpture park ([explorestlouis.com/partner/citygarden/](http://explorestlouis.com/partner/citygarden/)). Deeper into downtown, there’s the City Museum (see under “art”); the old Union Station is a tourist destination with a light show in the grand hall/bar, an aquarium, and a Ferris wheel; ([www.stlouisunionstation.com/](http://www.stlouisunionstation.com/)); the beautifully renovated Central Library does tours ([www.slpl.org/locations/9/](http://www.slpl.org/locations/9/)); and there’s the Art-Deco Soldiers Memorial Military Museum ([explorestlouis.com/partner/soldiers-memorial-military-museum/](http://explorestlouis.com/partner/soldiers-memorial-military-museum/)).

**Dining**

St. Louis has much more to offer beyond barbecue, a controversial style of pizza, and Anheuser-Busch products. In the neighborhoods below, you could just walk around and find what suits you, from cocktails to international cuisine to ice cream, but we highlight a few old favorites and newer options. Using the information available, we’ve marked Women-owned (WO), Black-owned (BO), and Immigrant-owned (IO) establishments. (R)=reservations advised.

**Near campus:**

(WO) **Kaldi’s Coffee** (local chain w/ food; DeMun and Skinker locations [kaldiscoffee.com/](http://kaldiscoffee.com/))
(R) **Louie** (fantastic Italian, can be noisy, DeMun; [www.yelp.com/biz/louie-clayton-2](http://www.yelp.com/biz/louie-clayton-2))
**Sasha’s** (wine bar w/ small plates, DeMun; [www.sashaswinebar.com/](http://www.sashaswinebar.com/))
**Basso** (Italian gastropub) and **Fox and Hounds Tavern** (cozy, small plates), both in the Tudor-style Cheshire Inn on Clayton Rd. ([www.cheshirestl.com/dining](http://www.cheshirestl.com/dining))
**Turmeric** (elegant pan-Indian, Loop; [www.turmericstl.com/](http://www.turmericstl.com/))
(IO) **Ranoush** (Syrian, Loop; [www.ranoush.com/](http://www.ranoush.com/))
**Moonrise Hotel** rooftop bar (small plates, view, Loop; [moonrisehotel.com/food-drinks/](http://moonrisehotel.com/food-drinks/))
(BO) **Prime 55** (steaks and other hearty stuff, Loop; [prime55delmar.com/index.php](http://prime55delmar.com/index.php))

**In Clayton:**

(WO) **Colleen’s** (breakfast, lunch, baked goods; [www.colleenscookies.com/](http://www.colleenscookies.com/))
(R) **Pastaria** (great pasta, pizza, desserts, cocktails; [www.eatpastaria.com/stlouis/](http://www.eatpastaria.com/stlouis/))
(R) **Avenue** (elegant American; pretty dining room; [avestl.com/](http://avestl.com/))
(R) **Louie’s Wine Dive** (pastas & such; [www.louieswinedive.com/](http://www.louieswinedive.com/))

**In or near Central West End:**

(BO) **West End Bistro** (seafood, steaks, sandwiches; [www.westendbistro255.com/](http://www.westendbistro255.com/))
(IO; R) **Bar Italia** (Italian, longtime CWE favorite; [baritaliastl.com/](http://baritaliastl.com/))
(IO) **Saigon Café** (quiet nook for Vietnamese; [www.saigoncafestl.com/](http://www.saigoncafestl.com/))
(BO) **Bait** (seafood; [www.baitstl.com/](http://www.baitstl.com/))
(IO) **The Scottish Arms** (cozy, first-rate pub food, patio; [www.thescottisharms.com/](http://www.thescottisharms.com/))

(WO; R) **Vicia** (amazing farm-to-table cuisine; [www.viciarestaurant.com/](http://www.viciarestaurant.com/))

In **The Grove** (south of CWE along Manchester Ave; diverse casual restaurants, breweries, and bars, and an LGBTQ hub; [www.thegrovestl.com/](http://www.thegrovestl.com/)):

- **Urban Chestnut Brewery and Bierhall** (German food, fun space; [www.urbanchestnut.com/](http://www.urbanchestnut.com/))
- (BO, WO) **Creole with a Splash of Soul** ([www.creolemeetsoul.com/](http://www.creolemeetsoul.com/))
- (IO) **Sameem** (Afghan, no alcohol; [www.sameems.com/](http://www.sameems.com/))
- (IO) **Sultan** (Mediterranean, no alcohol; [www.sultan-stl.com/](http://www.sultan-stl.com/))
- **Beast** (barbecue, fun open space; [www.beastbbqstl.com/](http://www.beastbbqstl.com/))

In **Grand Center** and **Midtown**:

- (BO; R) **Jazz St. Louis** (dine and drink well while listening to live music; [jazzstl.org/](http://jazzstl.org/))
- **Small Batch** (all-vegetarian menu, huge whiskey list; [www.smallbatchrestaurant.com/](http://www.smallbatchrestaurant.com/))

On **The Hill**, south of Highway 44 below Forest Park, is St. Louis’ “Little Italy” (and Yogi Berra’s childhood home; [www.hillstl.org/](http://www.hillstl.org/)). Loads of old-school Italian places here, but also:

- (R) **J. Devoti Trattoria** (cozy farm-to-table bistro; [www.jdevoti.com/](http://www.jdevoti.com/))
- On the **South Grand** strip (Arsenal to Humphrey) is famous for its diverse restaurants and its long association with the St. Louis Pride Festival ([southgrand.org/](http://southgrand.org/)).

- (WO; R) **Tree House** (outstanding veg & vegan and cocktails; [www.treehousestl.com/](http://www.treehousestl.com/))
- (WO; R) **Salve Osteria** (house-made pastas, legendary “Gin Room”; [www.salveosteria.com/](http://www.salveosteria.com/))
- (BO, IO) **Meskerem** (wonderful Ethiopian; [meskeremstl.com/](http://meskeremstl.com/))
- (IO) **Sheesh** (Turkish, beautiful, no alcohol; [www.sheeshrestaurant.com/](http://www.sheeshrestaurant.com/))
- (BO) **Steve’s Hot Dogs** (loaded dogs, burgers, cocktails; [www.steveshotdogsstl.com/](http://www.steveshotdogsstl.com/))

**Lafayette Square**:

- (WO) **Mayo Ketchup** (fast-casual Cuban/Dominican/Puerto Rican; [plantaingirl.com/](http://plantaingirl.com/))
- (WO; R) **Eleven Eleven** (Tuscan/Californian, lovely space & service; [1111-m.com/](http://1111-m.com/))

**Downtown**: You’ll find lots of good options along Washington and Locust Aves and in the hotels. A few suggestions:

- **Brick River Cider** (nice dry ciders, great bar food; [www.brickrivercider.com/](http://www.brickrivercider.com/))
- **Bridge Tap House & Wine Bar** (cool space, great bar, small plates; [www.thebridgestl.com/](http://www.thebridgestl.com/))
- **Broadway Oyster Bar** (live music, historic building; [www.broadwayoysterbar.com/](http://www.broadwayoysterbar.com/))
- **Fariñas** (Argentinian-inspired; [www.farinasrestaurantstl.com/](http://www.farinasrestaurantstl.com/))

**Finally, if you like craft beer**, check your menus for our favorite local offerings:

**Civil Life** (British-style, great flavor), **Urban Chestnut** (German-style), and **Schlafly** (started the craft movement, still going strong). But there are many more, and some breweries are also great destinations serving food. A partial guide: [explorestlouis.com/discover/st-louis-beer-brewing/craft-breweries-brew-pubs/](http://explorestlouis.com/discover/st-louis-beer-brewing/craft-breweries-brew-pubs/).