



It's nice to have you in Birmingham, and we mean it.

We even put it on murals. To ease your transition from newcomer to local, reference this guide as often as necessary.

Vocabulary

1. Bham (also B'ham or the 'Ham): use these abbreviations for Birmingham interchangeably in conversation and in written form. *Synonyms: Steel City, Iron City, Magic City*

2. James Beard Award: something our local chefs, restaurants and bars win and/or receive nominations for.

3. Magic City: founded in 1871, Birmingham grew so mind-bendingly fast with the iron and steel boom that it seemed magical. Hence the nickname.

4. Over the Mountain: this refers to which side of Red Mountain you live on, specifically the south side, away from the big city. It refers to Mountain Brook, Vestavia Hills, Homewood and Hoover. PS—it's iron ore that puts the red in Red Mountain.

5. Sidewalk: shorthand for Sidewalk Film Festival, 20 years and counting.

6. The Pig: It's the grocery store, not the animal. Of course we have lots of great grocery shopping options, including Publix, Whole Foods, Sprouts, Organic Harvest and others. But when your friend is running by "The Pig," you'll know they're going to Piggly Wiggly.

7. Vulcan (aka, Birmingham's big man in the sky): the Roman god of forge and fire, this colossal iron statue stands atop Red Mountain. And you better get used to the fact that he doesn't wear pants

Words to the Wise

8. If you know how to drive in the snow... Be advised, we don't.

9. If someone says they're going to SOHO or Hollywood... That's not referring to New York or California. They mean Homewood.

10. Locals tell you that you have to choose when it comes to the Crimson Tide vs. Auburn Tigers. And, that's true. However, to be a sports fan in Birmingham, there are a few other things you need to know. Let's take a deeper dive on that subject.

11. We love our UAB Blazers football team fiercely. Fighting back from the brink of extinction two years ago, the Blazers took home their first Conference USA Championship in December 2018. To celebrate, Birmingham Mayor Randall Woodfin declared January 18 UAB Blazers Football Day.

12. The Magic City Classic is an annual throw down between the football teams of Alabama A&M University and Alabama State University. The rivalry is more than 75 years old and draws a crowd of 100,000 to Birmingham.

13. Not moving here from football country? That's okay. We've got hockey, baseball and (coming soon!) soccer.

14. After football, we're passionate about two things: murals and dogs. Our pets are even invited to Birmingham's oldest festival, Doo Dah Day, which raises money for animal charities.

15. There are two types of people in Birmingham: those who grew up here and love it, and those who move here not quite knowing what to expect ... and never look back.

16. We're "good people." Good People Brewing Company is even based here for Pete's sake, along with many other local breweries. Hey, while we're on the subject ...

Eats and Drinks

17. Milo's Tea might be our biggest export. True story. Before it became more widely distributed, I filled my trunk with jugs of Milo's Tea to supply a friend's wedding in Kentucky. My family in Georgia? They love it.

18. Our culinary scene has got game. Renowned chefs include Frank Stitt and Chris Hastings, among others. Travel Channel host/chef Andrew Zimmern loves us so much he came back for seconds. Meanwhile, the Cooking Channel's Ali Khan digs our "Cheap Eats."

19. Even if you don't like coconut, try Dolester Miles' coconut cake. Named James Beard Outstanding Pastry Chef of 2018, she's been pastry chef at Highlands Bar and Grill for more than three decades.

20. When it comes to new restaurants, the more the merrier. Check out 18 favorite new bars and restaurants of 2018 and what's coming in 2019.

21. “Food snob” is not in our vocabulary. Give us our meat and threes, wings and pizza, please, and don’t forget the barbecue. A ‘must try’ is the local white sauce on barbecue chicken. PS—we never met a food festival we didn’t love.

Things to Do

22. Ya know, I hear there’s a great newsletter for that. Sign up for the Bham Now newsletter, and we won’t steer you wrong. Meanwhile, here are a few staples to get you started.

23. Spend a day at the museum. We have a whopping 21 including the Birmingham Museum of Art, the Civil Rights Institute and McWane Science Center.

24. Be artsy. The Alabama Symphony Orchestra, the Alabama Ballet, Opera Birmingham and the Red Mountain Theatre Company thrive in our fair city.

25. Be outdoorsy. Check out Railroad Park, Vulcan Park, Ruffner Mountain, Red Mountain Park and Oak Mountain Park. If you visit the Birmingham Zoo or the Birmingham Botanical Gardens in Mountain Brook, take advantage of the pedestrian crosswalk that connects the two at the Cahaba Road roundabout. A roundabout? How very English of us.

Places to Live

26. Sooooo many neighborhoods. There are just under a hundred neighborhoods in Birmingham proper. For example, my first Birmingham home was in Highland Park, with 1920s architecture, a series of parks and quick downtown access. Now I’m in Crestwood South, a mid-century suburban feel 10 minutes from everywhere. Check out over 20,000 listings here!

27. It’s easy to stand in two cities at once. Birmingham metro includes the cities of Mountain Brook, Homewood, Vestavia Hills and Hoover (those are “Over the Mountain,” as we say) as well as Trussville. Each has its own distinct character. In some cases, they’re nestled so close together it’s hard to tell where one city ends and the other begins.

28. How to answer the question, where are you from? It depends. Even if you live in Homewood or Hoover, you might answer Birmingham when you’re out of state. Inside Birmingham metro, definitely name your city or Birmingham neighborhood.

Welcome! It sure is nice to have you in Birmingham.

