

## Students Play Among the Stars in Branson

Located in the heart of the Ozark Mountains, Branson, Missouri is within a day's drive of many Midwestern cities, making it an easily accessible destination for student group travelers. With its "G"-rated entertainment and a great return for the dollar, Branson offers diversified experiences for students and peace of mind for parents.

In Branson, student performing groups don't just watch the show, they take center stage as a part of the cast and crew in one of the destination's many theaters. A variety of opportunities exist for groups to participate as the pre-show entertainment - performing on the same stages as many of Branson's biggest stars. For instance, performing groups can experience a pre-show sound check and clinic orchestrated by professional musicians from the area. Among the many performance venues are the Showboat Branson Belle, Dixie Stampede, Welk Resort Theatre, and American Bandstand Theater.

Through workshops, master classes, and behind-the-scenes programs, students can engage with theater professionals. More than 100 live shows featuring entertainment personalities, performing families, impersonators, illusionists, and comedians afford performance groups a rich and entertaining destination from which to learn and grow. In addition, year-round music festivals offer interactive musical competitions for bands, chorales, and orchestras.

But it's not all work and no play in Branson. As one of the fastest-growing student performance destinations in America, Branson offers student group traveler's not only top-notch performance venues, but exciting attractions as well.

The 1880s-themed Silver Dollar City features 100 demonstrating craftsmen, unique shops, live shows, and six exciting festivals throughout the year. On one end of the town, the newly introduced GIANT Swing sends students skyward as they experience the rush of back-to-back G forces. The explosive PowderKeg sends riders into a thrill zone on this rollercoaster ride that launches from 0 to 53 miles per hour in just seconds. On the other side of the park, students may meet craftsmen whose skills have been passed down from generations of artisans. Crafters include a silversmith, candy maker, coppersmith, basket maker, and a furniture craftsman.

Student group travelers may experience Branson sightseeing from a duck's-eye view on Ride the Duck tours, where passengers travel on land and water in one amazing vehicle. The amphibious vehicles are based on the famous World War II DUKW design, which allows the vehicles to travel through historic Branson and then splash into Lake Taneycomo for a cruise.

For more cruising fun, Showboat Branson Belle offers lake and dinner cruises of Table Rock Lake. Students can explore the three decks of the ship while capturing glimpses of wildlife along the shore. Dinner cruises include a three-course meal followed by a spectacular show in the 700-seat dinner theater. Performance groups are also invited to entertain guests as they board the ship at White River Landing.

Another popular dinner-show venue, the Dixie Stampede features a full-scale production with American buffalo, horses, racing ostriches, and dozens of talented performers. Students thrill to trick riders, amazing stunts, and audience participation, including a four-course dinner. Prior to the show, students may visit the open-air stables to see the show's Quarter Horses, Palomino, Appaloosa, and Paint breeds. The Carriage Room opening act begins 50 minutes before the Dixie Stampede main show and features juggling and physical comedy acts. Choir and band performance opportunities at the Dixie Stampede are also available.

Student group travelers will play all day and enjoy night life at night at Celebration City, Branson's biggest nighttime attraction. From thrill rides and midway games to a go-kart track and Coney Island-style Boardwalk, Celebration City is an all-in-one destination of fun. In the evening, student groups have a blast at Ignite the Night, the Midwest's largest laser and fireworks spectacular. The show features colorful lasers, dazzling water illusions, and sizzling fireworks set to music. Shows begin at 9:30 p.m. nightly, weather permitting.

When the fun gets too hot to handle, student group travelers can dive into Branson's White Water Park. The only outdoor water park in Branson, the attraction offers water-blasters, super-soakers, speed water slides, and Kalani Towers - with two 75-foot freefall drop lanes. White Water is home to the largest selection of water rides and attractions in the Ozarks.

## About the Author

[Travel Adventures](#) Travel Adventures is a student tour provider staffed by educators who understand the needs of teachers. It has served over one half million students since 1987 and its mission is to "empower teachers to create change by expanding the classroom to the world."

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