

Foley/Elberta— Art, Antiques, and Model Trains

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Eight miles north of the white sand beaches of Alabama's Gulf Coast sit two small towns rich in culture and heritage, **Foley** and **Elberta**. You'll find everything from modern art, antiques, a train depot and a medical museum where visitors have claimed to have seen ghostly spirits, to a soda fountain and, in Elberta, a museum with artifacts from pioneer days. Foley is a small town that's big on places to shop, while Elberta is home to the German Sausage Festival and Baldwin County Heritage Museum.

Shopping in Foley

Foley [www.visitfoley.org] is a great place to find antiques and collectibles in shops like the **Gift Horse Antique Centre** [<http://www.visitfoley.org/attractions.cfm?AttCatID=21>] (209 W. Laurel Ave., 251-943-3663), **Hollis Ole Crush** (204 S. McKenzie St., 251-943-8154), **The Green Ant** (109 S. McKenzie St.; 251-943-3696) and **Old Armory Mall** (812 N. McKenzie St., 251-943-7300). The shops are all within walking distance of each other.

The town is also home to the **Tanger Outlet Center**, [<http://www.tangeroutlet.com/foley>] (2601 S. McKenzie St., 251-943-9303) where you can shop till you drop at more than 150 brand name stores, from Coach and Ralph Lauren to J. Crew and Polo. The outlet is located approximately two miles from downtown Foley on Hwy. 59. The shops are open Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. and Sunday, 11 a.m.-6 p.m.

For more information on Foley, stop at the **Foley Visitor Information Center** [www.visitfoley.org] (109 W. Laurel Ave.; 251-943-1300) located next to the Holmes Medical Museum. The center is open Monday through Friday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Grab a Cup of Coffee for a Dime

After shopping, stop off for a treat or a cup of coffee for 10 cents at **Stacey's Rexall Drugs & Old Tyme Soda Fountain** [<http://www.visitfoley.org/attractions.cfm?AttCatID=18>] (121 W. Laurel Ave.; 251-943-7191). Since 1929, Stacey's has been offering ice cream, hand-made milkshakes, malts, ice cream sundaes, sandwiches and sodas. The fountain also houses a pharmacy with some unusual over-the-counter remedies.

Enjoy the beauty and fragrance of the roses along the paved public walking trail that winds through the heart of downtown Foley.

Model Trains, Roses, Art and Medicine

The **Foley Alabama Railroad Museum** [<http://www.foleyrailroadmuseum.com/>] (125 E. Laurel Ave.; 251-943-1818) is located in the **Old L&N Railroad Depot** and houses Foley's archives. The first depot was built in 1905 when John B. Foley of Chicago used some of his own money to bring the railroad to the southern part of Baldwin County. This first depot burned and a second station took its place in 1908. The museum contains reminders of the

days when Foley was a thriving agricultural center and the railroad played a major role in its prosperity. It's open Monday through Friday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

The Quarter Mile Model Train Exhibit

Step inside the railroad museum where families will enjoy the “O” gauge model train exhibit with one-fourth mile of track. The layout represents the 1950s era, when the rail lines were in the transition of being run by steam to running on diesel fuel. There is a Main Street USA, complete with a fire station, car wash, church, bus station and a city park with an "N" gauge train that carries children around the park. You will see a farm, a sawmill and a coal company on one end of the layout and an oil refinery on the opposite end. Also, *Thunder Road*, an old Robert Mitchum movie, is playing at the Hub Drive-In.

After touring the train museum stop to smell the roses, literally. Take a leisurely stroll along the **Wilbourne Antique Rose Trail** and camellia path that begins just outside the train depot. The paved public walking trail winds through the heart of downtown Foley following the path of the old railroad line. You'll enjoy the beauty and fragrance of the roses along the one mile trail. Enjoy the camellias in Heritage Park and continue north across Violet Avenue where the rose trail begins.

Enjoy a different type of trail while riding a horse at **Sea Horse Stables** (Hwy. 59 at County Road 24; 251-971-RIDE). The stables are open year-round and offer trail rides, birthday parties, hayrides and cookouts.

The **Holmes Medical Museum** [<http://www.visitfoley.org/attractions.cfm?AttCatID=18>] (111 W. Laurel Ave.; 251-943-1818) served as Baldwin County's first hospital from 1936-1958 and remains mostly unchanged since it was in operation. On display are many original medical artifacts including surgical instruments, operating room machinery and a human skeleton. It's said that some of the former patients are still around keeping watch. Visitors have told stories of seeing ghosts.

Downtown Foley is also home to two art galleries and studios. **Jan's Art Studio** (115 W. Laurel; 251-971-3836) sells arts and crafts by local artists and also offers art supplies and art classes. The local crafts make great gifts and souvenirs. Across the street from Jan's is the non-profit art center and gallery, the **Foley Performing Arts Center** [<http://www.foleyartcenter.com/>] (116 W. Laurel Ave.; 251-943-4381). As you shop, you just might discover your hidden gem. Displays in the large gallery include paintings, mixed media, pottery, jewelry, clothing and many other crafts. The center also offers art classes.

The Gulf Coast Hot Air Balloon Festival

(DON'T MISS BODY)

The Gulf Coast Hot Air Balloon Festival [www.gulfcoastballoonfestival.com] (251-943-3291) every Father's Day weekend in Foley. Nearly 50 hot air balloons float in the Gulf Coast skies, and the evenings provide spectacular balloon glows.

You can even take your own hot air balloon ride with **Taking Off Hot Air Balloon Company** [www.gulfviewballooning.com] (251-970-FLYU) where you will soar 1,500 to 2,000 feet over the Gulf Coast.

Where To Stay

The quaint **Hotel Magnolia** [www.thehotelmagnolia.com] (115 N. McKenzie St.; 251-943-5297) has celebrated more than 100 years of history. Built in 1908 by John B. Foley himself, the Hotel Magnolia was renovated in 2006 to serve a new generation of visitors. With all the elegance and craftsmanship of a bygone era, visitors can enjoy the hotel's luxurious and charming atmosphere, which includes antiques, comfortable, graciously appointed rooms and exquisite mosaic-tiled bathrooms, for about the same price as a garden-variety motel room.

A nearby option is the **Magnolia Springs Bed & Breakfast** [www.magnoliasprings.com] (14469 Oak St., Magnolia Springs; 251-965-7321). This B&B with five guest rooms sits on a quiet street lined with old oak streets draped with Spanish moss. It has been featured in *Southern Living* and on HGTV.

Where To Eat

Stop in at the **Magnolia Court Restaurant** for Sunday brunch at the Hotel Magnolia. Brunch is served 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m. [www.thehotelmagnolia.com] (115 N. McKenzie St.; 251-943-5297)

The lunch buffet at the **Gift Horse Restaurant** [www.thegifthorserestaurant.com] (209 W. Laurel Ave., Foley, 251-943-3663) will satisfy your appetite for Southern food. Their apple cheese casserole is listed in the "100 Dishes To Eat in Alabama Before You Die" brochure. Other dishes on the buffet include fried chicken, seafood bisque, baked chicken, salads, turnip greens, fish and more. If you have room, there are freshly baked cakes like German chocolate, coconut and red velvet. Housed in a 100-year-old building, the restaurant is open for lunch 11 a.m.-4 p.m. and the cost is \$12.95 per person.

Cahall's Deli (8207 Hwy. 59; 251-970-3030) offers quiches, salads, desserts and fresh Boar's Head brand deli sandwiches. It's located in the Hollis Orange Blossom Square. Locals rave about the chicken pot pie and chicken salad.

Visit Elberta

Just 10 minutes and 5.8 miles from downtown Foley on Hwy. 98 awaits the community of **Elberta** founded by farmers from Germany in the early 1900s.

Experience German heritage every October in Elberta. You can sample locally made sausage, dance, listen to music and be entertained at the **Original German Sausage Festival**. [www.elbertafire.com].

The **Baldwin County Heritage Museum** [www.baldwincountyheritagemuseum.com]

(25521 US Hwy. 98 E.; 251-986-8375) offers a place for visitors to reconnect with the early history of Baldwin County. The museum has created a home for historically significant buildings, tractors, farming materials, documents and artifacts.

(ABOUT FOLEY & ELBERTA)

Foley is located at the heart of Baldwin County, one of the largest counties east of the Mississippi River. Just minutes from the white-sand beaches of Gulf Shores, Foley has seen many influences, including Native Americans, Spanish, French and English. Its proximity to Mobile Bay made it home for settlers from France, Germany, Sweden, Russia, Greece and Africa.

The small community of Elberta was founded by farmers who had emigrated from Germany. The town was incorporated in December 1952. It is home to the German Sausage Festival and the Baldwin County Heritage Museum.

To share questions or comments about this road trip, please email edith.parten@tourism.alabama.gov [edith.parten@tourism.alabama.gov].