

# FOUR OF A KIND

## QUEENLY CITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY

By Lynn & Cele Seldon



*F*or a variety of historical reasons, the United States has several destinations with the nickname of “Queen City” or something similarly regal. Several of the royal nicknames can be traced back to monarchies in England or on mainland Europe, while other cities called Queen City, or the like have earned the moniker in a different manner.

Google and Wikipedia report that the term Queen City is also used as more of a generic term for any city that has the largest population in a state (or sometimes the county or other regions) but isn’t the capital (or county seat). In any case, a quick Google search also reveals dozens of cities and towns large and small called Queen City or something similar.

Like the four colorful queens in a deck of cards, here are four cities with queenly connections across the country: Charlotte NC, Cincinnati OH, Springfield MO, and Seattle WA.





NASCAR Racing



Blooming Trees in the Park



Sunset by the Docks



Trolley in the City Center

# CHARLOTTE

## NORTH CAROLINA: The Queen City

Perhaps no other city across America has as much of queen-leaning lineage as North Carolina's Charlotte. While Raleigh is the Tar Heel State's pretty capital, Charlotte is the largest city in the state. It was named for Queen Sophia Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, wife of King George III of England. Queen Charlotte's homeland, northern Germany's Mecklenburg-Strelitz, is also the namesake for the county – Mecklenburg.

What is now Charlotte was founded as Charlotte Town way back in 1768. Now often referred to as Queen City, QC, or Crown Town, Charlotte is peppered with crown insignia and

royal references throughout the city – from the street signs to street art and much of the city's branding. City tourism officials and many destinations have embraced Charlotte's royal roots in a big way, providing visitors with the royal treatment around every corner.

For instance, Sophia's Lounge in Uptown on 5th Street (in The Ivey's Hotel) is named for Queen Sophia Charlotte and features vintage décor, dark wooden tables, high-backed chairs, and creative cocktails – all reminiscent of 18th century Britain. Also, on the spirits front, Muddy River Distiller in nearby Belmont due west serves up a royal rum: Queen Charlotte's Reserve Carolina Rum.

Other royal options on the food and drink front include: Queen's Feast: Charlotte Restaurant Week (every January and July); Queen's Landing Sightseeing & Dinner Cruises (including the Catawba Queen Dinner Cruise); Queen City Q (tasty Carolinas-style barbeque and more); Louisiana-leaning Cajun Queen; and Queen Charlotte Pimento Cheese Royale™ (four varieties of tasty pimento cheese found in many local stores and restaurants).

Visitors will also note colorful queen-themed murals throughout town – ask any local for the location of their favorites. There are also statues of Queen Charlotte on College Street (a stop on the Charlotte Liberty Walk) and out at Charlotte Douglas International Airport. History and culture buffs will want to head to The Charlotte Museum of History, the Levine Museum of the New South, Queens University of Charlotte (formerly Queens College); and the Mint Museum Randolph and Mint Museum Uptown (where there's a 'queenly' work of modern art meets Charlotte history that's hard to miss).

Of course, many RVers are NASCAR fans. Thus, Charlotte road trippers will want to head to the excellent NASCAR Hall of Fame to explore the history and heritage of the sport that has its origins on the backroads of North Carolina and where NASCAR stars are called "Kings of the Queen City."



# CINCINNATI

## OHIO: The Queen City of the West

Neither the largest city in the Buckeye State or its capital (Columbus is both), Cincinnati earned the moniker of The Queen City of the West back in the early 19th century when Americans started migrating across the Ohio Valley and flocked to the city on the Ohio River...Westward Ho! The city was also dubbed "Queen of the West" in a Henry Wadsworth Longfellow poem (Catawba Wine) in 1854.

More recently, football fans may recall a fun social media challenge dubbed the "Queen City Bowl" back in 2014, when the cities of Charlotte and Cincinnati vied for top Queen City status on the field and online. Ironically, and many said appropriately, the game ended in a 37-37 tie between the Panthers and the Bengals, but both cities won when it came to recognition across the country as regal places to visit.

Often called the "Paris of America" when it came to cultural firsts and more for a city west of the Alleghenies, Cincinnati has the first purpose-built art museum west of the Alleghenies (1881's Cincinnati Art Museum); the oldest membership library west of the Alleghenies (downtown's Mercantile Library, opened in 1835), the West's first the machine tool builder, John Steptoe, who arrived in Cincinnati in 1850 and jumpstarted the city's rich steamboat history; and the oldest planetarium in the west (Wolff Planetarium in Burnett Woods, which opened a century later in 1950).

Culture and history certainly still reign as modern Cincinnati's crowning glory, including the Cincinnati History Museum, where visitors can board the Queen City of the West, a replica sidewheel steamboat at the once-bustling Cincinnati "Public Landing" exhibit. Cincinnati's unique history and more can also be explored with a variety of tours from American Legacy Tours, including popular "Queen City Underground," "Ultimate Queen City Underground," "Queen City is Haunted," "Ultimate Queen City is Haunted," and many more.

On the food and drink fronts with regal connections, there's

Queen City Radio, a beer garden-style bar in the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood, Queen City Exchange, a stock market-inspired bar in downtown Cincinnati, and Orchids at Palm Court, located in the historic Cincinnati Netherland Plaza Hotel, which is Ohio's only AAA Five Diamond restaurant. Those looking for a crowning view of the Queen City of the West will want to head to Top of the Park at The Phelps Hotel or Eden Park, a hilltop park overlooking downtown that's home to the aforementioned Cincinnati Art Museum, Playhouse in the Park, Krohn Conservatory, and more.



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# SPRINGFIELD

MISSOURI: Queen City of the Ozarks



Photo Courtesy of Springfield, Mo Convention & Visitors Bureau



Photo Courtesy of Springfield, Mo Convention & Visitors Bureau



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The first known touting of Springfield as the “Queen City of the Ozarks” evidently occurred in a speech made by Sempronius “Pony” Boyd during the celebration of the city’s centennial in 1876. Boyd was a local attorney and founder of the town of North Springfield and Springfield Wagon Works. He was also the judge at the trial of James “Wild Bill” Hickok for murder in 1865.

Like Cincinnati 550 miles to the east, Springfield also served as another gateway to the west by way of the Ozark Mountains. The St. Louis-San Francisco Railway’s arrival in 1870 had sparked the continued growth that would lead to Boyd’s bragging, which would continue into the 20th century and beyond.

Though Springfield isn’t the largest city in Missouri (it ranks third behind St. Louis and Kansas City, with Jefferson City serving as the Show-Me State’s capital), the Queen City of the Ozarks is the largest metropolitan area in the sprawling geographic region encompassing southwest Missouri, northwest Arkansas, southeast Kansas, and northeast Oklahoma. Because of that, it serves as the regional hub for culture, dining, shopping, activities, and more.

Today, many local businesses have adopted the Queen City name in some way, including Neighbor’s Mill Bakery & Café (their Queen City Breakfast

Sandwich comes with ham, bacon, egg, Swiss cheese, tomato, and barbeque chipotle ranch sauce), J. Parrino’s Queen City Deli, and Queen City Wine Dive. Springfield visitors will also find other businesses with Queen City in their name, including a bicycle sales and repair shop, a barber shop, and tattoo parlor, and more.

Even event names use the nickname, including the Queen City Sertoma Cajun Cookoff, the Queen City Century Ride, the Queen City Beard & Moustache Federation Competition, Queen City Goes to the Roller Derby, Queen City Pinball, Drag Bingo for Queen City Voices, and more. Several clubs use the name, including the Queen City Sertoma Club (Sertoma is “service to mankind”), the Queen City Ukulele Club, and the Queen City Chevelle Club.

Springfield visitors will also love learning about the royal connection found at a lavish house called, “The African Queen,” which has been dubbed one of America’s most regal homes. The secluded 3,100-square-foot house sits on six acres and was reportedly named after the 1951 movie starring Humphrey Bogart (who won the Oscar for Best Actor, his only one) and Katharine Hepburn. Though it isn’t open to visitors, some of its unique and very un-RV-like features evidently include a glass floor looking into a creek, a copper hot tub built into a bluff, and a 550,000-piece mosaic wood floor.

## THE QUEEN MARY: A Regal Floating Landmark



Photo Courtesy of Seldon Ink.

Longer, wider, and almost twice as heavy as the Titanic, Queen Mary docked for the final time in 1967 to become a popular floating museum and so much more. Today’s “passengers” can enjoy fine dining and drinks (including the Promenade Café, Midship Marketplace, Chelsea Chowder House & Bar; Sir Winston’s Restaurant & Lounge, a Malibu Wines tasting room, and the Observation Bar, as well as the ship’s appropriately-named Royal Sunday Brunch), varied tours (from “The Steam and Steel Tour” to “The Glory Days,” “Their Finest Hours,” and more), attractions (like “Illusions of the Passed” and “Voyage to the Other Side”), a 4-D theater, shopping (including Portside Marketplace, Starboard Shoppe, and more), and many special events and nighttime attractions.

Varied accommodations options include original Art Deco rooms with original polished wood paneling, 1930s artwork, portholes, giving lucky overnight guests a taste of what transatlantic travel was like. While there are many ghost stories shared onboard those in the know report that Stateroom B340 has had a large volume of recorded paranormal activity!

There are lots of different ticket options, including combo passes that can include the USS Iowa and the Aquarium of the Pacific. Other nearby attractions and activities include Disneyland and Disney California Adventure® Park; the legendary Laugh Factory comedy club; excursions to Catalina Island; whale watching, and more.

Much like a floating city, where people live, play, eat, and sleep, Long Beach, California’s permanently docked Queen Mary cruise ship is a one-stop regal destination.

Cunard Line’s iconic Queen Mary originally set sail in 1936 and, like today, welcomed many dignitaries and celebrities, including: Sir Winston Churchill; the Duke & Duchess of Windsor (Edward VII and Wallis Simpson); Queen Elizabeth; General Dwight D. Eisenhower; Jackie Kennedy; Bob Hope; Fred Astaire; and many others.

LEARN MORE AT VISIT [QUEENMARY.COM](http://QUEENMARY.COM)





Photo Courtesy of VisitSeattle.com

# SEATTLE

## WASHINGTON: Queen City of the Pacific Northwest

Though it's changed over the years Seattle's original nickname, Queen City of the Pacific Northwest, originally developed as a slogan by Portland, Oregon-based real estate agents back in the late-1860s who hoped to promote Seattle as a great place to work and live – and by real estate. Later, after the Klondike Gold Rush began in 1897, Seattle was promoted as "Gateway to Alaska," and, later, thanks to trade with the East, "Gateway to the Orient."

In 1982, after a contest, the local Convention & Visitors Bureau adopted "The Emerald City" as the city's tourism brand. Since 2001, the city's tourism logo has combined a stylized "eye" symbol with an @ email symbol and the capital letter "L" to create the "See-at-L" branding of "Seattle: soak it up!"

The original Queen City of the Pacific Northwest still has many regal connections in its emerald-laden crown of offerings. First and foremost, the iconic 520-foot Seattle Space Needle is still the city's crowning glory.

Part of bustling Seattle Center, site of the 1962 World's Fair, the Seattle Space Needle is yet again a crown jewel for the city after a \$100 million renovation. Of course, it continues to offer great views (with an all-glass floor, floor-to-ceiling glass, and glass benches) and much more, including the world's first and only rotating glass floor, Atmos Café and Atmos Wine Bar, virtual reality bungee jumps, and super selfie spots.

Seattle Center also features the Museum of Pop Culture (MoPOP), Chihuly Garden and Glass, the Seattle Children's Museum, outdoor gardens and artwork, and more than 20 restaurants, cafés, and bars. The Seattle Center Monorail, the nation's first full-scale commercial monorail system and a city landmark, provides a great way to head to Seattle Center and the Seattle Space Needle from downtown proper.

Seattle is a city of unique neighborhoods and one popular residential community with queenly connections, Queen Anne Hill, is



Photo Courtesy of VisitSeattle.com



Photo Courtesy of VisitSeattle.com

actually adjacent to the Seattle Space Needle. Originally called Eden Hill and later named for the style of architecture popular in the 1880s and situated almost 500 feet above Puget Sound, the steep slopes of Queen Anne Hill made it one of the last original Seattle neighborhoods to develop. Other highlights here might include: the landmark 1936 North Queen Anne Drive Bridge that spans Wolf Creek; the original location of the Seattle mainstay, Uptown Espresso; Stuhlbergs, a neighborhood fixture set in a Queen Anne house that features a fun selection of home accessories and baby-focused offerings; and Queen Anne Dispatch, a local favorite for women's clothing, gifts, and accessories, where they also wrap and ship (dispatch) purchases.

Of course, popular Pike Place Market is a Seattle "neighborhood" in its own right. Even veteran Pike Place visitors may not know about the 2017 addition of waterfront's MarketFront, including incredible views of Elliott Bay, Mt. Rainier and more, farm and craft stalls, colorful mosaic walls of Pacific Northwest flora and fauna along the grand staircase, and Producers Hall, with a brewery (Old Stove Brewing Co.), a scratch-made biscuit café (Honest Biscuits), a bean-to-bar chocolate factory (indie chocolate), and a seafood restaurant (Little Fish) that features smoked and cured fish.

When it comes to even more food and drink further afield, visitors will find that Seattle is definitely the "Queen of Northwest Cuisine," with a focus on seafood and Washington State wines. For a locals experience where they're treated royally, visitors will want to head to Queen City, a neighborhood bar and restaurant in the Belltown neighborhood (originally opened in 1910 and formerly the Queen City Grill). ■