

TOP 10 “UNIQUELY CINCINNATI” STORY STARTERS

#1 CINCINNATI-STYLE CHILI

Cincinnatians eat more than 2 million pounds of chili each year, topped by 850,000 pounds of shredded cheese. Chili is done differently here. In place of chunks of meat and sizeable beans, you'll get savory soupiness and creative accoutrements like spaghetti, hot dogs and mustard. In place of an overtly tomato-y base, you'll taste hints of cinnamon, cloves, allspice and maybe even chocolate. Cincinnati has more chili restaurants per capita than any other city in the world – more than 180 parlors in the region with loyal followings enjoying their 3, 4, or 5-Ways.

#2 PORKOPOLIS

In the 1800s, Cincinnati's easy access to river transport and farmland made it the largest pork-producing city in the world. Cincinnati opened the first modern-day pork packing plant in 1818, introducing salt pork — it quickly became a staple across the nation. By 1833, more than 85,000 pigs were processed in Cincinnati and the availability of byproducts paved the way for small companies producing candles and soap. Procter and Gamble got its start this way in 1837. While pork production has left town, powerhouses like Procter and Gamble have made Cincinnati home, and Cincinnati's top chefs and restaurants recreate delicious pork creations every day.

#3 FIRST PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL TEAM

In 1869, the nine-player Cincinnati Red Stockings became the country's first professional baseball team (all paid players, no amateurs) and finished with a perfect 57-0 record. Total salary outlay for the season? A cool \$11,000 dollars. Today, the Cincinnati Reds are an integral part of the region's culture, and the history of the team is celebrated throughout the area, including the Cincinnati Reds Hall of Fame & Museum near Great American Ball Park.

#4 GRAETER'S ICE CREAM

This renowned ice cream company all began when a German immigrant to Cincinnati in the mid-1800s started making high-quality ice cream out of his home. Today, the family-run company continues to use the original French Pot process to make the products that Graeter's is famous for. A favorite of Oprah's, the signature flavor and must-try experience at Graeter's is the Black Raspberry Chip.

#5 REVIVAL OF AN ORIGINAL AMERICAN BEER CITY

By 1890, Cincinnati was the third largest beer producing city in the country. At that time, the city had 36 breweries, largely due to the high percentage of German immigrants, with hundreds of drinking establishments throughout the streets of Over-the-Rhine, the predominant brewing neighborhood. Prohibition was a death sentence for most of the city's brew scene, but today's newfound interest in the historic lagering tunnels under city streets and rich brewing history of the area has brought a resurgence in craft breweries. Popular breweries include Christian Moerlein, Rhinegeist, MadTree and Listermann, among more than 80 craft breweries, brewpubs and taprooms across the Cincinnati region, serving locally-made brews, spirits, cocktails and more.

#6 ARCHITECTURE

As one of America's oldest cities and an early haven for immigrants, Cincinnati's architecture is stunning, ranging from skyscraping Art Deco towers to the largest preserved historic district in the country, Over-the-Rhine. Some of the most notable architectural landmarks in Cincinnati include the Art Deco masterpiece of Carew Tower and the Hilton Netherland Plaza Hotel, as well as Union Terminal, a historic train station that now serves as the home to the Cincinnati Museum Center.

#7 UNDERGROUND RAILROAD HISTORY

At the crossroads between the South and North during the Civil War, Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky are home to a rich Underground Railroad history. The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, built on the banks of the Ohio River, commemorates the region's important role in the Underground Railroad and the Civil War. Rotating exhibits, available to view Tuesday through Saturday, tell stories from the past and honor modern abolitionists and freedom heroes.

#8 PUBLIC ART & MURALS

Cincinnati is home to a thriving arts scene, made up of an incredible diversity of both performing arts and museums. In fact, Cincinnati is one of only 13 U.S. cities with professional companies in all five arts: ballet, opera, fine art museums, symphony and theater. One way that visitors can enjoy Cincinnati's rich arts scene for free is through the public art throughout the region. The nonprofit organization ArtWorks has created more than 100 public murals in 36 neighborhoods throughout the region, many of which can be enjoyed in the heart of downtown Cincinnati on guided or self-guided walking tours.

#9 CITY OF SEVEN HILLS

With 52 unique neighborhoods and a multitude of hills making up the Cincinnati region, the city is known as both "The City of Seven Hills" and the "Queen City." Many of Cincinnati's neighborhoods were once small villages, and many have still retained their original names, distinct personalities, and recognizable city centers. Although there are more than seven hills in Cincinnati, here's a list of the seven most notable: Mount Adams, Mount Auburn, Walnut Hills, Fairmount, Fairview Heights, Clifton Heights and Price Hill.

#10 CITY OF INNOVATION

From being the first American city to establish a weather bureau, have a municipal fire department, and own a major railroad, to being home to the development of the first polio vaccine, Cincinnati has a history of being an innovative region. Many Cincinnati innovators are household names, including Neil Armstrong, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and President William Howard Taft. Today, the innovative reputation continues, with Triple Pundit recently calling Cincinnati one of the most innovative cities in the country, and TechInsurance naming the city as a top city for tech entrepreneurs.