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## Getaway: Head out to the ballpark

### The Astros' home opener is the perfect chance to take part in America's favorite pastime

by Cheré Coen

Monday marks the home opener of the Houston Astros at Minute Maid Park in downtown Houston. The Astros take on the Chicago Cubs in the closest chance we have to see Major League Baseball up close and personal.

During the series against the Cubs, there will be an opening day street fest on Monday, a 10th season commemorative cap given away to the first 10,000 fans on Tuesday and a Milo Hamilton Way Replica Street Sign given out Wednesday. Also, \$10 gets you a ticket, hot dog and soda as part of Wednesday's Price Matters.

Before the games begin, the Astros will host the team's annual FanFast this Saturday at Minute Maid, with autograph sessions with the players and former Astros, Talkin' Baseball seminars with Astros broadcasters and staff, a sports card and memorabilia show, silent auction and the popular Garage Sale of Astros promotional merchandise.

For the kids, there will be face painters, clowns and other free activities. FanFast begins at 9 a.m. Saturday and ends with the exhibition game between the Houston Astros and Cleveland Indians. Admission to FanFast is free with the purchase of a game ticket, except for the autograph sessions, which is a fundraiser for the Astros in Action Foundation.



Submitted photo

**There's no better time than now to catch the Astros play over in Houston. Monday's home opener against the Cubs also provides fans of all ages a rockin' good time.**

Tickets to Saturday's exhibition game start at \$7 for adults and \$1 for children ages 3-14. For information on FanFast or the entire baseball season, visit [astros.com](http://astros.com) or call (877) 927-8767.

### Need a place to stay?

The newly remodeled Hyatt Regency Houston is offering a spring Home Run Package, where guests receive deluxe accommodations, transportation to and from Minute Maid Park, valet parking, a \$25 food and beverage credit and a souvenir baseball.

Just show your Houston Astros game day ticket to apply.

The Hyatt's remodel includes elegantly designed rooms with lots of amenities such as large-screen TVs, extensive hookups for business and personal use, ergonomic chairs, relaxing chaise lounges that overlook the skyline of Houston and hip bathrooms with oversized beach-style showers.

The hotel features a 24-hour fitness center, outdoor pool (that may not be open this early in the spring) and several restaurants, including Shula's Steakhouse, named for Don Shula, the pro football Hall of Fame coach.

For more information, go to [houstonregency.hyatt.com](http://houstonregency.hyatt.com).

## Now, for something completely different

While in Houston, be sure to visit the Houston Museum of Natural Science's current exhibition, *The Birth of Christianity: A Jewish Story*, continuing through April 12. The exhibit takes visitors back in time, examining the political environment and the religious traditions upon which Jesus emerged.

There are artifacts from the time of the sovereign Jewish state and Qumran, when the Dead Sea Scrolls were created.

On display are excerpts from the Scrolls, early menorahs and ram horns, Jewish tombs, elaborate baths and eating utensils.

"What makes this exhibition so compelling, however, is not the objects alone. It is the story we are telling that brings the objects to life. This is the closest we can get to the historical Jesus," narrates Dr. Matthias Henze, guest curator and associate professor of Religious Studies at Rice University.

"For example, an oil lamp remains just that — unless the visitor makes the connection that this object was used during the time of King Herod, who expanded the Second Temple complex in Jerusalem and is known from the New Testament for the notorious massacre of innocent babies."

The exhibit also highlights "common elements shared by Jews and Christians due to their common past," he said.

April Deconick of Rice University will examine the links between Judaism and Christianity at 6:30 p.m. Monday during a special museum lecture.

The exhibition is in addition to regular museum admission.

For tickets or more information, go to [www.hmns.org](http://www.hmns.org).

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