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Columbia, SC, is known for being "famously hot," with summer temperatures matching the enormous number of fun things to do in South Carolina's capital city. Whether you're headed to town on business or to drop off your college freshman at the University of South Carolina, here are 10 things to know about the new Southern hot spot so you'll fit right in.

1. Columbia is the first city in the US named for Christopher Columbus. The name Columbia won over the other popular option, Washington.
2. Columbia is affectionately known as the "Soda City" by locals, but not because any soda was invented or manufactured there. Instead, the nickname comes from an old abbreviation of Columbia to "Cola."
3. The Soda City was founded in 1786, but you won't see many 18th or early-19th century buildings there. That's because two-thirds of Columbia burned to the ground during the Civil War when Gen. William T. Sherman entered the city in 1865.

4. The tallest trees east of the Mississippi are just 20 miles outside of town in Congaree National Park. Congaree has more than two dozen “champion trees,” or trees that are the largest of their species.

5. Riverbanks Zoo is one of fewer than half a dozen zoos in the US that has a permanent koala exhibit. And yes, they are as adorable as you might imagine.

6. The Dreher Shoals Dam (popularly known as the Lake Murray Dam), a few miles upriver from Columbia, was the largest earthen dam in the world when it was built in 1930. During the great flood of 2015, water behind the dam rose to above flood stage. Every single flood gate in the dam was opened and even the hydroelectric power plant at the base was sacrificed to prevent a breach. The old earthen dam held, possibly saving thousands of lives.

7. Columbia is home to one of only a handful of dedicated puppet theaters in the nation. The Columbia Marionette Theater was built specifically for this unusual art form, and a show there is like no other puppet show you’ve seen.

8. Assembly Street in downtown Columbia is remarkably wide for a city street of anytime, but it's even more remarkable when you learn it was designed that way in the 18th century. Why so broad? Local lore says it’s because the early city planners hoped that it would be too wide for mosquitoes to cross.

9. The first textile mill run completely by electricity in the world opened in Columbia in 1894. The enormous red brick building that housed the mill is now home to the South Carolina State Museum. You can still see tiny bits of the mill’s spinning machinery that became embedded in the original wooden floors.

10. Synchronous fireflies, or fireflies that light up all at the same time, are found in only half a dozen places in the entire world. One of them happens to

be right outside Columbia, in Congaree National Park. The fireflies put on their show in late May and early June. As a link to the amazing show, the city's minor league baseball team, which started play in 2016, is named the Columbia Fireflies. Some of the team's merchandise even glows in the dark.