

# TEXAS

## INTERNATIONAL GUIDE

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essential travel details.

**On the cover:** Sunset over Pedernales River,  
Johnson City, Texas Hill Country. Photo by  
Silvio Ligutti / Shutterstock.

**Photo opposite:** Big Bend National Park.  
Photo by Jeff Wilson.

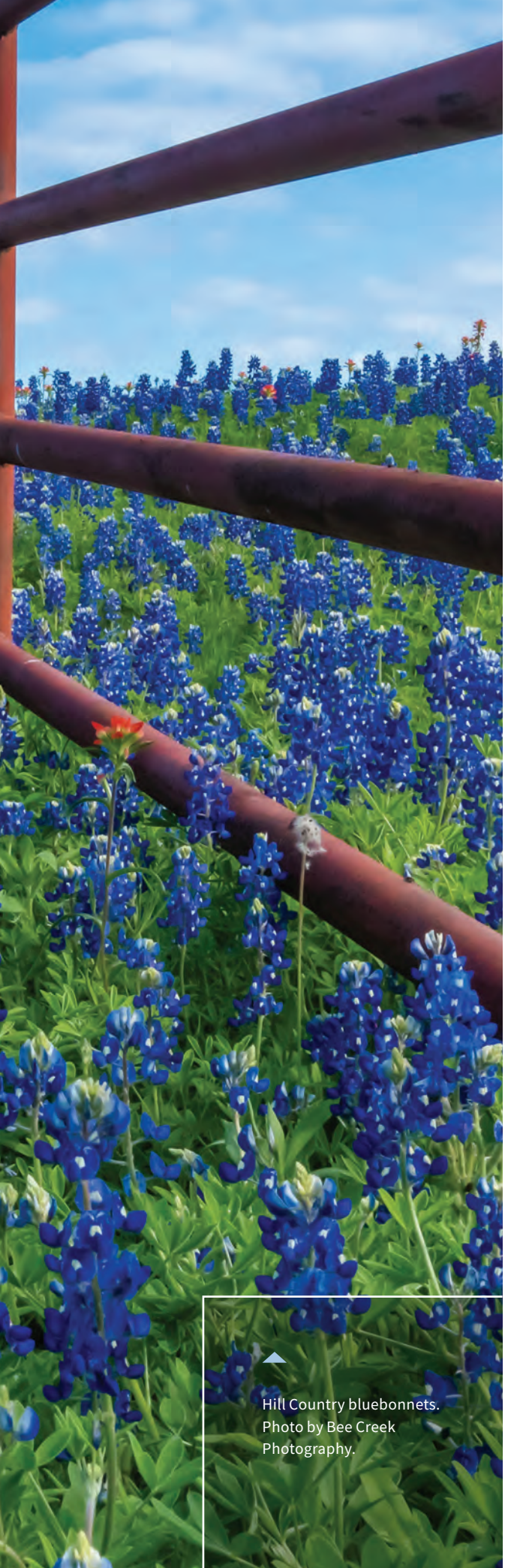
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# WELCOME Y'ALL!

**W**hether you're looking for the bright lights of the big cities or the Old West enchantment of our smaller towns, the people you meet on your journey are the hidden treasure, the finest you'll ever meet.

And as they will all tell you, Texas is the friendliest place to visit in America.

Across its seven diverse travel regions covering some 695,660 square kilometers, you may experience everything from cattle drives to rocket launches, from country dancehalls to contemporary art installations—and every sort of cuisine you could ever dream of. (And let's be serious here, we do have the best barbecue and Tex-Mex in the country!)

There's a Texas welcome for everyone, whoever you are—outdoor adventurer, art and history buff, epicurean explorer, sports fan, family traveler ... or you simply long to explore deserts, rolling hills, beaches, pine forests, and mountains. You just need to pick a spot in the state and make a friend.

From the cypress-lined bayous of the Big Thicket in the east to the canyons of the northwest Panhandle to the remnant of subtropical habitat of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, a birder's paradise, each region of Texas has its unique charms.

As legendary Houstonian singer-songwriter Robert Earl Keen describes our state, "The road goes on forever and the party never ends."

▲  
Hill Country bluebonnets.  
Photo by Bee Creek  
Photography.



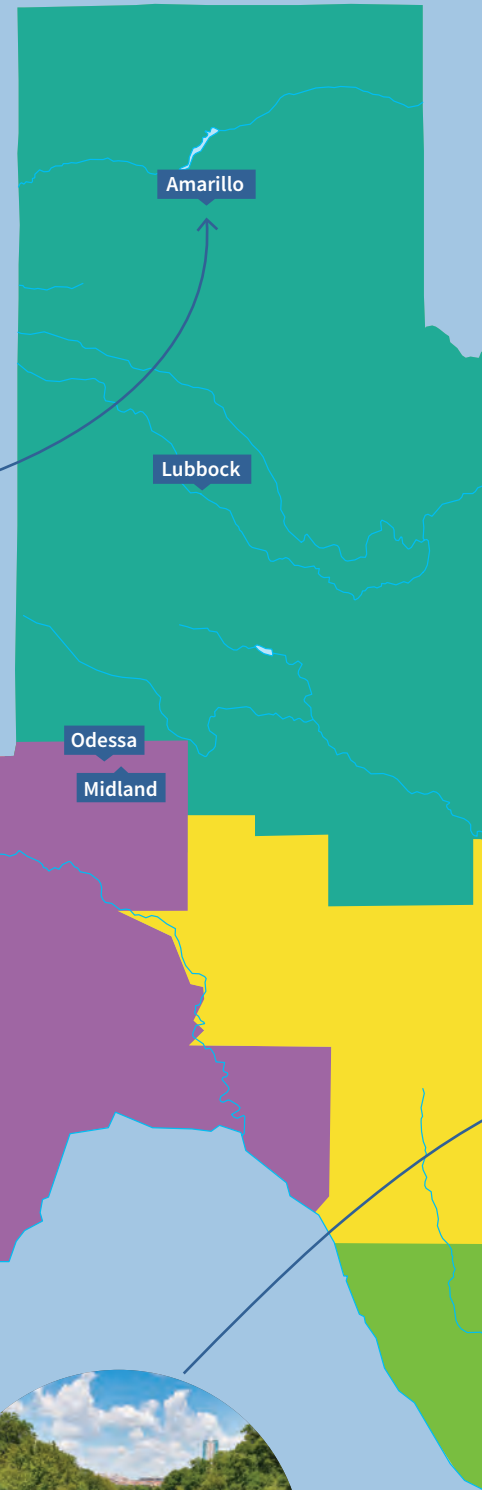
# VISITING TEXAS

## PANHANDLE PLAINS

Amarillo, Lubbock,  
Wichita Falls, Abilene



AMARILLO



Amarillo

Lubbock

Odessa

Midland

Marfa

Alpine



BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK

## BIG BEND

El Paso, Midland, Odessa,  
Marfa, Alpine, Del Rio

## HILL COUNTRY

Austin, Fredericksburg,  
San Marcos, New Braunfels



AUSTIN



## PRAIRIES & LAKES



Dallas, Fort Worth, Arlington, Grapevine,  
Waco, Killeen, Bryan, College Station

FORT WORTH



## PINEY WOODS

Texarkana, Longview,  
Tyler, Nacogdoches

CADDO LAKE



## GULF COAST

Houston, Beaumont, Galveston,  
Rockport, Corpus Christi,  
Port Aransas, South Padre Island

PORT ARANSAS



SAN ANTONIO

## SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

San Antonio, Laredo, McAllen, Brownsville



Photos by Bee Creek  
Photography, Jeff Wilson,  
and Visit San Antonio





# LIVE MUSIC CAPITAL

You'll get a true Texan welcome in Austin—with great music, fabulous food, wildflowers, and more.

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▲  
*This page: Downtown Austin. Photo by Bee Creek Photography*

▶  
*Opposite page, clockwise from left: Barton Springs. Photo by Bee Creek Photography. Willie Nelson at ACL. Photo by Jeff Wilson. Texas barbecue. Photo courtesy of Travel Texas.*





**A**ustin is not only the capital city of Texas but also home to more than 250 live-music venues where you can catch nightly tunes at C-Boys and the Continental Club, weekend blues and soul at Skylark Lounge, and jazz at the Elephant Room downtown. The city is also home to the South by Southwest (SXSW) media conference/festival, held in spring, and the Austin City Limits Music Festival (ACL), featuring more than 100 performances on multiple stages over two weekends in October.

Another notable thing about this town: its barbecue. For a bite of some of the most celebrated smoked meat in the world, look no further than Franklin Barbecue, Mickelthwait Craft Meats, Terry Black's BBQ, or InterStellar BBQ—all located near each other in Austin. For more casual fare, line up at one of the more than 2,000 food trucks serving everything from delicious lobster

rolls to authentic Tex-Mex tacos. For connoisseurs of beer, there are some 58 breweries in the Austin area.

South Congress is the place to explore unique local shops, including Allen's Boots, Heritage Boot Co., and Goorin Bros, where you can find cowboy boots, hats, jeans, and classic Western wear. Just across the street are premier outposts from luxury brands such as Billy Reid, Hermès, Kendra Scott, and Sézanne womenswear from Paris.

Many flock to Austin for the soccer, cheering on the Austin FC at the Q2 Stadium. And each spring the city welcomes MotoGP fans and then in the fall hosts the highest class of international racing with Formula 1 at the Circuit of the Americas track, the ultimate destination for both racing and live music. College favorites—the University of Texas football team, known as the Longhorns—draw fans each fall, who fill the Darrell K Royal-Texas Memorial

Stadium for spirited home games.

There are great hikes and cycling routes in the surrounding hills, but even in the heart of town you can enjoy the Hike and Bike Trail around Ladybird Lake. Right off the trail is Zilker Park, a lovely greenspace that hosts Barton Springs, a 1.21-hectare spring-fed pool that folks enjoy year-round, and especially in the summer months. Walk to Congress Bridge at dusk between March and October and witness 1.5 million Mexican Free-tailed bats flying out into the night sky in search of a meal.

Culture lovers will enjoy the beautiful grounds of the Texas State Capitol, as well as the informative 60-minute walking tour. Soak up more state history at nearby Bullock Texas State History Museum, and be stunned by the artwork awaiting you at the Blanton Museum of Art and the Mexic-Arte Museum for Mexican and Latin American art.





*This page, top: Becker Winery. Courtesy of Becker Winery. Below: Luckenbach. Photo by Jeff Wilson.*



*Opposite page, top: Bullock Texas State History Museum. Photo by Bee Creek Photography. Below, right: Austin bat watch. Photo by Bee Creek Photography. Below, left: Austin City Limits. Photo by Jeff Wilson.*

## Day Trippin’

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, south of Austin, is an oasis of sustainable gardens filled with more than 900 native Texas plant species. To experience more flora the state has to offer, each spring highways in every direction are resplendent with some of the 5,000 species of wildflowers found in Texas, including bluebonnets (the state flower), as well as Indian paintbrush, pink evening primrose, Mexican hat, wine cups, and coreopsis.

Visit the town of Fredericksburg, the epicenter of Texas Wine Country, with more than 60 wineries dotting Wine Road 290 and more located in the surrounding area. Wine production here dates back to the original settlers who used the native Mustang grape to produce wines. Today, you can visit the beautiful wineries, taste the award-winning wines that have won top honors around the world, and learn about how wines are produced in Texas’s version of Napa Valley. You’ll also want to explore the town’s German-Texas heritage, with a visit to the Pioneer Museum, which showcases life in the time of the original German settlers. The mesmerizing National Museum of the Pacific War is also a must-see. Or climb to the top of Enchanted Rock, a giant pink granite dome rising 130 meters from the terrain.

Stop in at legendary Luckenbach, where the dance hall and general store have drawn visitors since the mid-1800s.


In San Marcos, south of Austin, take a glass-bottom boat tour of Spring Lake. Leave time for a shopping spree at San Marcos Premium Outlets. With 145 designer shops, it’s the largest luxury outlet destination in Texas.









A large, metallic sculpture of a robot, known as 'The Traveling Man' by Deep Ellum, stands prominently in the foreground. The robot is constructed from polished metal pipes and plates, giving it a steampunk or industrial aesthetic. It has a large, rectangular head with circular eyes and a small antenna. Its right arm is extended, holding a baseball bat, while its left hand holds a baseball. The robot's legs are thick, cylindrical pipes that taper slightly towards the base. In the background, a city skyline is visible under a clear blue sky with some light clouds. A building on the left has a sign that says 'iPhone 7'. A street sign for 'Swiss' is visible on the right. The overall scene is a vibrant representation of Dallas art and urban life.

# A MATCH MADE IN TEXAS

Dallas and Fort Worth: two inseparable cities,  
two unique experiences, and the single best  
time you'll ever have.

TEXAS INTERNATIONAL GUIDE

▲  
*This page:*  
*The Traveling*  
*Man, Deep Ellum,*  
*Dallas. Photo*  
*by Bee Creek*  
*Photography.*

►  
*Opposite page:*  
*Sunrise in*  
*Dallas. Photo by*  
*Amber Bufkin*  
*Photography.*





## Dallas

**F**rom the iconic skyline to the downtown urban arts district comprised of almost 20 blocks filled with world-class museums, galleries, and restaurants, Dallas has a lot to offer visitors.

Shopping enthusiasts should begin their journey at NorthPark Center, a chic enclosed mall that boasts some 235 designer retailers and restaurants, also renowned for its collection of artworks, fountains, and lush gardens. For those who like a slice of history with their shopping, step into the flagship Neiman Marcus store on Main Street, where luxury goods have been sold since 1907. Just four miles north of downtown, stroll the tree-lined Spanish Mediterranean-style sidewalks of Highland Park Village, an outdoor enclave with designer shops such as Chanel, Cartier,

Dior, Fendi, Harry Winston, and Tom Ford.

Arts lovers flock to museums downtown, including the Dallas Museum of Art and the Nasher Sculpture Center, featuring an outdoor oasis dotted with unrivaled works. Opera, classical and pop music concerts, theater, ballet, and other live performing arts events can be found at the AT&T Performing Arts Center, a 4-hectare campus operating the Winspear Opera House, Wylly Theatre, and Strauss Square all set against public green space, Sammons Park. Science and history buffs will delight in a visit to the Perot Museum of Nature and Science, which offers hands-on discovery on all five levels. Or head to Dallas Love Field airport, also home to the Frontiers of Flight Museum. Visitors of all ages learn the history of aviation as well as space travel. Don't miss the Apollo 7 Command Module, a real moon rock, and other unique space artifacts.

When it's time to take a break, Dallas

offers a lively and mouth-watering dining scene, from international dishes to those with Texas flair. Besides delicious steak, burgers, Tex-Mex, and pizza, diners will discover cosmopolitan fine-dining options, many of which have won national acclaim. Notable restaurants include Petra and the Beast, Roots Southern Table, Lucia, Gemma, and José, among others. Dallas is also where the frozen margarita was invented some 50 years ago, and a stop on the "Margarita Mile" is de rigueur. Visitors can download a free pass to start the self-guided tour of restaurants with the best tequila sips in town.

For a cocktail and a view, stop in at the Upside West Village, a rooftop bar with spectacular views of downtown Dallas. Or experience the city from the observation deck of the 171-meter-tall Reunion Tower, which locals affectionately call "The Ball."





*This page, top: Perot Museum. Photo by Visit Dallas. Below: Deep Ellum. Photo by Visit Dallas.*

*Opposite page, left: Fort Worth Stockyards Station. Photo by Bee Creek Photography. Right: Sundance Square. Photo by Getty Images.*

## Deep Ellum and Bishop Arts District

There's more to discover in the storied Deep Ellum area of downtown. A hotbed of blues music in the 1920s, the area hosted such legends as Blind Lemon Jefferson, Robert Johnson, and Bessie Smith. Today, the district still offers some of the city's best bars and live music venues, along with vibrant street murals, quirky art galleries, and eclectic stores. Restaurants here serve everything from barbecue to burgers, ramen to tacos, and many are open late.

The Bishop Arts District is one of the most unique areas of the city and can be found in the Oak Cliff neighborhood. Visitors to the area will find captivating boutiques with everything from vintage finds and eclectic handmade items to chic French imports. There are myriad options for dining and nightlife.

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## Fort Worth

Fort Worth carries a classic Western vibe. Commonly known as “Where the West Begins,” the city has evolved into an epicenter of the “Modern West,” boasting world-class restaurants, hotels, luxury shopping, and lively nightlife.

In fact, visitors will find some of the state’s finest museums in the Fort Worth Cultural District. Paintings and sculptures fill the Amon Carter Museum of American Art. Asian and European collections can be found at the Kimball Art Museum, and more than 3,000 post-1940s artworks from around the world are on exhibit at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth. For a Texas treat, don’t miss the Sid Richardson Museum featuring magnificent cowboy artworks by Frederick Remington and Charles M. Russell.

Fort Worth still rejoices in its roots

twice daily when authentically dressed cowhands drive a colorful herd of Longhorns through the streets of the Stockyards Historic District. On weekends, join locals for rodeos, concerts, and sporting events at the Cowtown Coliseum on Exchange Avenue. Take a stroll down Mule Alley for a carefully curated collection of restaurants. Look out for fine boots, hats, and clothing by King Ranch, Lucchese Boots, and Double D Ranch, and make sure you check out the chic new Hotel Drover. Nearby you’ll also find M.L. Leddy’s, where handmade boots, hats, saddles, and clothing have been sold for more than a century.

Closer to downtown Fort Worth is the dynamic 37-square-block campus of Sundance Square, a pedestrian-friendly shopping and entertainment district. Don’t miss a symphony concert or Broadway show at the Bass Performance Hall.

For a taste of classic Texas barbecue, try

James Beard semifinalist Goldee’s Barbecue located southwest of downtown. Other dining favorites include Del Frisco’s Double Eagle Steakhouse, James Beard “Best New Restaurant” nominee Don Artemio, and Lonesome Dove Western Bistro with notable chef Tim Love. Local favorite Joe T. Garcia’s has been serving Tex-Mex dishes and margaritas to hungry folks since 1911.

End your day at one of the city’s hot spots, such as The Rooftop Bar at the Hotel Sinclair, the highest in town. Or try two-steppin’ on the Texas-sized dance floor at the legendary Billy Bob’s Texas, where the full “honky tonk” experience comes with a pro-bull riding arena and live music concerts. The Four Seasons Dallas at Las Colinas is the perfect spot to hole up for a big city golf weekend, where non-golfers can relax at the spa, and everyone can reunite for cocktails and an elegant meal at any of several restaurant choices.

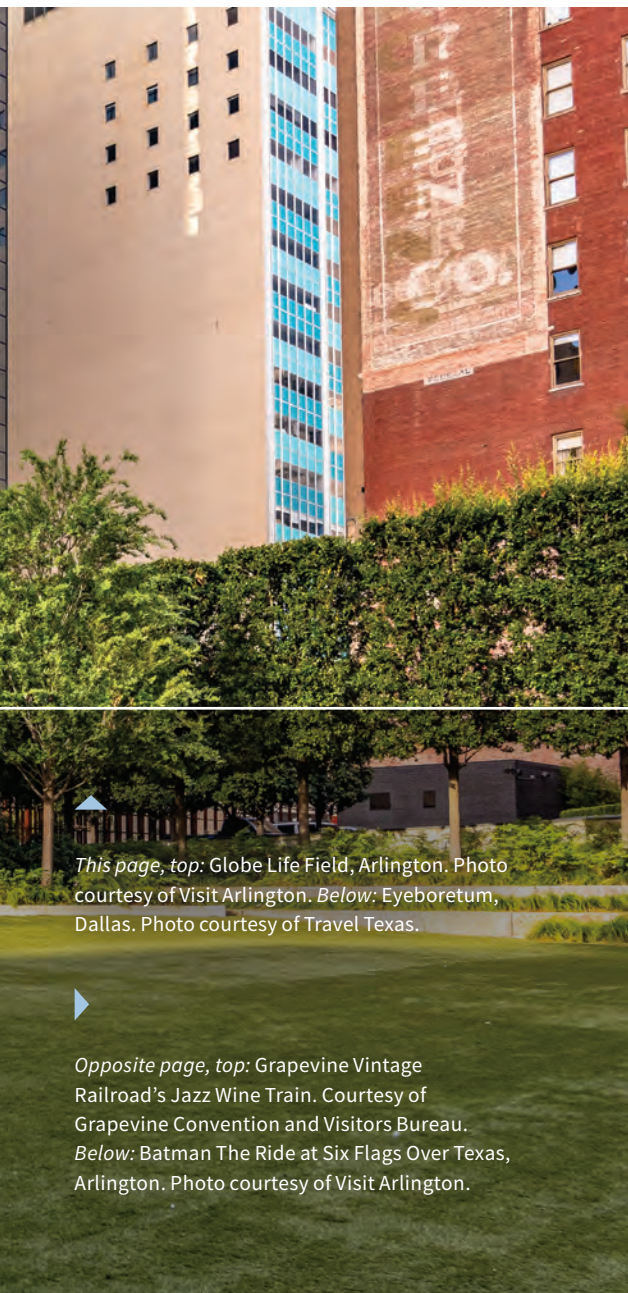




## Unbeatable Thrills

Dallas and Fort Worth are at the heart of the sporting world in Texas. The world-famous Dallas Cowboys play football at the AT&T Stadium in Arlington. Close by, the Texas Rangers—winners of the 2023 World Series—play baseball at the new Globe Life Field. Soccer fans can catch FC Dallas at the Toyota Stadium in Frisco.

Six Flags Over Texas is an 86-hectare amusement park and home to 14 world-class roller coasters and more than 100 thrilling attractions. Located in Arlington, visitors are treated to special events throughout the year, including the popular “Fright Fest” in October and “Holiday in the Park” throughout December.



*This page, top: Globe Life Field, Arlington. Photo courtesy of Visit Arlington. Below: Eyeboretum, Dallas. Photo courtesy of Travel Texas.*

*Opposite page, top: Grapevine Vintage Railroad's Jazz Wine Train. Courtesy of Grapevine Convention and Visitors Bureau. Below: Batman The Ride at Six Flags Over Texas, Arlington. Photo courtesy of Visit Arlington.*





## Grapevine

Nestled midway between Fort Worth and Dallas, the city of Grapevine is celebrated for its restored 19th-century buildings, many located on historical Main Street. For a journey back in time, hop aboard one of the luxury 1920s coaches of the Grapevine Vintage Railroad, which takes visitors in style between downtown Grapevine and the Fort Worth Stockyards. There's also fun for the family with attractions such as Meow Wolf's *The Real Unreal* and the Indoor Water Park at Great Wolf Lodge.



A wide-angle photograph of the Houston skyline at dusk. The sky is a mix of blue and pink. Several skyscrapers are visible, including the green cylindrical Bank of America Tower and the gold-colored JPMorgan Chase Tower. In the foreground, there is a lush green park with many trees, a multi-lane highway with a few cars, and a bridge over a body of water.

# EVERYTHING HAPPENS IN HOUSTON

The fourth-largest city in the nation, Houston is an international, multicultural city offering something for everyone—from arts and sports to shopping and what is arguably the most diverse food scene in the country.

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▲  
*This page:*  
Houston Skyline.  
Photo by Bee Creek  
Photography.

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*Opposite page:*  
Hugo Ortega's  
Xochi. Photo by  
Jody Horton.





**I**n a city where more than 145 languages are spoken, you don't have to travel far to sample cuisine from 70 different countries and American regions in the more than 12,000 restaurants in Houston. Try the game meats and seafood at the Rainbow Lodge, a century-old log cabin on the banks of White Oak Bayou. Other standouts include Italian fare from La Griglia or Potente; delicious French cuisine from Étoile; and Brennan's of Houston, where you should not miss the bananas foster, flambéed at your table. Chef Hugo Ortega,

the best-known Mexican chef in Texas, is the inspiration behind five of Houston's top restaurants, including Hugo's, Xochi, and URBE.

Houston's dazzling downtown Theater District boasts nine venues where you can watch Broadway shows and plays, as well as performances by the Houston Ballet, the Houston Grand Opera, and the Houston Symphony. There is also a thriving live music scene here, from intimate clubs to concert arenas, where you can find country music, as well as rock, hip-hop, R&B, and Tejano.

The Museum District near downtown has 19 art and science museums with more scattered throughout the city. Favorites include the Asian Society Texas Center, The Menil Collection, and the Houston Museum of Natural Science, which houses the spectacular Burke Baker Planetarium and the Cockrell Butterfly Center.

With more than 375 stores, 30 restaurants, an ice rink, and two hotels, shoppers can find almost everything at Houston's famed Galleria. Additional shopping centers, boutiques, and specialty stores can be found in various neighborhoods.



## Daytrippin’

Space Center Houston is a museum that serves as the official visitor center for the NASA Johnson Space Center, located 40 kilometers from downtown Houston. Here you can immerse yourself in the past, present, and future of space exploration. Get behind the scenes, see the restored Apollo Mission Control Center, and even meet an astronaut.

A bustling city fueled by modern industries, the city returns to its cowboy roots every March when the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo takes over the town. The month-long event includes one of the richest professional rodeo events, as well as concerts, competitions, and more.

Don't miss the Houston Zoo, a 22-hectare zoological park located in lush Hermann Park. There are more than 6,000 animals and more than 900 species. Be sure to spend time at the African Forest, McNair Asian Elephant Habitat, the John P. McGovern Children's Zoo, and the Texas Wetlands, where you can see alligators, bald eagles, and whooping cranes.

It's always "game on" in Houston. Professional sports teams include the Houston Rockets (basketball), Houston Texans (American football), Houston Astros (baseball), the Houston Dynamo (men's soccer), the Houston Dash (women's soccer), and Houston Sabre Cats (rugby). With four state universities and two private universities, it's easy to find sporting activities here throughout the year.



*This page, top: Space suit on display. Courtesy of Johnson Space Center.*

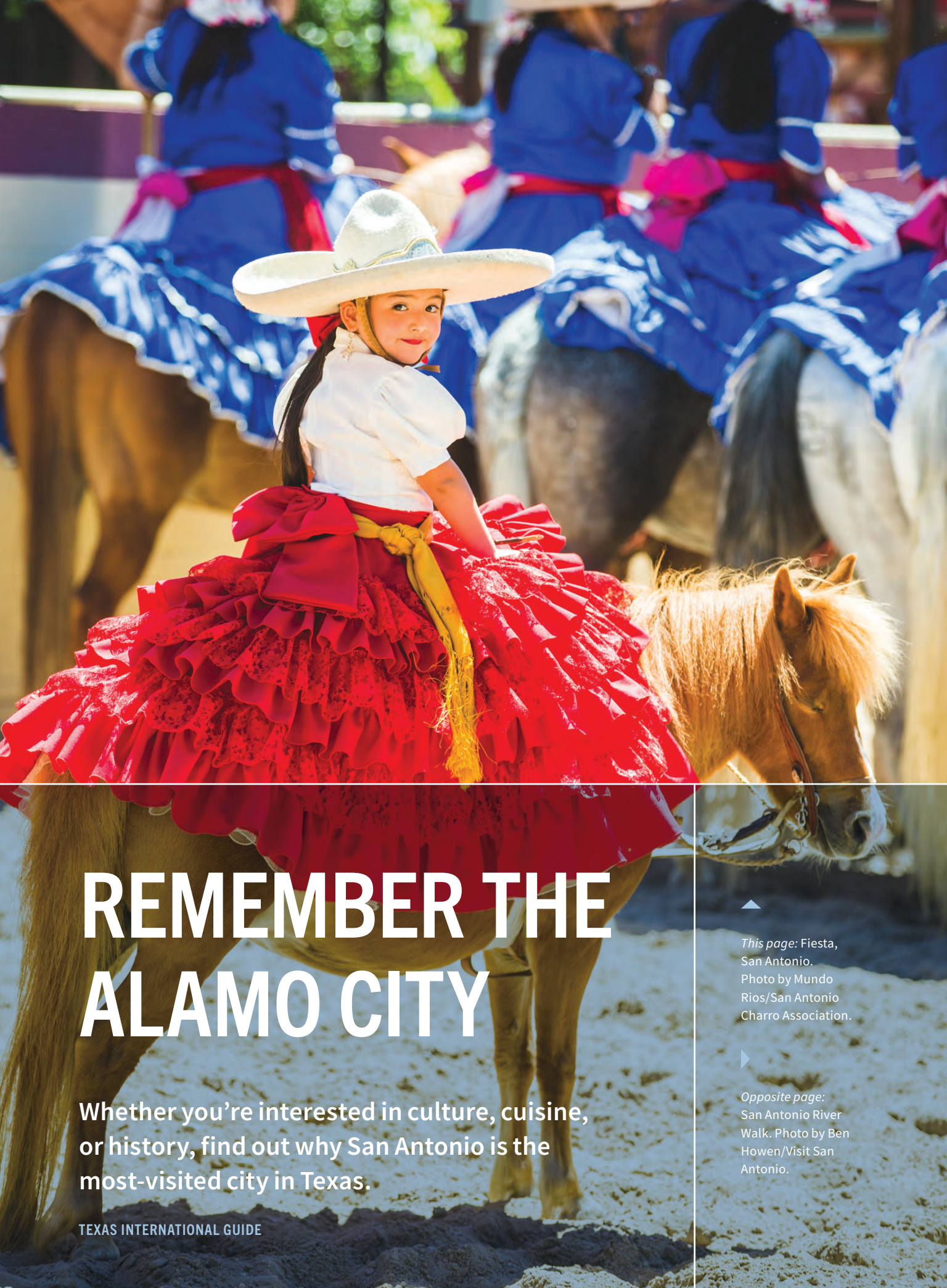
*Below: The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Photo by Adrian Newell on Unsplash.*

*Opposite page, top: Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. Photo courtesy RodeoHouston. Below: Houston Zoo. Photo courtesy Houston Zoo.*









# REMEMBER THE ALAMO CITY

Whether you're interested in culture, cuisine, or history, find out why San Antonio is the most-visited city in Texas.

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▲  
*This page:* Fiesta,  
San Antonio.  
Photo by Mundo  
Rios/San Antonio  
Charro Association.

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*Opposite page:*  
San Antonio River  
Walk. Photo by Ben  
Howen/Visit San  
Antonio.





**F**ounded in May 1718, San Antonio recently celebrated 300 years of history and multicultural influence. From its vibrant, diverse culture and iconic landmarks, to the majestic beauty of its Spanish missions, San Antonio has truly become a multi-cultural capital of the United States.

Experiencing the iconic Alamo—a jewel of Texas heritage that has captured the world’s attention for generations—is essential. Don’t miss the fascinating Alamo Exhibit at the new Ralston Family Collections Center, including the priceless artifacts gifted to the State of Texas by musician and historian, Phil Collins. After dark, walk to the San Fernando Cathedral in Main Plaza, founded in 1731, to view “The Saga,” a 24-minute colorful historic journey of San Antonio projected onto the cathedral’s façade. After visiting The Alamo and all that’s left of the sprawling Mission San Antonio de Valero, you should also explore Mission San José, Mission Concepción, Mission San Juan, and Mission Espada—the other mission complexes which, along with The Alamo, comprise this World Heritage Convention UNESCO site.

Recognizing the city’s culinary achievements, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has designated San Antonio a Creative City of Gastronomy. Find

award-winning restaurants and unique boutiques in the Pearl district, the former Pearl Brewery dating back to 1883 that has been beautifully restored. In the last 20 years, historic Pearl has become a lively, pedestrian-friendly center bustling with shops, bars, and activities like the weekend farmer’s market. Don’t miss the colorful Historic Market Square, with more than 100 shops and restaurants, offering a unique and authentic confluence of Mexico and the Southwest.

The River Walk in San Antonio defines the city with more than 15 miles of beautiful views, fabulous restaurants, world-class museums and galleries, green spaces, and historical sites. You can walk the five miles of the River Walk that cross through downtown, or relax on a river barge to see more. In this foodie city, you will never run out of great options. Try breakfast at Ocho or Mi Tierra Café, brunch or lunch at Best Quality Daughter, dinner at Biga or Supper, and for one of the best margaritas and guacamole in town, Boudro’s.

As you promenade the River Walk, look out for the McNay Art Museum. This outstanding collection of 19th- and 20th-century art from such artists as Mary Cassatt, Paul Cézanne, Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, and Georgia O’Keeffe, is housed in the former home of founder Marion

Koogler McNay and was the first modern art museum in the state.

Further along the river is the San Antonio Museum of Art, which is housed in a former brewery and holds 5,000 years of artwork. Stop in for lunch at Tre Trattoria restaurant next door and ask for an outdoor table for great views of the San Antonio River.

For family fun, check out one of the major theme parks here, including Six Flags Fiesta Texas, home of rollercoasters and thrill rides, and SeaWorld San Antonio, a 168-hectare marine mammal park with rides and animal attractions. Morgan’s Wonderland and Morgan’s Inspiration Island, offer accessible rides and activities, as well as a waterpark.

A treasure of the city is the San Antonio Zoo, a 20-hectare park that is home to more than 750 species, including one of the world’s largest bird collections. Nearby, enjoy the peace of the Japanese Tea Garden, a quiet refuge in a bustling city.

San Antonio is the site of multiple festivals throughout the year, the biggest being the 10-day Fiesta San Antonio in April, when the city commemorates the Battle of the Alamo and the Battle of San Jacinto. More than three million people take part in 100 events staged all over the city, with live music venues featuring classical music, jazz, mariachi, pop, and Tejano.





▲  
This page, top: The Alamo. Photo by Bee Creek Photography.  
Below, left: Relaxing at Pearl. Photo courtesy Travel Texas. Below, right: Natural Bridge Caverns. Photo courtesy of Natural Bridge Caverns.

►  
Opposite page, top: San Fernando Cathedral light show, San Antonio | The Saga. Photo by Matthew Johnson. Below, left: San Antonio River Walk. Photo by Bee Creek Photography. Below, right: Joker Carnival of Chaos ride at Six Flags Over Texas. Photo courtesy of Visit San Antonio.





## Daytrippin’

The San Antonio Spurs compete in the National Basketball Association (NBA) at Frost Bank Center. Heralded as one of the pioneers of team basketball, the Spurs will be on the court thrilling fans from October to April.

Don’t miss the Mission Reach Paddling Trail, an 12-kilometer stretch of water where you can kayak, birdwatch, or fish.

San Antonio has 33 golf courses so pack your clubs! The Oaks course at TCP San Antonio hosts the PGA Tour’s Valero Texas Open every year. The course, designed by the legendary Greg Norman, should be on every golf enthusiast’s list. Head over to La Cantera Resort and Spa if you are looking for a relaxing stay.

Explore antique stores in New Braunfels, or float miles of cool rivers at Schlitterbahn Waterpark nearby. At Natural Bridge Caverns, you’ll descend 54 meters below ground to see one of the premier show caves in the world. End the day with a meal at the iconic Gristmill River Restaurant and Bar, which overlooks the Guadalupe River, then head over for some two-steppin’ at nearby Gruene Hall, Texas’s oldest dance hall.







# WAY OUT WEST IN EL PASO

This western oasis has carved out a distinct identity as both grand and friendly.

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▲  
*This page:* Castner Range National Monument.  
Photo by Adobe Stock.

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*Opposite page, top:* Presidio Chapel of San Elizario. Photo by Adobe Stock. *Below:* Carlos & Mickey's. Photo courtesy of Destination El Paso.





**I**n dreamy downtown El Paso, early 20th-century architecture enshrines museums, restaurants, and bars pulsing with modern life. Within walking distance, you can enjoy Triple-A baseball at Southwest University Park, delight in the visual treats at the El Paso Museum of Art, and learn about the border region's multinational history at the El Paso Museum of History.

Take a walk down El Paso Street for a slice of living history, a long-standing thoroughfare of enticing storefronts. A few blocks away, don't miss the Plaza Theatre. Constructed in 1930, it is one of the city's most well-known landmarks and a great place to catch comedy, music, and classic movies. No matter where you stay, be sure to check out historic hotels in the city, including two architectural gems—the Paso del Norte and the Plaza—both designed in the early 1900s.

Known for its fabulous views of El Paso and Ciudad Juarez, take Scenic Drive around the southern tip of the Franklin Mountains. Franklin Mountains State Park protects 96 square kilometers of rugged terrain. Check out McKelligon Canyon, a spectacular place to picnic, and the Wilderness Park Museum. Take a nature walk through the gardens of wildflowers here, perfect for birdwatching.

In June, don't miss the annual rodeo at the El Paso Country Coliseum. Events include bareback riding, barrel racing, breakaway roping, bull riding, and steer wrestling. To commemorate your trip, treat yourself to a souvenir of handmade custom boots from either Rocketbuster Handmade Custom Boots or Lucchese Boots.

Comfort food—especially Mexican cuisine—is the city's hallmark, and you'd be hard-pressed to find a part of town without some legendary eateries. In Central El Paso, the Southwestern digs of Carlos and Mickey's lend ambiance to match the “Texas-sized” margaritas. Chico's Tacos, famed for its soaked rolled tacos, is an undeniable bucket-list item. The Kern Place district, near the University of Texas at El Paso, offers a selection of chic dining and drink options at hot spots like Elemi and Manhattan Heights—perfect for recharging after a long day of exploring.

## Daytrippin'

About 65 kilometers east of the city, visit Hueco Tanks State Park and Historic Site, an area of low mountains 1,500 meters high named for the large rock basins or “huecos” that have supplied water to this desert-like region for centuries. See thousands of rock and cave paintings left by the Jornada Mogollon, a group of farmers who lived throughout the Southwest.

If you're up for a challenge, take a drive out to Guadalupe Mountains National Park and climb Guadalupe Peak which, at 8,751 feet, is the highest point in the state. The stunning views from the summit are the reward for your efforts. You will be immersed in some of the park's ecosystems, including the high desert and high elevation forest.

In the Diocese of El Paso, there are three of the oldest and most beautiful preserved adobe churches from the 17th and 18th centuries. The Ysleta Mission, founded in 1692, is the cornerstone of the Ysleta del Sur Indian Pueblo. The Socorro Mission was founded in 1680, and the Presidio Chapel of San Elizario was founded in 1789. Don't miss them!







# WESTERN ADVENTURE STARTS HERE

From historic dude ranches to two-steppin' at a landmark dance hall, the authentic spirit of the Lone Star State is alive and thriving.

TEXAS INTERNATIONAL GUIDE

▲  
*This page:* Wildcatter Ranch in Graham. Photo by Nick Simonite.

▶  
*Photo opposite, top:* Horseback riding on South Padre. Photo by Ben Lowy. *Bottom:* Cultural flair in El Paso. Photo by Nick Simonite.





**W**hether you're looking to get out on horseback, enjoy a chuck wagon meal on a ranch, or to boot, scoot, and boogie back to a time gone by—or all of the above—you can do it all in this state. Find out why Texas is so fiercely proud of its world-famous Western lifestyle.

From Amarillo's Panhandle Plains to the San Antonio River Walk, to the Piney Woods of East Texas and everywhere in between, Western heritage is not just a part of our history—it's an authentic way of life.

Saddle up and come see for yourself.

## Adventures on Horseback

Immerse yourself in the real dude ranch experiences of Bandera, the self-proclaimed "Cowboy Capital of the World." The much-loved Flying L Ranch Resort is a dude ranch-style resort experience tucked away in Bandera's Hill Country. Nearby, Western hospitality and unbeatable ranch experiences are never in short supply at Dixie Dude Ranch. Enjoy a sunset trail ride along the Brazos River at Wildcatter Ranch in Graham, where rustic elegance pairs with unforgettable fun on the Texas range.

Experience wild Texas from horseback on trail rides offered around the state. Big Bend and Lajitas Stables at Big Bend Ranch State Park offer hourly rides and overnight horseback trips on trails that promise sweeping views of the otherworldly Chihuahuan Desert. Amarillo's Cowboys and Cowgirls in the West brings the Wild West to life on horseback and chuck wagon adventures. For exhilarating fun, try galloping across the sandy beaches of the Gulf of Mexico on South Padre Island.





## Dazzling Dance Halls

Two-step your way into history at Gruene Hall in the town of New Braunfels. Founded in 1878, it's the oldest continually operating dance hall in the state. Learn to line-dance—including Western Swing and the Cotton-Eyed Joe—at Austin's Broken Spoke. Out in the Hill Country, swing the night away at Luckenbach Dance Hall, a local treasure near Fredericksburg since 1887.



## That Western Style

Tip your hat to the best of Lone Star fashion. Wear what working cowhands have worn since 1947—Wrangler jeans, pearl snap shirts, and accessories, such as wallets and bolo ties—all are available at Cavender's or Pinto Ranch stores. For heirloom-quality belts, buckles, leather goods, and jewelry, head to Maida's in Houston. Texas is the place to buy authentic cowboy boots. Lucchese boots have stood up to long days on the ranch and have been a favorite of presidents and celebrities for decades. El Paso's RocketBuster Boots are more like wearable art. Top things off with a real cowboy hat. Look for styles from Ariat, Resistol, and Stetson.







## Your First Rodeo

Rodeo's roots reach back to ranching's early days when cowboys competed in riding and roping contests for fun. A pro sport today, rodeo is also the official sport of Texas. Speed and skill are key in such exciting competitions as barrel racing, calf roping, and bull riding, while rodeo parades, carnivals, and musical entertainment add to the fun. Rodeos in cities like Houston, Fort Worth, and San Antonio are among the largest in the world and last for weeks.



*Opposite Page, top:*  
Gruene Hall. *Below, left:*  
RocketBuster Boots. *Below,*  
*right:* Standard Hat Works  
hat. All photos by Jeff  
Wilson.

*This page, top:*  
Roping skills competition.  
Photo by Getty Images.  
*Below:* Cattle drive at Fort  
Worth Stockyards Station.  
Photo by John Davidson.






# EXPERIENCE BIG BEND

Slow down, take a breath, and remind yourself  
of the stunning beauty of the natural world.

TEXAS INTERNATIONAL GUIDE



▲ This page: Big Bend  
with a view of Sierra del  
Carmen. Photo by Bee  
Creek Photography.

▶ Opposite page,  
left: McDonald  
Observatory. Photo  
by Will van Overbeek/  
Texas Department of  
Transportation. Right:  
Balmorhea State Park.  
Photo by Jeff Wilson.





**I**f you want to experience the glory of natural, untouched Texas, there's no finer destination than Big Bend National Park, encompassing more than 324,000 hectares of protected Chihuahuan Desert wilderness. There are trails to hike, rivers to raft, mountains to climb, and way too many stars to count.

Climb to the highest point in the park—Emory Peak at 2,388 meters—or hike to the South Rim, a 24-kilometer round-trip offering unforgettable views. Other notable hiking options include the Window Trail, offering panoramic desert vistas, and the Lost Mine Trail, leading to a woodland-grassland ecosystem with some of the best views in the park. Each explores a different section of the Chisos Basin.

With more than 175 kilometers of paved roads circling Big Bend, visitors will experience much of the park at pullouts along the way. Stop and take advantage of some amazing photo opportunities. Local wildlife can be seen along the Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive, including deer, coyote, jackrabbits, and javelinas. Bird spotting is also plentiful in the park—don't be surprised if you spy a golden eagle. Every spring across Texas the state flower, the bluebonnet, carpets the countryside and highways along with other native wildflowers. Visitors to the Big Bend area out West marvel at the varieties of cacti, yucca, and agaves which thrive in the area.

After hiking or river rafting on the Rio Grande, try a dip at the natural springs found at the Hot Springs Historic District on the east side of the park. Heated by geothermal processes to about 40 degrees Celsius, look out for pictographs from happy spa people made hundreds of years ago as you soak the day away.

There is more to discover along the 130 kilometers of beautiful backcountry roads leading to Big Bend Ranch State Park, where you can explore another 72,400 hectares of pristine wilderness. Standouts include the 42-kilometer Old Ore Road in the shadows of the Dead Horse Mountains, and the River Road, an 82-kilometer trek across the southern portion of this beautiful park.

Get close to the night sky at the McDonald Observatory, a world-renowned facility atop Mount Locke near the town of Fort Davis, which offers stargazers an unparalleled window to the cosmos through its powerful telescopes. Spanning more than 38,000 square kilometers in Texas and Mexico, the Great Big Bend International Dark Sky Reserve is the largest Dark Sky Certified place in the world. And that's why the stars are always biggest and brightest deep in the heart of Texas.



## Daytrippin'

Balmorhea State Park in the town of Toyahvale is a refreshing natural oasis. Check out the world's largest spring-fed swimming pool, renowned for its crystal-clear water teeming with aquatic life.

The small desert town of Marfa is noted for its art installations, specialty boutiques, lauded restaurants, and mysterious Marfa Lights. This fascinating town offers foodies several dining options where you can grab a meal and discuss, including Cochineal, Para Llevar, and The Sentinel.

Ghost Town Texas in nearby Terlingua is a must-see when you're in the area. The remains of the Chisos Mining Company offer visitors a chance to explore and soak up some West Texas atmosphere. Refresh and refuel at the Starlight Theatre Restaurant and Saloon while enjoying live local entertainment. Take in the sunset from their porch.

At the foothills of the Davis Mountains, the towns of Alpine and Marathon are gateway communities to Big Bend. A visit to Marathon should include dinner at the historic Gage Hotel, or at least a drink at its White Buffalo Bar. In Alpine, be sure to check out the more than 40 colorful murals dotting buildings around town.





# OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

The best way to experience our state is to get outdoors for activities under the big Texas sky.

*This page, top:*

Rock climbing at Hueco Tanks State Park. Photo by Jeff Wilson. *Below:* Kayaking in the Hill Country. Photo by Earl Nottingham/TPWD.

*Opposite page:*

Possum Kingdom. Photo by Kenny Braun.

**E**xperience hiking the mountain landscapes out West, biking the rolling terrain of the Texas Hill Country, or canoeing and fishing the bayous and bass-filled lakes of East Texas.

The Texas State Park System, which celebrated its centennial in 2023, is a great place to begin.

Hikers will find thousands of kilometers of trails crisscrossing Texas, as well as challenging climbs like Guadalupe Mountain—at 2,667 meters, the

highest point in Texas. Classic routes include backpacking in Big Bend National Park and the Davis Mountains, regarded as the Texas Alps, where trekkers can explore so-called “sky islands.” Popular state parks include Palo Duro Canyon, outside of Amarillo, and Enchanted Rock, near Fredericksburg, where hikers can trek up a huge pink granite dome rising some 550 meters above the Texas Hill Country.





## Caprock Canyons State Park

About 165 kilometers southwest of Amarillo, the Texas State Bison Herd—now more than 150 strong—has made its home in Caprock Canyons State Park. As well as 145 kilometers of trails for hiking, horseback riding, and biking, Lake Theo offers fishing, no-wake boating, and swimming. Watch for golden eagles and red-tailed hawks.

## Dinosaur Valley State Park

Located in Glen Rose, this park takes you on a trip back to more than 113 million years ago when dinosaurs roamed this area of Central Texas. You can still see fossilized claw marks and footprints preserved in the riverbed. The park also has 20 miles of trails, perfect for hiking and mountain biking. Nearby Paluxy River is a paddler's paradise.

## Garner State Park

Located in the Hill Country, Garner State Park is Texas's most-visited state park. Float down the Frio River on an innertube, and join family for a fun day of canoeing, fishing, geocaching, and playing mini-golf. On summer evenings, kick up your heels and dance to jukebox tunes, a nightly tradition since the 1940s.

## Monahans Sandhills State Park

Try the unique experience of sandboarding the dunes at Monahans Sandhills State Park in West Texas, where some of the dunes peak as high as 22 meters. There's a 325-hectare horseback riding area. And, you'll also find one of the largest oak forests in the world here.

## Seminole Canyon State Park and Historic Site

A haven for backpacking, bird watching, and biking, the Seminole Canyon State Park and Historic Site is best known for ancient rock paintings found here. The cave art is thought to date back as far as 2,000–8,000 years ago, when humans shared the land with mammoths.



## Swimming Holes and Paddling Trails

Texas residents consider swimming holes essential to enjoying the summer. Barton Springs Pool in Austin, Blanco State Park in Blanco, and Balmorhea State Park out West in Toyahvale, are just a few special spots. The state also enjoys plenty of lakes, where you can take a dip as well as go boating, fishing, paddling, and more. Destinations include Inks Lake State Park, Burnet, and Possum Kingdom Lake, located one hour west of Dallas-Fort Worth, where you can also snorkel and scuba dive, as well as wakeboard. Visitors can canoe and kayak along pristine paddling trails on rivers, lakes, and coastal areas, such as Devils River State Natural Area in West Texas, Village Creek State Park in Lumberton, and the Neches River National Wildlife Refuge in Jacksonville, as well as Houston's Buffalo Bayou Paddling Trail. If floating in an innertube is more your speed, get out on the Guadalupe, a 230-mile river that runs from Central Texas to the Gulf of Mexico. Popular stretches to float include those in New Braunfels, Canyon Lake, San Marcos, and San Antonio.

## Enchanting Forests

Texas is home to five U.S. National Forests, and four of which are located in East Texas. Together, the Angelina National Forest, Davy Crocket National Forest, Sabine National Forest, and Sam Houston National Forest comprise just over 202,343 hectares of native woodlands.

Visitors will find trails ideal for hiking and horseback riding. Other activities include canoeing and kayaking, fishing, geocaching, and swimming.

Located in Southeast Texas, Big Thicket National Preserve is the largest forest in the state. Spanning more than 40,468 hectares, Big Thicket has nine different ecosystems, making it one of the most biologically diverse places in the country. The park also offers 64 kilometers of hiking trails, as well as creeks, bayous, and a river to explore by kayak or canoe. Known for its longleaf pine forest, woodpeckers, bald cypress trees, and thousands of insect-eating carnivorous plants, this breathtaking treasure offers visitors an unforgettable experience.







# PARADISE FOUND

Texas has 591 kilometers of Gulf shoreline, boasting beautiful sandy beaches, historic coastal towns, and offshore adventures. For surfing, paddleboarding, and beachcombing, the Texas Gulf Coast offers plenty of seaside fun.

TEXAS INTERNATIONAL GUIDE

▲  
*This page:* Horace Caldwell Fishing Pier, Port Aransas. Photo by Bee Creek Photography.

▶  
*Opposite page:* Great Blue Heron in the surf. Photo by Bee Creek Photography.



## Corpus Christi

**T**he largest coastal city in Texas, Corpus Christi is a major deep-water seaport with a rich naval history. Discover more at the USS Lexington, a 330,000-kilogram floating museum on board what was once the nation's longest-serving aircraft carrier. With more than 20 exhibits, the Texas State Aquarium houses a vast array of sea creatures found in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea, and also rescues and rehabilitates wildlife. Visit the Museum of Science and History to learn more about Corpus history, as well as the ecology of the Coastal Bend region of Texas. Plan a day at the South Texas Botanical Gardens and Nature Center, where visitors can see more than 2,500 different orchids, as well as butterflies and parrots.

## Galveston

About 80 kilometers southeast of Houston is the coastal resort city and port of Galveston. With its districts of historically significant 19th-century buildings, you can spend the day admiring the many Victorian homes that line the streets here. This quaint Gulf Coast barrier island also features some 51 kilometers of beachfront. Relax on family-friendly Stewart Beach or stroll the Seawall Urban Park, a 16-kilometer stretch that is perfect for bicycling or jogging. Galveston is also home to family-fun attractions, including the Galveston Island Historic Pleasure Pier, the Moody Gardens Botanical Park, the Oceans Star Offshore Drilling Rig and Museum, the Lone Star Flight Museum, Schlitterbahn Galveston Waterpark, and the Galveston Railroad Museum. Take the bridge over to scenic Pelican Island and try pier-fishing at Seawolf Park, and experience life as a WWII sailor touring historic naval ships at the Galveston Naval Museum.

## Port Aransas

Port Aransas is a city on Mustang Island, renowned for its pristine, family-friendly beaches and fish-filled waterways. Port A's thriving arts community is showcased in local galleries, and there are shops and boutiques filled with island-inspired fashion and unique home décor. For a relaxing day, book a dolphin-watching cruise or explore the paddling trails at Mustang Island State Park. Look no further than Fisherman's Wharf and Grumbles Seafood Co., serving fresh-caught seafood with a view.

## Port Isabel and South Padre Island

Enjoy the coastal breezes in Port Isabel, home to one of the oldest lighthouses in Texas. Watch dolphins frolic in the waves, mark the migration of sandhill cranes and snow geese, and learn about wildlife preservation aboard one of the island's many eco-tour cruises. Take the Queen Isabella Causeway to South Padre Island, a popular resort and vacation spot offering year-round tropical weather and 56 kilometers of pristine beachfront. Fish, ride horses on the beach, learn to surf or snorkel, or stop in at the many intriguing galleries and shops.

## Rockport

This small coastal city is best known for its fishing. Indeed, you'll find no less than six fishing piers, as well as opportunities to charter fishing boats with guides, bait shops, gear rentals, and more. Rockport Beach has a saltwater pool and powdery sand, perfect for building sandcastles and reveling in the sun. Take in the Heritage District downtown for unique shops, art galleries, and a selection of bars and seafood restaurants—many of which will cook your fresh catch. History buffs will love the fascinating Texas Maritime Museum.



## Daytrippin'

Some of the best deep-sea fishing in the country can be found in port cities along the Gulf Coast, from Galveston to South Padre Island. There are big fish out there under the waves, including amberjack, blue marlin, grouper, sailfish, shark, and wahoo, as well as smaller catch like mackerel and red snapper.

Just south of Corpus Christi, discover the legendary cowboy town of Kingsville, home of the famous King Ranch, founded in 1852. Join a daily ranch tour and visit the King Ranch Museum to learn more about the fascinating family, and its legendary Quarter Horses and Santa Gertrudis cattle. Visit the 1904 Train Depot Museum and the National Professional Bull Riders Rodeo and also make time to sample the juicy barbecued steaks, savory Mexican Jalisco-style tacos, and freshwater drum fish served at the town's restaurants.

The Gulf Coast sits at a migratory crossroads, hosting more than 600 bird species at different times of the year. During spring and fall, songbirds, hawks, and hummingbirds visit Texas before and after crossing the Gulf of Mexico. The coast also acts as a winter home for multitudes of waterfowl and wading birds, none more famous than the Whooping crane, the tallest bird species in North America, which congregate around the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge.





# THE SOUTHERN TIP OF TEXAS

Palm trees, citrus orchards, and beautiful beaches make the Rio Grande Valley a paradise for sports fishermen and birdwatchers alike.

*This page: Port Isabel lighthouse at pre-dawn. Photo by Bee Creek Photography.*

*Opposite page, top: Brownsville bike trail. Photo by Nick Simonite. Center: Kai Tod Thai Kitchen, Laredo. Photo by Ryan Cantu. Below: Enjoy birding at the World Birding Center in McAllen. Photo by Mark Olsen on Unsplash.*

One of Texas's great unspoiled habitats is Laguna Atascosa, encompassing nearly 40,468 coastal hectares. It is the largest remaining protected natural environment in the Rio Grande Valley. Edged by the shallow waters of the Laguna Madre on the east, the refuge is a diverse mix of topographies: Tidal flats and sand dunes give way to coastal salt prairies dominated by cordgrass and yuccas.

Bird watchers mark the migratory patterns of more than 500 species at nine distinctly different birding sites, set along 193 kilometers of the Rio Grande. Uniquely situated at the convergence of the Central

and Mississippi Flyways, the World Birding Center welcomes human and avian visitors throughout the year. Look for crested caracaras, plain chachalacas, bronzed cowbirds, Harris's hawk, and long-billed thrashers, appearing alongside butterflies.

Step inside Texas history at Presidio La Bahía and Goliad State Park and Historic Site. Designated as a National Historic Landmark, La Bahía is known as the "Crossroads of the Texas Revolution" and is considered the world's finest example of a Spanish frontier fort. Nearby, Goliad State Park houses three additional historic sites and 76 hectares of recreational space along the San Antonio River.

At the Edinburg Museum of South Texas History, discover the stories and culture of the Rio Grande Valley, from prehistoric times through the 20th century, while visitors to the Roma Historic District can walk through a preserved 19th-century border town.

In the Lower Rio Grande Valley, the Caracas Trails connects 688 kilometers of trails, including 370 kilometers of multi-use trails, 193 kilometers of bicycle routes, and 126 kilometers of paddling trails, highlighting the region's beaches, cultural sites, geographic landmarks, waterways, and wildlife preserves.



## Brownsville

Bordering the Rio Grande River, the city of Brownsville is the southernmost port city of the continental United States. Relax on Boca Chica Beach, 12 kilometers of sugary white sand that's open to anglers, campers, surfers, and sunbathers. You'll also have a front-row seat to rocket launches from nearby Starbase, the world's first commercial orbit facility for SpaceX. Brownsville is home to the Gladys Porter Zoo, where you can enjoy the giraffe feeding station. And don't forget, this is the "Taco Capital of Texas": The famous Taco Trail, featuring the best taquerias, should be high on your list.

## Laredo

Your visit to Laredo should begin in the San Agustín de Laredo Historic District, home to the 19th-century San Agustín Cathedral. Learn the history of this historic border town at the Republic of the Rio Grande Museum and the Villa Antigua Border Heritage Museum. Located east of Laredo, explore the Lake Casa Blanca International State Park, perfect for boating, fishing, mountain biking, picnicking, and swimming.

## McAllen

Located on the U.S.-Mexico border, the city of McAllen highlights the colorful cross-cultural melding of both countries plus the rich history of South Texas. Visit Quinta Mazatlan, a stunning Spanish Revival-style adobe mansion whose manicured gardens are now home to the World Birding Center. For a fun shopping experience, head to La Plaza Mall or the Rio Grande Valley Premium Outlets.

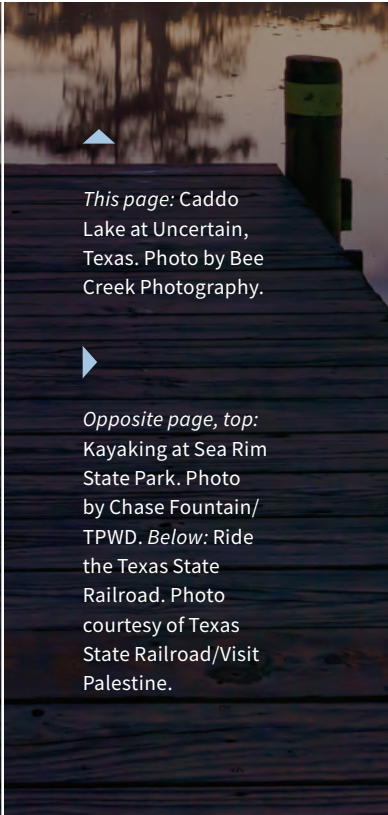






# THE MAGIC OF EAST TEXAS

The lush scenery among the pines stands in contrast to the deserts of West Texas, a testament to how unique the Lone Star State really is.



▲  
*This page: Caddo Lake at Uncertain, Texas. Photo by Bee Creek Photography.*

▶  
*Opposite page, top: Kayaking at Sea Rim State Park. Photo by Chase Fountain/TPWD. Below: Ride the Texas State Railroad. Photo courtesy of Texas State Railroad/Visit Palestine.*





## Daytrippin'

Ride the Texas State Railroad through the scenic Piney Woods on steam and diesel trains, which run between the rustic towns of Rusk and Palestine. Each spring, Palestine hosts the Dogwood Trails Arts and Music Festival, celebrating these lacy white flowers.

A half-hour north of Houston, start your shopping expedition at The Woodlands Mall, a premier fashion center with more than 160 stores, and then head to the open-air luxury boutiques at Market Street.

Sabine National Forest, near Hemphill, forms part of the boundary between Texas and Louisiana. The eastern part of the forest outlines Toledo Bend Reservoir, known for its bountiful bass fishing.

**T**he Piney Woods of East Texas is an ecological wonder, steeped in rich Native American heritage, wondrous wildlife, and plenty of Texas charm. At the state's largest natural lake, Caddo Lake and State Park, near Karnack, ancient bald cypress trees covered in frothy Spanish moss surround the lake, perfect for canoeing and fishing.

At the East Texas Oil Museum, learn about the industry that launched the community of Kilgore onto the world's stage. Visit Tyler, the Rose Capital of America, where more than 300 varieties of colorful rosebushes populate the Tyler Rose Garden Center. Check out the Tyler Rose Museum, which explains the history of the city's annual Texas Rose Festival, a beloved event that has been running for more than 90 years. Spend a day at Caldwell Zoo, located on 34 hectares and featuring 200 species from around the globe.

Explore Nacogdoches, the oldest town in Texas, where the Caddo tribe and Spanish settlers etched cultural heritage into its foundation, naming our state "Texas" from the Caddo word *tejas*, meaning friend. Nearby, enjoy camping and fishing at the Mission Tejas State Park, where you'll also find a commemorative replica of the first Spanish mission in Texas.

There's more to see in Beaumont and the nearby Big Thicket

National Preserve, where visitors can kayak, or hike or bike some 64 kilometers of trails.

Stop in at the fascinating Texas Country Music Hall of Fame in Carthage and visit the antique shops that line the original brick streets of historic Jefferson. Don't miss the experience of a lifetime with a hot air balloon ride in Longview, home of The Great Texas Balloon Race.

An hour north of Houston, visit Huntsville State Park, which offers pinecone-laden trails for hikers, as well as horseback riding and kayaking around the calm waters of 85-hectare Lake Raven. Nearby Sam Houston Memorial Museum honors the memory of the original President of the Republic of Texas on his homestead. Head eight kilometers south and discover majestic trees at the Sam Houston National Forest, where you'll also find the 206-kilometer Lone Star Hiking Trail.

Sea Rim State Park in Sabine Pass offers quiet coastland and abundant wildlife. There are more than 1,600 hectares of marshland and eight kilometers of rugged, unspoiled beach to visit. The park is home to neotropical birds and plenty of wildlife. Rent kayaks and explore the three paddling trails through wetlands, or join fishermen casting for redfish and drum.





# THE GREAT WIDE OPEN

The windswept high plains and breathtaking canyons of the Texas Panhandle recall the proud heritage of ranching and oil and gas.

TEXAS INTERNATIONAL GUIDE

*This page:*  
Lighthouse Rock at  
Palo Duro Canyon.  
Photo by Chase  
Fountain/TPWD.

*Opposite page, top:*  
Cadillac Ranch  
outside Amarillo.  
*Below:* Historic  
Route 66 sign. Both  
photos by Bee Creek  
Photography.





## Amarillo

**A**marillo is the largest city in the Texas Panhandle, the northernmost region of the state.

Driving east from Amarillo you'll see the world-famous Cadillac Ranch, a roadside attraction featuring 10 Cadillacs dating from 1948 to 1963 buried upright in a row, nose-first in the ground. Head back into town to visit Bill's Backyard Classics, a collection of 170 beautifully restored cars from the golden age of automobiles.

Route 66 may begin in Chicago and end some 3,666 kilometers later in Los Angeles, but, of course, Texas is in the center of it all. Indeed, America's legendary highway hits a major milestone in 2026: its 100th anniversary. The ultimate road trip, Route 66 is a symbol of American freedom and adventure, crossing eight states.

In McLean, about an hour west of Amarillo, you'll find Devil's Rope and Route 66 Museums, dedicated to the story of how barbed-wire fencing tamed the West, as well as Texas's first Phillips 66 gas station, built in 1929. The tiny Texas town of Adrian marks the halfway point between Chicago and Los Angeles, where travelers converge on the Midpoint Café for one of their famous "Ugly Crust" pies.

Local history is embodied in the American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame and Museum, the Kwahadi Museum of the American Indian, and the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum in the nearby town of Canyon. For a bit of family time, check out the Amarillo Zoo and Wonderland Amusement Park, still going strong after more than 70 years.

Head to the Route 66 Historic District and Bracero's Mexican Bar and Grill, a once-functioning gas station. Grab great burgers and good music at The GoldenLight Cantina, Amarillo's oldest restaurant, or try Savór for tapas and an upscale dining experience. You'll find a touch of romance, unexpected dishes, and craft cocktails at OHMS Café & Bar.

## Palo Duro Canyon

South of Amarillo is an unexpected wonder: the 193-kilometer-long Palo Duro Canyon, the second-largest canyon in the United States. With breathtaking views and spectacular rock formations, the canyon offers hiking, biking, horseback riding, and camping opportunities. TEXAS Outdoor Musical, performed in the summer at an amphitheater built on the canyon floor, is a family-friendly production that tells the story of the struggles of early Texas settlers.

## Lubbock

Celebrate the birthplace of a rock 'n' roll legend and native son Buddy Holly and the music of West Texas at the Buddy Holly Center, then head down to the bustling Depot District for concert venues and lively nightlife. Check out the Museum of Texas Tech University to see millions of objects of art, history, and paleontology, and catch one of 40 astronomy shows at the Moody Planetarium. Nearby Brownfield is known as the Grape Capital of Texas. The sandy, nutrient-rich soil and low humidity found here produce some 32 different types of grapes. Indeed, 90 percent of vines grown in the state come from West Texas, with High Plains wineries like Llano Estacado, Cap Rock, and McPherson Cellars among those where visitors can stop and sip.





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