

Austin Area Entertainment Spots



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Alamo Title

Central Texas is bustling with historic sites, family-friendly attractions, theme parks to enjoy and caverns to explore. Many tours require reservations. Some are free; call for costs. Here are just some of the attractions tourists and residents alike can enjoy.

Austin

Austin Duck Adventures. A narrated, 75-minute land-and-lake tour in an amphibious vehicle through downtown. 209 E. Sixth St. 477-5274, www.austinducks.com.

Austin Ghost Tours. Downtown walking tours offered Saturday and Sunday nights year-round. Reservations required. 853-9826, www.austinghostours.com or www.hauntedtexas.com.

Austin Nature and Science Center. Camps, exhibits and animal showcase. 301 Nature Center Drive. 327-8181, www.ci.austin.tx.us/ansc.

Austin's Park. Go-karts, miniature golf, bumper boats, rock wall, batting cages, arcade games, laser tag, pizza buffet and more. 16231 Interstate 35 N., Pflugerville. 670-9600, www.austinspark.com.

Austin Steam Train. Vintage trains make varied runs throughout the year. 477-8468, www.austinsteamtrain.org.

Austin Zoo. Rescued animals from Texas and around the world, petting zoo and train. 10807 Rawhide Trail. 288-1490, www.austinzoo.org.

Bats in flight. The Ann W. Richards Congress Avenue Bridge over Lady Bird Lake is home to the largest urban bat colony in North America. Best mid-March through early November. The American-Statesman has a free bat-viewing area, 305 S. Congress Ave. Inside Line, 416-5700, www.batcon.org.

Bear Creek Stables Inc. Lighted arenas, English and Western riding lessons. 13017 Bob Johnson Road. 282-0250, www.bearcreekstables.com.

Bremond Block. Historic district bound by Seventh, Eighth, San Antonio and Guadalupe streets. The Convention and Visitors Bureau offers tours on weekends March through November. 478-0098.

Capital Cruises. Boat tours on Lady Bird Lake. 208 Barton Springs Road. 480-9264, www.capitalcruises.com.

Capital Skatepark. In-line skating, skateboarding and BMX biking. Lessons available. 2008 Picadilly Drive, Round Rock. 251-4500, www.austinskatepark.com.

Capitol Visitors Center. Center is in the old General Land Office Building, the oldest state office building. 112 E. 11th St. 305-8400, www.tspb.state.tx.us/CVC/home/home.html.

Chaparral Ice Centers. Ice skating, video games and a hockey program. 14200 Interstate 35 N. 252-8500. 2525 Anderson Lane. 451-5102, www.chaparralice.com.

Congress Avenue and Sixth Street. Guided walking tour of downtown includes historic buildings such as the 1915 Paramount Theatre and the 1886 Driskill Hotel. Wheelchair accessible; parking free on weekends. 478-0098, www.austintexas.org.

J & M Aviaries. Home to more than 60 species of exotic birds and other animals. Animal encounter shows Saturdays and Sundays. 8647 U.S. 290 West. 288-2199.

Kiddie Acres. Amusement park for families with children 10 and younger. Rides and miniature golf. 4800 W. Howard Lane. 255-4131, www.kiddieacres.com.

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. Established by Lady Bird Johnson in 1982,

the nonprofit center promotes and preserves native plants. 4801 La Crosse Ave. 232-0100, www.wildflower.org.

Lone Star Riverboat. Double-decker, paddle wheel riverboat cruises on Town Lake. 210 Barton Springs Road. 327-1388, www.lonestarriverboat.com.

Mabel Davis District Park. Austin's first skate park with a skate bowl and streetscape elements, Olympic-size swimming pool, playscape and picnic area. 3427 Parker Lane. 441-5247.

Main Event. Bowling alley, laser tag, wall climbing, billiards and a restaurant. 13301 N. U.S. 183. 401-0000, www.maineventusa.net.

Millennium Youth Entertainment Complex. Bowling, roller skating, arcade games, movie theater and more. 1156 Hargrave St. 472-6932, www.myec.net.

Mount Bonnell. Visitors can picnic atop this 785-foot limestone hill with panoramic views of Lake Austin, downtown and the University of Texas. 3800 Mount Bonnell Road.

Old Bakery and Emporium. 1876 structure listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Gift shop and confectionery. 1006 Congress Ave. 477-5961, www.ci.austin.tx.us/park/bakery1.htm.

Peter Pan Mini Golf. Two miniature golf courses and video games. 1207 Barton Springs Road. 472-1033.

Playland Skate Center. Roller skating and in-line skating. 8822 McCann Drive. 452-1901, www.playlandskatecenter.com.

Ramp Ranch. In-line skating, skateboarding and BMX biking. Lessons available. 10355 Texas 29, Liberty Hill. 512-515-7600, www.austinskatepark.com.

Texas Capitol. Tours of the Capitol and underground extension. 11th Street and Congress Avenue. 463-0063, www.capitol.state.tx.us.

Texas State Cemetery. Burial ground dating to 1851 for Republic of Texas founders, jurists, writers and elected officials. Monuments include the works of Charles Umlauf, Elisabet Ney and Pompeo Coppini. Tours available. 909 Navasota St. 463-0605, www.cemetery.state.tx.us.

Texas Union Underground. Located on the University of Texas campus, the Union Underground offers bowling, billiards, arcade games and a laptop lounge. Texas Union, 24th and Guadalupe streets. 475-6670, www.utexas.edu/student/txunion.

Treaty Oak. 500-year-old famed live oak is the last surviving tree of a grove that once sheltered Comanches and Tonkawas. The tree made international news in 1989 when it was poisoned. Fifth and Baylor streets. 478-0098.

University of Texas Tower. Landmark on the University of Texas campus made headlines Aug. 1, 1966, when Charles Whitman opened fire on pedestrians from the tower, killing 14 people and wounding 31. Reopened in 1999, the tower offers panoramic views of the city. Call for availability. 475-6633, www.utexas.edu/tower.

Volente Beach Water Park. Water rides, beach and lagoon on Lake Travis. April-Sept. 16107 FM 2769, Leander. 512-258-5109, www.volentebeach.com.

Wild Basin Wilderness Preserve. 224-acre sanctuary for native plants, animals and birds, including some endangered species. Some trails are wheelchair accessible. Weekend, stargazer and moonlight tours. 805 N. Capital of Texas Highway (Loop 360). 327-7622, www.wildbasin.org.

Zilker Botanical Garden. 31-acre botanical garden features a butterfly trail and themed gardens, including pioneer and prehistoric villages. 2220 Barton Springs Road. 477-8672, www.zilker garden.org.

Zilker Park. Downtown park includes Barton Springs, a spring-fed swimming pool, picnicking, a hillside theater, playground and a miniature train. 2100 Barton Springs Road. 974-6700.

Boerne

Cascade Caverns. 68 degrees year-round with 100-foot waterfall. Guided tours. Three miles south of Boerne. 226 Cascade Caverns Road. 830-755-8080, www.cascadecaverns.com.

Cave Without a Name. Six large underground rooms. 60-minute guided tours. FM 474 northeast of Boerne about 6 miles to Kreuzberg Road. 325 Kreuzberg Road. 830-537-4212, www.cavewithoutaname.com.

Georgetown

Historic Georgetown. Three nationally registered historic districts. Georgetown History and Visitor Information Center, 101 W. Seventh St. 800-436-8696.

Inner Space Cavern. Guided tours include a new 'Explorer's Tour,' which takes visitors on an extended cavern trail. Exit 259 off Interstate 35, a half-mile south of downtown Georgetown. 4200 Interstate 35 S. 512-931-2283, www.myinnerspacecavern.com.

Lake Buchanan

Fall Creek Vineyards. Winery near Lake Buchanan has tours, tastings and retail shop. 1820 County Road 222 in Tow, 80 miles northwest of Austin. 325-379-5361, www.fcv.com.

Vanishing Texas River Cruise — Boat trips through canyons. 16942 RM 2341, 65 miles northwest of Austin on Lake Buchanan. 800-474-8374 or 512-756-6986, www.vtrc.com.

New Braunfels

Landa Park. Miniature golf, walking/jogging trails, miniature train rides, playgrounds and paddle boats. Park Office, 110 Golf Course Road. 830-221-4350, www.nbpard.org.

Schlitterbahn. 65-acre waterpark with more than 40 attractions. April-September. 400 N. Liberty Ave. 830-625-2351, www.schlitterbahn.com/nb.

Snake Farm. Snakes, alligators, crocodiles, llamas, longhorns, lizards, monkeys, kangaroos and more. 5640 Interstate 35 S. 830-608-9270.

Round Rock

The Chisholm Trail. A recognized historic district of eight buildings that predate the Civil War is part of the legendary cattle-drive trail. Sam Bass Road south to RM 620. 512-463-6255, www.roundrocktexas.gov.

San Antonio

Natural Bridge Caverns. 60-foot limestone bridge spans the entrance. Challenging 'adventure tour' offered, in which visitors are outfitted with caving gear and crawl through undeveloped rooms and passages. 30 minutes north of San Antonio at 26495 Natural Bridge Caverns Rd. 210-651-6101, www.naturalbridgecaverns.com.

River Walk. Two-mile stretch along San Antonio River that offers boat tours, shops and restaurants. 210-227-4262, www.thesanantonioriverwalk.com.

Sea World San Antonio. 250-acre marine theme park home to Shamu, beluga whales and sea lions, more than 25 rides, shows and attractions. March-November. 10500 SeaWorld Drive. 800-700-7786, www.seaworld.com/sanantonio.

Six Flags Fiesta Texas. Amusement park includes rides and water park.

March-October. Interstate 10 West, Exit 555. 17000 Interstate 10 W. 210-697-5050, www.sixflags.com/fiestaTexas.

San Marcos

Aquarena Center. More than 100 varieties of aquatic life. View aquatic life on glass-bottom boat tours. 921 Aquarena Springs Drive. 512-245-7570, www.aquarena.txstate.edu.

San Marcos Skate Park. 10,000-square-foot skate park has a concrete skateboard area, with ramps, walls, rails and stairs. The park is free and open to the public during daylight hours. 627 E. Hopkins St. 512-393-8400.

Wonder World. Features a cave, miniature train, wildlife park and 'antigravity' room. 1000 Prospect St. 512-392-3760, www.wonderworldpark.com.

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