

WHAT'S NEW & THINGS TO DO



Credit: The Alamo

San Antonio

The Alamo expands with the Alamo Collections Center, opening March 3, 2023.

The Alamo Collections Center, the newest construction on the Alamo grounds since the 1950s, will provide 10,000 square feet of exhibition space, expanding the current galleries by fivefold. Items from the Phil Collins Collection, the Donald and Louise Yena Spanish Colonial Collection, and the Alamo Collection will be displayed in the Alamo Collections Center until they can be shown in the new Visitor Center and Museum, which is anticipated to open in 2026. www.theAlamo.org

Morgan's Wonderland in San Antonio is the world's first accessible amusement park for children and adults with special cognitive and physical needs.

Non-profit Morgan's Wonderland is the very first theme park of its kind. Admission for those with special needs is FREE; admission fees for accompanying family members, friends, caregivers and the general public are nominal. For more information, visit www.morganswonderland.com.



Credit: Morgan's Wonderland

Galveston

Everything's bigger in Texas, and the biggest, boldest adventure has arrived.

Royal Caribbean International's new \$125-million cruise terminal in Galveston, Texas, recently opened its doors and welcomed the Lone Star State's largest cruise ship, **Allure of the Seas**. The 161,334-square-foot facility is the world's first zero-energy cruise terminal and offers seven-night Western Caribbean cruises that visit destinations such as Costa Maya and Cozumel, Mexico; and Roatan, Honduras.



Credit: La Nube Children's Museum

El Paso

El Paso's new childrens museum, La Nube, will open in early 2023.

With a focus on science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM), the center's goal is to spark curiosity and cultivate critical thinking. Children and their families will interact with expansive, hands-on exhibits and an exploration of land, water, and sky. <https://la-nube.org/>

BIG BEND ROAD TRIP ADVENTURE

In the **Big Bend** region of Texas, the road stretches out before you as far as the eye can see and kisses the bright blue sky at the horizon. There are few places like it for fans of epic road trips, with hidden gems and a rich culture made up of Native American, Mexican and American cowboy influences waiting for you all along the route from **El Paso** to **Big Bend National Park**.

We begin this journey in **El Paso**, a bustling border city in the far western corner of the state. Head east from El Paso to make your first stop on this adventure at **Hueco Tanks State Park & Historic Site**. For millennia, these rocky hills have been a sacred spot for Native Americans, and today you can walk in their footsteps and gaze at the imagery they left behind.

From Hueco Tanks, you'll continue northeast on Highway 62 toward **Guadalupe Mountains National Park**. The stretch of highway leading to the park is known as "the Lonesome Highway," and with so few vehicles in sight for miles, you'll quickly understand why. The views as you approach the mountains are truly breathtaking. Any of the trails make for unforgettable hikes, but if you have the time and are experienced enough for a steep hike, the Guadalupe Peak Trail up to **Guadalupe Peak** — the highest natural point in Texas (8,751 feet) — is rated strenuous but is absolutely worth it.

If you're looking to add a unique detour to your trip, we suggest **Monahans Sandhills State Park** as a trip extension. It's roughly two and a half hours east from the Guadalupe Mountains, but the natural sand formations are fun for the entire family and are never the same shape twice. Roughly two and a half hours south of **Guadalupe Mountains National Park** is the Fort Davis area. Truth be told, you could spend an entire day or more just discovering all there is here, from learning about the Buffalo Soldiers who called Fort Davis home until 1885 at the **Fort Davis National Historic Site** to exploring the **McDonald Observatory** to hiking **Davis Mountains State Park**.

If your trip allows, we also highly recommend that you spend time exploring two nearby towns: **Alpine** and **Marfa**. Alpine is a picturesque town with scenic views that is steeped in cowboy culture and history. You can hike Hancock Hill where you'll enjoy the amazing views seated behind the extremely out-of-place school desk near the top. Marfa is, in many ways, its own world. It's the epicenter of the arts and culture scene in the **Big Bend Region**. Famous for its mysterious lights and internationally recognized contemporary museums, Marfa attracts visitors from all across the globe.

A couple hours south of Marfa, located between **Big Bend Ranch State Park** and **Big Bend National Park**, sits the former mining town of **Terlingua, TX**. The town is home to what is affectionately known as Ghost Town Texas. In both Terlingua and nearby Study Butte, you can find various outfitters to guide you through all sorts of experiences, ranging from horseback riding, hiking, mountain biking and more. Finally, your trip will come to a magnificent conclusion when you arrive at **Big Bend National Park**. One of the country's great preserved lands, Big Bend features both desert and mountain landscapes full of diverse wildlife. Don't miss driving Big Bend's many scenic routes, both on- and off-road. One such route is River Road, a dirt road running along the southern portion of the park that requires a four-wheel-drive vehicle.

Other must-sees in Big Bend include **Balanced Rock** and **Santa Elena Canyon**. Balanced Rock is a unique rock formation that seems to defy gravity located at the end of a moderate two-mile hike. Santa Elena Canyon is a fantastic rafting or canoeing experience through Big Bend showcasing its spectacular scenery.

Road-tripping through this land is an incredible experience no matter your outdoor skill level. It's also a trip you're sure never to forget. So hit the road and remember to drive friendly, the Texas way.



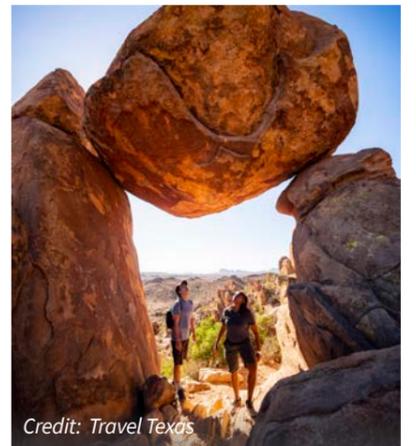
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BIG EVENTS

JANUARY

Laredo – George Washington’s Birthday Celebration

Laredo’s annual Washington’s Birthday Celebration commemorates the birthday of the nation’s first president, George Washington, and is the largest event of its kind in the United States. This yearly celebration, which takes place from mid-January through mid-February, features too many activities to list, but some of the highlights include parades, pageants, fun runs, concerts, a carnival, childrens fun festival, fireworks and more. For more information, visit www.visitlaredo.com.

FEBRUARY

Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo Feb. 28–March 19, 2023

For over two weeks at the beginning of each March, the city of Houston, Texas, holds its big rodeo event. It is billed as the largest rodeo in the world, featuring all the usual performances, competitions and livestock expositions along with a solid line-up of country-western musicians. It is Houston’s main event. www.rodeohouston.com

APRIL

Total Solar Eclipse April 8, 2024

A total solar eclipse will take place at the moon’s ascending node of its orbit. Totality first touches Mexico, enters the United States at Texas, cuts a diagonal to Maine and visits the maritime provinces of Canada. For more information, visit www.greatamericaneclipse.com/april-8-2024.

DECEMBER

Galveston – Dickens on the Strand December 2023

For more than three decades, characters from Charles Dickens’ novels have strolled Galveston’s Historic Strand during December. Known as Dickens on the Strand, this holiday festival takes visitors back to the Victorian era as street vendors with pushcarts work amongst carolers and street musicians, while children busy themselves at the Royal Menagerie Petting Zoo. For more information, visit www.VisitGalveston.com.

IITA SUMMIT 2023



Texas Travel Information Centers

ALL OF THE TEXAS TRAVEL INFORMATION CENTERS feature Texas photo ops and beautiful, park-like grounds, making them a great spot for a picnic or a rest stop. Clean, accessible restrooms; professional travel planning assistance; current road conditions information; and ample parking are available.

- ★ **AMARILLO**—With a design inspired by the region’s ranches and canyons, this center features life-size longhorn sculptures. Restrooms are available 24 hours.
- ★ **ANTHONY**—A jewel in the desert, this Southwest-themed center provides a welcome break from the road as you enter Texas from New Mexico. Restrooms are available 24 hours.
- ★ **AUSTIN**—Located in the majestic 1857 General Land Office building on the Texas Capitol Grounds, this center offers historical and educational exhibits for all ages.
- ★ **DENISON**—This blackland prairie beauty features a handsome 27-foot Texas star. Restrooms are available 24 hours.
- ★ **GAINESVILLE**—A monument to WWII heroes resides on the rolling grounds of this beautiful center. Restrooms are available 24 hours.
- ★ **LANGTRY**—Experience Old West History at Judge Roy Bean’s original Opera House and Jersey Lilly Saloon. Walking trails lead through a cactus garden centered around a working 1900 windmill.
- ★ **LAREDO**—Evoking the grace of an old Spanish mission, this center nestles among tropical ponds and fountains. Restrooms are available 24 hours.
- ★ **ORANGE**—From a 400-foot boardwalk over the Blue Elbow Swamp, visitors can spot fish, turtles, and even the occasional alligator! Restrooms are available 24 hours.
- ★ **TEXARKANA**—Pine and cypress trees shade the extensive grounds of this center, whose interior is bathed in natural light. Restrooms are available 24 hours.
- ★ **VALLEY**—Centrally located in Harlingen, this center serves as a gateway to the Rio Grande Valley. Fountains and palm trees provide a tropical setting for the handsome tiled building.
- ★ **WASKOM**—Deep in the Texas Piney Woods, this center features modern architecture with a spacious, airy feel. Restrooms are available 24 hours.
- ★ **WICHITA FALLS**—This cozy center offers access to the city’s extensive hike-and-bike trail system, making it an ideal spot for stretching your legs after a long drive.

www.drivetexas.org • 800/452-9292

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TRAVEL TEXAS