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6 Best Weekend Getaways in Texas for National Park Adventures, Luxury Resorts, and Small-town Charm

Whether you want to explore the outdoors or hole up at a luxury resort, you'll find it at these destinations across Texas.

By **Amanda Ogle** | Published on November 12, 2022



PHOTO: MARIAH TYLER

As the largest contiguous state in the U.S., Texas is full of beautiful landscapes, a blend of cultures, and endless areas to explore. The state makes up almost 270,000 square miles, which includes coastal plains in the south, mountains out west, rolling hills throughout the center, prairie land up north, and dense forests to the east. And with plenty of lakes and rivers, beaches, wineries and breweries, shopping, and great hotels, it's easy to plan a weekend getaway to different regions across the state.

Whether you're looking for some outdoor exploration, downtime at an incredible resort, or a bit of retail therapy, there's a place for it in Texas. Here are some of the best weekend getaways in Texas.

San Antonio



PHOTO: MARIAH TYLER

In southern Texas, San Antonio shines as a favorite destination for Texans and out-of-state visitors. It's home to the historic Alamo, where Texans fought for their independence in 1836, plus four other UNESCO-designated missions along Missions Trail. San Antonio is also known for its excellent food scene, and Tex-Mex and a margarita along the River Walk are essential, as are the world-class museums such as The Witte and McNay.

Between explorations, make sure you allow ample time to enjoy your stay at La Cantera Resort & Spa, home to a championship golf course, five heated pools, nine restaurants, and even an adults-only floor. All rooms and suites overlook the resort's 550 acres of Texas Hill Country, and boutique-style villas offer a bit more room for family gatherings and those wanting to extend their stay. Don't miss dinner at Signature, where chef John Carpenter offers seasonal menus with items such as Gulf redfish with Spanish chorizo and a red pepper broth, and axis venison with potato pave and cherry jus. Loma de Vida, the resort's 25,000-square-foot spa, is situated in one of the highest points in San Antonio, offering sweeping views that are sure to provide a moment of calm. For a memorable experience, book the Destress Together spa treatment in the Sky Loft, where you can expect a CBD-infused soak, Champagne, artisan chocolates, reflexology, and a customized massage.

For a bit of educational fun, there's the monthly Women & Whiskey series, which focuses on the roles women play in the whiskey industry and includes information on distilling, tasting, the whiskey-making process, and more.

Austin



PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

No trip to Texas is complete without a stop in the capital, Austin, famed for its live music scene, hopping nightlife, and lots of outdoor pursuits such as kayaking, cycling, and hiking. Grab a kayak or paddleboard and head down Lady Bird Lake, where lush greenery collides with skyscraper views as you row through downtown.

Be sure to visit a food truck, or better yet, one of the city's food truck parks, where you'll find an array of delicious food from around the world. Then, grab a drink or two at a fun bar — there are plenty throughout the city, but The White Horse is a great spot for two-stepping and the house specialty drink, the Two-Step: a shot of well whiskey and a Lone Star beer.

Meanwhile, Small Victory is a great place for vintage-inspired cocktails in a dark yet stylish setting.

Anchor yourself at Lake Austin Spa Resort, a secluded lakefront oasis where wellness is top of mind. Here, the LakeHouse Spa offers more than 100 treatments, and your pace slows a bit with activities like yoga, cooking classes, waterskiing, kayaking, hiking, fishing, author chats, and more. The resort only has 40 rooms, making for an intimate getaway, and stays include daily meals created from locally sourced ingredients.

Fort Worth



PHOTO: MARIAH TYLER

In northern Texas, a weekend in Fort Worth makes sense: It's only 30 minutes from Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport and close enough to Dallas and the surrounding small towns. If you have kids in tow — or just love animals — the Fort Worth Zoo is a must, as it's home to elephants, penguins, rhinos, and even local critters. The Amon Carter Museum of American Art is another winner, and the collection contains work from thousands of artists (admission is free).

For a night out, make your way to the Near Southside neighborhood for dinner at Lili's Bistro, a local favorite with everything from burgers and sandwiches to bacon-wrapped quail and duck gumbo. Head to the Stockyards for a taste of Western culture, where The Herd — Texas longhorns driven by cowhands — walks down Exchange Avenue twice a day for visitors to experience what a cattle drive was like in days past.

Then, have a drink at the White Elephant Saloon, a classic Stockyards watering hole, and stay at Hotel Drover Beesrt, one of Fort Wnewest hotels where rustic meets modern. A stay in downtown Fort Worth is also recommended. Grab drinks at the Flying Saucer, where more than 100 beers are on tap, and have a special dinner at Grace, a fine-dining establishment serving local meats and produce. For beautiful downtown views, stay at The Sinclair, an art deco gem with modern amenities, loft-style rooms, and a beautiful rooftop bar. Less than 10 minutes from downtown, beer lovers can enjoy fun and funky brews from Martin House Brewing Company — arguably the Willy Wonka of beer makers. New brews are released every week, and the Best Maid Sour Pickle Beer, plus all of its pickle-centric variations, are staples. But you can't go wrong with anything here, as concoctions have included raspberry cobbler beer, pumpkin stouts, cake ale, and endless sour flavors such as strawberry kiwi, mango, and watermelon.

Big Bend



PHOTO: MARIAH TYLER

In western Texas, the Big Bend region is a bit of a drive, but worth it for a weekend of solitude. Here, it's easy to surround yourself with wide-open spaces, epic hiking, and endless stargazing. At more than nine million acres, the Greater Big Bend International Dark Sky Reserve is currently the world's largest Reserve and protected Dark Sky Place, and it includes two International Dark Sky Parks with Big Bend National Park and Big Bend Ranch State Park. Both offer organized star parties and stargazing opportunities. At Big Bend National Park, grab a canoe and float down the Rio Grande on the U.S.-Mexico border, where you'll see canyons, buttes, mesas, mountains, and even wildlife such as beavers, turtles, and birds. At

Big Bend Ranch State Park, 238 miles of multi-use trails allow visitors to explore on foot, bike, or horseback. The Puerta Chilicote Trailhead is great for accessing numerous trails and the Bofecillos Highlands and Fresno Canyon. The park is also home to more than 300 bird species, so grab a pair of binoculars and see how many you can spot.

Just outside of both parks is Terlingua, an old mining destination that became a ghost town after operations ceased. Today, Terlingua is home to two championship chili cook-offs, plus the Terlingua Trading Company, art galleries, and a few must-visit bars and restaurants. The Starlight Theatre, formerly a place for miners, is now a saloon, restaurant, and live music venue attracting visitors from near and far. Start with a cup of award-winning chili, then move on to the brisket tacos or chicken-fried antelope with Lone Star beer gravy.

In between Big Bend National Park and Big Bend Ranch State Park, hang your hat at Lajitas Golf Resort, a 27,000-acre property with a world-class golf course, clay shooting, horseback riding, zip-lining, and more. There are four on-site eateries, including a saloon and pizzeria. At Candelilla Café, try the shrimp tacos with charro beans and sofrito rice, and don't skip the prickly pear cheesecake for dessert.

Fredericksburg, Texas



PHOTO: MARIAH TYLER

Founded by Germans in 1846, Fredericksburg is a popular Hill Country destination for a weekend getaway. Full of restaurants, bars, shops, and plenty of room to roam, it's a great place to anchor yourself while exploring central Texas, especially if you're planning on visiting the numerous wineries along Highway 290. Stop in at Blackchalk Home and Laundry for unique home decor and gifts, or score some vintage furniture and fabrics at Carol Hicks Bolton Antiquités. For a Texas souvenir, head to San Saba Soap Company for a bottle of fragrant body oil or soap made from pecan oil pressed from Texas pecans. For drinks, head to The Speakeasy at Salvation Spirits, the only speakeasy in Fredericksburg (reservations required), or share a charcuterie board and bottle of wine at Signor

Vineyards, where seven varietals grow across 17 acres. For a special meal, try to catch a supper club session at Vaudeville, where seasonal dinners focus on cuisine from numerous countries. Looking for a fun hike? Head to Enchanted Rock State Natural Area and climb Enchanted Rock, a giant granite dome that was once a pool of magma a billion years ago. Stay at Barons CreekSide, where 26 acres include a vineyard, private cabins and houses, and a bistro and wine bar.

Guadalupe Mountains National Park



PHOTO: JACOB BRYANT/EYEEM/GETTY IMAGES

Near the border of Texas and New Mexico lies Guadalupe Mountains National Park, a vast landscape of desert, mountains, canyons, and vistas that protect the world's most extensive Permian fossil reef, the four highest peaks in Texas, and lots of plants and animals native to the area.

Adventurers can tackle Guadalupe Peak, the highest point in Texas at 8,751 feet above sea level. This round-trip hike is 8.5 miles and usually takes about six to eight hours to complete. Hiking to McKittrick Canyon is another popular option, as it's one of the best places in Texas to observe fall foliage, and the exposed cave features and stone picnic tables make a great place for lunch.

There's no lodging in the park — only two developed campgrounds for tent and RV camping. About an hour south is Van Horn, where you'll find Hotel El Capitan, a historic property built in 1930 and designed by famous architect Henry Trost. The hotel has 50 rooms and a restaurant with items such as pistachio fried steak and hand-cut ribeyes.