

AUSTIN

In recent times, Austin has grown from being a sleepy college town into a fully fledged destination, with people clamouring to visit (or just showing up with a U-Haul). As a result, prices have risen but it's still a laid-back place where there's plenty to do on the cheap.



Austin Art Garage

This offbeat and completely nonstuffy gallery owned by two local artists perfectly captures the spirit of the Austin art scene: it's colourful, it's eclectic and it never takes itself too seriously. Come and browse around to catch the vibe, and if you happen to fall in love with the art, there's a good chance you will be able to afford it. austinartgarage.com; 2200 S Lamar; 11am-6pm Tue-Sat, noon-5pm Sun; free.

Elisabet Ney Museum

Tucked away in a quiet residential neighbourhood, this unassuming miniature castle built in 1892 was the home and studio of sculptor Elisabet Ney. Ney sculpted some of the most notable figures of her time, and her statues can be found at the US Capitol, the Smithsonian and this gem of a museum and art gallery, where she created some of her best work. 304 E 44th St; noon-5pm Wed-Sun; free.

Texas State Capitol

Built in 1888 from sunset-pink granite, this National Historic Landmark is the largest state capitol in the US and a striking centrepiece in downtown Austin. Get a taste of history, government and architecture during the free 45-minute