



San Antonio & Hill Country

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Best Places to Eat

- Cove (p112)
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- Grape Juice (p133)

Best Places to Stay

- Hotel Havana (p106)
- Hotel Faust (p133)
- Omni La Mansion del Rio (p107)

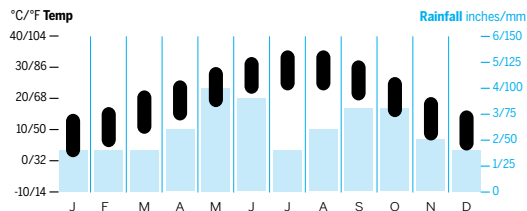
Why Go?

Tourism has been good to San Antonio and the sprawling city reciprocates with a wide variety of attractions to keep everyone entertained. In addition to its colorful European-style Riverwalk lined with cafes and bars, it rewards visitors with a well-rounded menu of museums, theme parks, outdoor activities and historical sites. The Alamo is a stalwart tourist favorite, and the scene of the most famous battle in the fight for Texas' independence from Mexico. You can find four other beautifully preserved Spanish Missions within the city limits.

San Antonio also puts you in close proximity to the Hill Country, a naturally beautiful region known for its wildflower-lined roadways, charming small towns and, yes, hills. Fredericksburg is the most touristy Hill Country town, but the area is more about winding roads and stopping along the way than any particular destination.

When to Go

San Antonio



Mar & Apr Hill Country comes alive with bluebonnets, Indian paintbrushes and other wildflowers.

May & Jun The kids are out of school and temperatures are still bearable – mostly.

Dec & Jan Brush off cabin fever: it's warm enough to get outdoors, even if the trees are bare.

Getting Ready to Remember the Alamo

Seeing the Alamo for the first time? Many people are surprised to see that it's in the middle of downtown San Antonio, surrounded by tacky tourist attractions – but even more startling is its diminutive size. Whether it's because of the monument's sentimental stature or too many tightly cropped photographs that don't offer any indication of scale, the first thing many people say when they first see the Alamo is, 'Wow, it's a lot smaller than I thought it would be!'

EXPLORING THE HILL COUNTRY

With so many day-trip destinations so close to San Antonio, it's hard to choose between them. If you have some time to spare, the following route lets you cover a lot of ground. The entire loop can be driven in 4.5 hours, but how long you decide to linger is up to you.

From San Antonio, head northwest on I-10, stopping for a little antique shopping in Boerne and Comfort. Continue on to Kerrville and enjoy cowboy art or swimming in the Guadalupe River. From Kerrville, take Hwy 16 to Fredericksburg, the unofficial capital of the Hill Country, and listen to live music under the trees in tiny Luckenbach.

Next, continue west to the LBJ Ranch, and see JBJ's childhood home in Johnson City. Then head south at Dripping Springs, passing through Wimberley, and stop in San Marcos, land of the outlet mall. Don't miss Texas' oldest dance hall in Gruene – a short detour. Just south, New Braunfels invites you to float the Guadalupe River, then it's just 32 miles back to San Antonio.

Downtown Parking Tips

When visiting downtown, you'll definitely want to ditch your car, but street parking is hard to find. Here are some alternatives.

- ➔ Park on the street for free in the King William District, then take a VIA blue line streetcar into downtown.
- ➔ Park free at **VIA Ellis Alley Park & Ride** (btwn E Crockett & Center Sts) then pay \$2.50 roundtrip to ride downtown.
- ➔ Park inexpensively at **Market Square** (2hr \$3, flat rate \$7) then walk 15 minutes to the Alamo.
- ➔ Park at **Riverbend Garage** (210 N Presa; 2hr \$7, maximum \$12; ☺24hr), which is a little more expensive but puts you right in the heart of things.

RIVERWALK EXTENSION

Long a downtown tourist staple, San Antonio's Riverwalk now has 14 additional miles of paths that reach from the King William District south of downtown, all the way to the Pearl Brewery development to the north.

Hill Country for Kids

- ➔ Explore cool caves at Natural Bridge Caverns (p120)
- ➔ Activities abound at McKenna Children's Museum (p120)
- ➔ Take a wildlife tour at YO Ranch (p134)
- ➔ Visit the museum at the LBJ Ranch (p125)
- ➔ Burn off extra energy at Landa Park (p120)

Best Places to Cool Off

- ➔ Tubing on the Guadalupe (p120)
- ➔ Kerrville-Schreiner Park (p131)
- ➔ Splashtown (p105)
- ➔ Schlitterbahn Waterpark (p120)
- ➔ Blue Hole (p137)

Resources

- ➔ **Express-News** (www.mysanantonio.com)
- ➔ **San Antonio Current** (www.sacurrent.com)
- ➔ **Neighborhoods** (www.saculturaltours.com)