

Contents

Ala Kahakai Trail	6	Mormon Pioneer Trail	168
American Discovery Trail	14	Mountains to Sea Trail	172
Appalachian Trail	20	Natchez Trace Trail	176
Arizona Trail	28	Natural Bridge Trail	184
California Trail	36	New England Trail	188
Captain John Smith Trail	42	Nez Perce Trail	192
Chilkoot Trail	46	North Country Trail	198
C&O Trail	50	Old Rag	202
Colorado Trail	54	Old Spanish Trail	206
Continental Divide Trail	58	Oregon Coast Trail	210
Crawford Trail	66	Oregon Trail	214
Cumberland Trail	68	Overmountain Trail	220
Derby Wharf Trail	74	Ozark Highlands	226
East Coast Greenway	78	Pacific Crest Trail	230
El Camino Real de los		Pacific Northwest Trail	238
Tejas Trail	82	Pony Express	244
El Camino Real de Tierra		Potomac Heritage Trail	250
Adentro Trail	86	Resurrection Pass	254
Florida Trail	92	Rim to Rim Trail	258
Freedom Trail	100	Santa Fe Trail	264
Grand Enchantment	104	Selma to Montgomery	270
Grays Peak	108	Sierra High Route	274
Hayduke Trail	112	Star Spangled Banner	278
Ice Age Trail	120	Superior Hiking Trail	282
Idaho Centennial Trail	126	Tahoe Rim Trail	286
Iditarod Trail	130	Trail of Tears	292
John Muir Trail	138	Union Pacific Rail Trail	298
Juan Batista Trail	144	Washington-Rochambeau	
Kaupo Trail	148	Revolutionary Route	302
Lewis & Clark Trail	152	Wonderland Trail	306
Long Trail	158	Yunque Rainforest	310
Maah Daah Hey Trail	162		



01

Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail

This 175-mile trail on the lush Big Island honors and protects Native Hawaiian culture and natural resources. Still in development, it traverses the coast from kiawe forest and beaches to petroglyph grounds and fishponds.



📍 On the Appalachian Trail
at Carver's Gap.

03

Appalachian National Scenic Trail

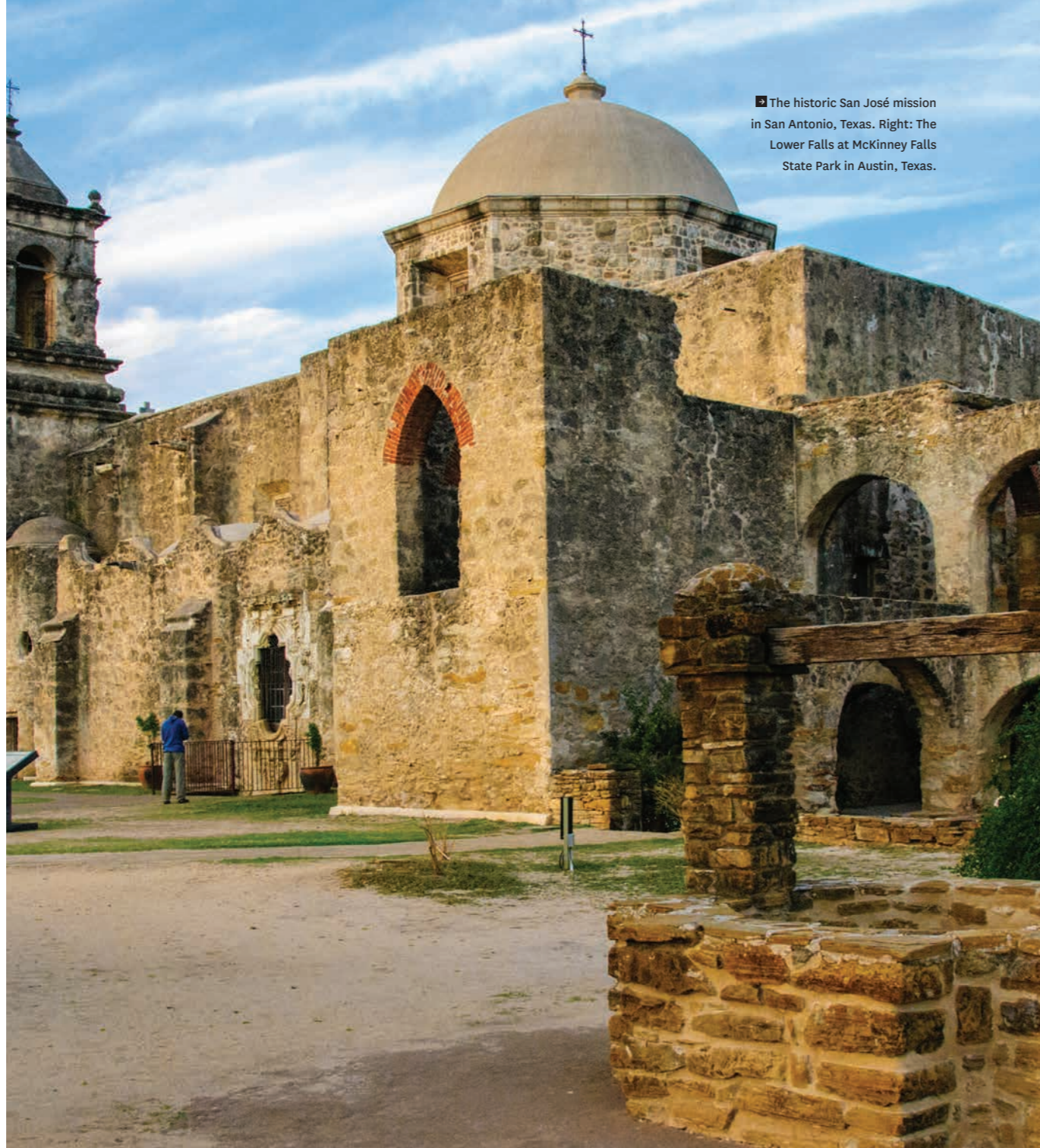
The world's longest hiking-only footpath is a classic bucket list trail, a 2190-mile wilderness pilgrimage from the southern Blue Ridge Mountains to the wilds of Maine.

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06

El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail

One of several royal roads in New Spain, this one ran through what is now the southern part of Texas. It remains a link to the history of Texas and Louisiana long before either state came into existence.



■ The historic San José mission in San Antonio, Texas. Right: The Lower Falls at McKinney Falls State Park in Austin, Texas.

As with some other historic trails in America, El Camino Real de los Tejas is not one route from point A to point B. Instead it was composed of many different paths used by traders, missionaries and settlers for some three centuries across shortcuts and detours. This road was, for a long time, a work in progress.

The Camino Real's origin is commonly dated from 1686 to 1690, when it was mapped by Alonso de León, the governor of the state of Coahuila, an area adjacent to Texas on the other side of the Rio Grande. Many trails that became the basis of this Camino Real (the words mean 'royal road'), however, had been followed by Native Americans for centuries before the arrival of the Spanish. The route established by de León, and modified by other explorers who followed in the 18th century, would eventually stretch from Mexico City, the capital of the viceroyalty of New Spain, to Natchitoches on the western side of the Mississippi River, in territory that was controlled by the French until the Louisiana Purchase in 1803.

For centuries this route was the spine of Spanish and later Mexican Texas. The road connected missions and ranchos as well as roadside towns, some of which, like San Antonio, would grow into major cities. As was the fate of many of America's historic trails, it was eventually superseded by other routes – alternative stagecoach trails, then the railroads and eventually highways. Today, Texas State Highway 21 and Highway 6 in Louisiana largely follow the main branch of the original road. Unlike the original Camino Real, the National Historic Trail that goes by the same name stops, for obvious political reasons, at the



Sleep here...

The so-called King's Highway threads its way from the Rio Grande at the Mexico border, across East Texas, to reach Natchitoches and the Mississippi River. Along the way, it passes through some of the most important early Texan settlements, several of which still boast digs that retain their 19th-century character.



La Posada Hotel, Laredo

The historic hotel on the banks of the Rio Grande in Laredo has views into Mexico and incorporates portions of an 18th-century hacienda and a 19th-century convent.



Landmark Inn, Castroville

You can spend the night at a historic site when you check into this hotel in Castroville, Texas. Dating to 1849, it was established as a roadside tavern serving travelers en route to San Antonio.



Bastrop State Park, Bastrop

These 14 cabins in Bastrop, Texas, were built by the Civilian Conservation Corps and became a model for other CCC projects, helping earn the park its status as a National Historic Landmark.



Hotel Emma, San Antonio

The 19th-century Pearl Brewery, just north of downtown San Antonio, has been reborn as a culinary and cultural destination, complete with its own 146-room hotel.

Toolbox



When to go

You might want to avoid the height of summer, when South Texas gets hot and humid. In almost every other season of the year, you can expect temperatures ideal for exploring the state.



Getting there

Laredo, Texas, has a large airport, though there are more options if you check out Corpus Christi and San Antonio, both under three hours from Laredo. The closest large airports to Natchitoches, Louisiana, are Alexandria and Shreveport, both about an hour away.



Practicalities

Length in miles: 2500

Start: Laredo, TX

End: Natchitoches, LA

Dog friendly: Yes; portions

Bike friendly: Yes; portions

Permit needed: Some

campgrounds; also, unless

clearly marked, some of

the historical route crosses

private land, and requires

permission from the owner

States covered: Texas,

Louisiana

09

Chilkoot Trail

Follow in the footsteps of thousands of Gold Rush ‘stampeder,’ who traversed this steep and wild 33-mile trail in Alaska and Canada for the promise of wealth at the end.

Historic St Andrews Church on Lake Bennett at the end of the Chilkoot Trail.



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The Chilkoot Trail is one of the most popular and storied trails in Alaska. During the Klondike Gold Rush that began in 1896, miners trekked this route in a winding, single-file line up and then down Chilkoot Pass to reach the Yukon goldfields in Canada. Long before the days of recreational hiking made this route attractive, prospectors streamed up its snowy path. Bent over with the weight of their tools and provisions, the stampeder, as they were called, faced disease, exhaustion and frostbite.

The trail was first used as a trade route by the Tlingit, an Alaska Native group. Chilkoot Pass was one of only three paths in what is now Southeast Alaska that could be traversed year-round, so it was a valuable resource. In the late 1800s, expeditions hired local Alaska native people to carry gear; but when the Gold Rush hit, the locals were effectively shoved out. Tramlines were built to shuttle goods up Chilkoot Pass, which was steep, rocky and slippery – quite rough for humans carrying loads. Stampeder short of funds might work as packers to earn money, carrying supplies over terrain that was too steep for pack animals. The trail was so crowded that on April 3, 1898, an avalanche between Sheep Camp and the Scales at the base of the so-called 'golden staircase' before the Pass killed at least 63 people. The Palm Sunday Avalanche would be the deadliest event of the Klondike Gold Rush.

The trail starts in Dyea, 10 miles out of Skagway, Alaska. This quiet, wooded spot was once a bustling Gold Rush hub. At one point the town had thousands of residents, but once the railroad was completed to Skagway, making the Chilkoot Pass unnecessary, Dyea was abandoned. At



Sleep here...

Accommodations in Skagway make much of the town's Gold Rush history, as well as its access to natural attractions. It's the National Park campgrounds on and off the Chilkoot Trail that are the real stars. Reserve in advance for the Chilkoot Trail, and show up at the Dyea Campground near the trailhead first come, first served. Off season (Labor Day to Memorial Day), there are no fees, but fewer facilities.



Chilkoot Trail Campgrounds

There are nine backcountry campgrounds along the trail itself, several with warming huts, tent platforms and outhouses. Your Chilkoot Trail reservation will include selecting your campgrounds as part of the permit process. You can also camp at the trailhead in Dyea and the trail's end in Bennett.



Sheep Camp

The last campground before Chilkoot Pass, Sheep Camp has a ranger station and several hiker huts for comfortable shelter. It's the most popular campground on the trail.



Chilkoot Trail Outpost

Across the road from a National Park campground and half a mile from the head of the Chilkoot Trail, the cabins at Dyea's Chilkoot Trail Outpost were crafted out of local Sitka spruce and are a great spot to rest up and enjoy some s'mores before taking the pass.



Skagway Inn Bed and Breakfast

Built in 1897, the Skagway Inn has been a brothel and boardinghouse over its lifetime, with the turn-of-the-century decor to prove it. The Inn is located directly in the Klondike Gold Rush National Historic District.

Toolbox



When to go

June, July and August are the best times of year to hike the trail, though you'll need a permit during these months. If you go any earlier or later, you risk snow and freezing temperatures.



Getting there

The trail starts 10 miles outside of Skagway, Alaska, at the abandoned townsite of Dyea off the Klondike Hwy; Skagway is the southernmost point of the Klondike Hwy. At the trail's end you can take the train back into Skagway from Bennett in British Columbia. Many arrive in Skagway on cruises, and it is also the most northern stop of the Alaska Marine Highway. If flying, there are regularly scheduled flights on bush planes from Juneau International Airport.



Practicalities

Length in miles: 33
Start: Dyea, AK, US
End: Bennett, BC, Canada
Dog friendly: Yes
Bike friendly: No
Permit needed: Yes
States covered: Alaska, British Columbia (Canada)

Mountain at Rogers
Pass, Glacier National
Park.

12

Continental Divide National Scenic Trail

*Rugged, wild and truly
Western, traverse the literal
spine of the country on this
trail, which marks the line
where water will eventually
run to either the Atlantic or
the Pacific Ocean.*

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