



# Gulf Coast & South Texas

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## Best Places to Eat

- Roosevelt's at the Tarpon Inn (p275)
- Taco N' Madre (p290)
- El Meson de San Augustin (p290)
- Maceo Spice & Import (p260)

## Best Places to Sleep

- Inn at Chachalaca Bend (p279)
- Casa de Palmas Renaissance Hotel (p287)
- Lighthouse Inn at Aransas Bay (p265)
- La Posada Hotel & Suites (p290)
- V Boutique Hotel (p271)

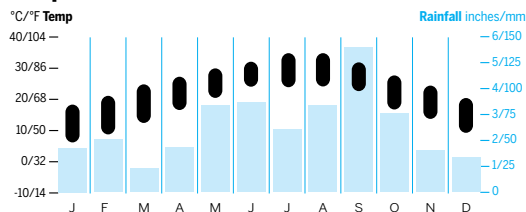
## Why Go?

America's 'Third Coast,' as it has dubbed itself, is a place of many contrasts. The beach-town scene of Port Aransas is a sea of calm compared with the frenetic hedonism of South Padre Island, for one. There are plenty of reminders of the state's dramatic history too, from the first shots of the Mexican-American War at the Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic Site to the long and bumpy history of the port city of Galveston.

Along the Rio Grande River, border politics affect all aspects of life. In many ways the area forms a cultural border distinct from Mexico and Texas, a unique multicultural and bilingual region that for a short time was even an independent state. The Republic of the Rio Grande may not have survived as a political entity, but this unique history still accents the towns and remote stretches from Brownsville to Laredo and beyond.

## When to Go

### Corpus Christi



**Mar Spring Break!**  
Hordes of partying students, but also peak bird-migration season.

**Apr–May & Sep–Oct**  
The weather is just right and crowds are few.

**Dec–Feb Peak**  
'Winter Texan' season and reasonably warm temperatures.



## Gulf Coast & South Texas Highlights

**1 Aransas National Wildlife Refuge** (p264) Bird-watching in this coastal wetlands reserve of nearly 115,000 acres, which serve as spotting grounds for hundreds of species.

**2 Brazos Bend State Park** (p262) Getting up close and personal with wild alligators.

**3 Bishop's Palace** (p256) Gaping at what was the crowning jewel of Galveston

during the 1800s, the island's heyday as the country's second-busiest port.

**4 Padre Island National Seashore** (p277) Savoring 60 miles of nearly undeveloped