

Suggested Itinerary:

Houston, Austin, San Antonio and Texas Hill Country

Enjoy the superlative shopping and museums of Houston and the live music capital of Austin, then retreat to Texas Hill Country, where scenic drives deliver you to swimming holes and sunset hikes. In San Antonio, savour Latin American influences through the city's historic sites, authentic shops and delicious Tex-Mex cuisine.

Houston, Texas

Suggested: 2-3 days

Houston is a city of museums, but its ultimate exhibition may be Space Center Houston, where displays include a Saturn V rocket and a Mars research capsule you can climb into. Spend a day here to take advantage of astronaut talks and a tram tour of Johnson Space Center, home to Mission Control and monitoring of the International Space Station.

Craving more excitement? Catch a Houston Rockets basketball game or shop at The Galleria. As Texas' largest shopping center, and one of the largest in the USA, The Galleria features hundreds of department stores and speciality shops, 50 dining options and two hotels complemented by international banks and diversions such as play areas and an ice rink.

Austin, Texas

Suggested: 2-3 days

Austin earns its reputation as a live music capital with some 250 venues. Slip into a retro bar such as The Continental Club for Rockabilly, Country and Swing shows, or arrange tickets to Austin City Limits Live at The Moody Theater, a slick venue that hosts concerts of all genres and the taping *Austin City Limits*, the USA's longest-running televised music series.

You may know Austin for its springtime South by Southwest Music Festival. However, you can find a music festival almost any time of the year, so listen up when you're in town.

From breakfast tacos stuffed with farm-fresh eggs and avocados to top-shelf margaritas, Austin is also revered for its take on Tex-Mex. Try ordering from one of the city's popular food trucks or trailers.

Texas Hill Country

Suggested: 2-4 days

Take a Hill Country drive – Scenic Highway 16 makes a pretty route – for glimpses of bluebonnets against limestone outcrops. Pause at a swimming hole to cool off in the area's natural springs: Krause Springs, Blue Hole and Hamilton Pool are local-favourites. Later, time the half-mile hike to Enchanted Rock with the sunset – the massive granite dome grants an unforgettable view.

Venture into Hill Country towns such as Fredericksburg, where walking tours illuminate the area's German heritage. Then, sample heritage cooking and brewing at the town's bistros, bakeries and beer gardens.

Hill Country takes further pride in its barbecue tradition. Mesquite coals lend signature flavor to meats, including tender brisket. Seek out an iconic barbecue restaurant such as Cooper's Old Time Pit Bar-B-Que for a taste.

San Antonio, Texas

Suggested: 2-4 days

San Antonio's 18th century Spanish Catholic missions – including Mission San Antonio de Valero, known as The Alamo – were recently named a World Heritage Site. Visit for tours and special events.

Nearby, the River Walk is a paved path alongside the city's namesake river. Follow it to restaurants with open-air patios, or take the short boat tour.

In this gateway to Latin America, Mexican-made clothing and artisan wares make unique souvenirs, and the cuisine is in a class of its own. Tex-Mex, as it's called, blends Mexican and American culinary traditions. Sample saucy enchiladas at a family-owned restaurant or fresh fish tacos from a small taqueria.

For a different side of San Antonio, experience its theme parks, including SeaWorld® San Antonio, Six Flags® Fiesta Texas and water parks.

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