



nileGUIDE

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



BruceTurner

Austin's Top 10 Hidden Gems

Austin, 1 Day

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Guide Description



AUTHOR NOTE: Sometimes the most exciting out-of-town activities are the city's best-kept secrets. Here's a list of local favorites so you can enjoy the insider action that Austin has to offer, from watering holes that are off the beaten path and neighborhood eateries that are worth the extra effort to a couple of short drives that result in some serious good times. Whatever your interests, there's something for everyone below--just be sure you don't brag too much when you get home. We wouldn't want to spoil our little secrets, now would we?

Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - Austin



Hamilton Pool Preserve

Lush, spring-fed swimming hole formed out of a collapsed cave.



Top Notch

Old-school 'Dazed & Confused' burger joint



Hippie Hollow Park

A popular lake-side park



Manor Downs

Horse racetrack



Hoffbrau (The)

Comfort zone



Musashino

Fresh from Tokyo



Barton Creek Greenbelt

Walk, jog, swim, hike and bike



Little Deli

Delicious Crestwood deli with small town feel



Wild Basin Wilderness Preserve

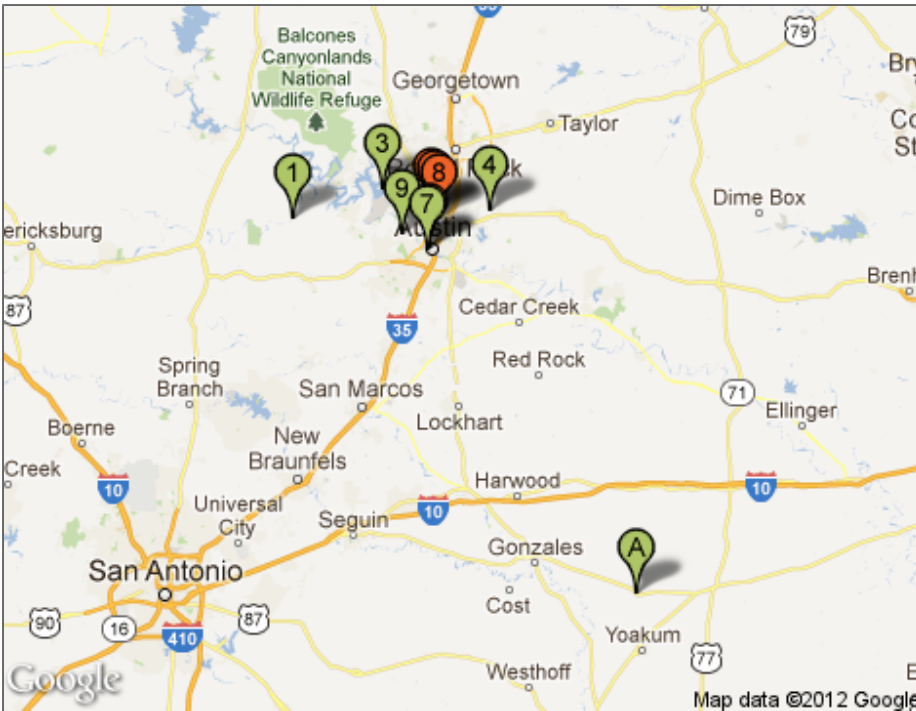
Protected urban wilderness packed with pedestrian-only trails



Spoetzl Brewery

Home of Shiner Bock

Day 1 - Austin



QUICK NOTE

contact:

tel: 512-264-2740

http://www.co.travis.tx.us/tnr/parks/hamilton_pool.asp

location:

24300 Hamilton Pool Road
Dripping Springs TX 78620

1 Hamilton Pool Preserve

DESCRIPTION: Located approximately 30 miles southwest of Austin, Hamilton Pool Preserve appeals to nature lovers in search of swimming, hiking, and birdwatching opportunities. The main attraction is a natural swimming hole formed out of a collapsed grotto. The pool is about 1/4 mile from the parking area, so keep that in mind when you're deciding what to bring. A limestone outcropping, formerly part of the roof of a cave, shades one side of the pool. Depending on recent rainfall, water either drips or flows down the outcropping, creating a refreshing shower for swimmers underneath. Delicate ferns cling to the outcropping, lending the site a tropical flair. Hamilton Pool Preserve is also home to the golden-cheeked warbler, a rare and endangered bird that lives among the area's mixed ashe-juniper and oak woodlands. The hike to the pool is short, but it does include a series of uneven rock steps. Good hiking shoes are recommended. Visitors with physical disabilities should call ahead to arrange assistance. Parking is limited, and the pool is very popular, so try to arrive early. Drinking water and other concessions are not available. Take Highway 71 west through the town of Bee Cave and turn left onto FM 3238 (Hamilton Pool Road). Travel 13 miles to the Preserve entrance, which will be on your right. © NileGuide



wcities

contact:

tel: +512 452 2181
http://austin.citysearch.com/profile/10237876/austin_tx/top_notch.html

location:

7525 Burnet Road
Austin TX 78757-1202

hours:

M-Sa 11a-8p

2 Top Notch

DESCRIPTION: When you are on your way to Top Notch, don't be surprised if you have a déjà vu moment. It's probably because you're recalling Matthew McConaughey and his buddies having their burgers and fries at this very place in 'Dazed and Confused'. Top Notch is probably one of the only places to have an indoor charcoal grill, which gives their cheeseburgers the added oomph. The fried chicken, complete with fries and coleslaw on the side, is a local favorite, but neither popularity nor fame can make Top Notch hike their prices. © wcities.com



citysearch

contact:

tel: +1 512 854 7275
http://www.co.travis.tx.us/tnr/parks/hippie_hollow.asp

location:

7000 Commanche Trail
Austin TX 78732

hours:

Sept 10-Oct 31 9am-7:30pm,
Nov 1-Feb 28 9am-6pm, Mar
1-Apr 30 9am-7:30pm, May 1-
Sept 9 8am-9pm

3 Hippie Hollow Park

DESCRIPTION: Hippie Hollow Park lies in the basin area of Lake Travis in the Hill Country of central Texas, approximately one-half hour's drive from downtown Austin. The Park features a steep, rocky shoreline and provides some spectacular views of Lake Travis. This heavily-used park, the only clothing optional public park in Texas, is popular for sunbathing and swimming. Hippie Hollow is also the site of Splash Day, a festive, semiannual event celebrating the beginning of spring and the end of summer, hosted by the Gay and Lesbian community.

contact:

tel: +1 512 272 5581
<http://www.manordowns.com/>

location:

9211 Hill Lane
Manor TX 78653

hours:

Offices: 9a-5:30p Mon-Fri;
race times vary

4 Manor Downs

DESCRIPTION: This quarter horse race track is just ten minutes from Austin off Highway 290. Each spring, horses fly down the track while excited onlookers hoot and holler for their pick of the race. Simulcasting is offered Wednesday through Sunday and on holiday Mondays year round. Up to fifteen live races are broadcast daily from other premier horse and dog tracks in America. They can be viewed on one of the monitors scattered under the Manor Downs grandstand or at the Turf Club. The club offers a full bar service in two large viewing rooms (one smoking, the other non-smoking). © wcities.com



citysearch

contact:

tel: +1 512 472 0822
<http://www.originalhoffbrausteaks.com>

location:

613 West Sixth Street
Austin TX 78701

hours:

5 Hoffbrau (The)

DESCRIPTION: Established in 1934, this place is one of the most unique eating joints. Revel in the home style cooked meals. The Hoffbrau has the friendliest staff who will give you tips and suggestions on a la carte. The pies are simply irresistible. © wcities.com



wcities

Tu-Sa 11a-2p, 5p-9p

contact:

tel: +1 512 795 8593
<http://www.musashinosushi.com/>

location:

3407 Greystone Drive
Austin TX 78731

hours:

Tu-Th 11:30a-2p, 5:30p-10p;
F 11:30a-2p, 5:30p-10:30p;
Sa 5:30p-10:30p; Su
5:30p-10p

6 Musashino

DESCRIPTION: This hidden treasure was rated one of the top 20 sushi restaurants in the nation by a guidebook for Japanese tourists. The traditional sushi and sashimi are served in an elegant, vibrant atmosphere. It also caters to the not-so-adventurous palate with tempura and teriyaki dishes. The sushi regular or deluxe platters are also offered with an all-cooked option. The 'Born in the USA' section of the menu offers various takes on the California roll and other American sushi hybrids. © wcities.com



citysearch

contact:

tel: +1 512 499 6700
<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/park/greenbelts.htm>

location:

200 S Lamar Blvd
Austin TX 78703

7 Barton Creek Greenbelt

DESCRIPTION: This creek winds through Central and South Austin, featuring beautiful hiking and bike trails as well as many choice swimming holes. The natural surroundings have been left to flourish as only the Texas countryside can. One of the more popular areas is at the far north end of the park—the Scottish Woods Trails, a rocky path leading to a gorgeous private swimming hole at the base of a small waterfall. © wcities.com



Photo courtesy of Barton Creek Greenbelt

contact:

tel: +1 512 467 7402
<http://www.littledeli.com/>

location:

7101-A Woodrow Ave
Austin TX 78757-1859

hours:

M-F 1a-4p

8 Little Deli

DESCRIPTION: Little Deli puts together items like meatball subs, New Orleans muffalattas, tuna salads, and liverwurst - all of which are scrumptious and filling. Pot-roast and sandwich lovers will find plenty to relish on. Don't miss the toothsome banana pudding on the dessert list. The kind owners make you feel at home even on crowded days, and service is usually swift. The atmosphere is always abuzz with more locals than outsiders. As most patrons will testify, the drive to this deli is worthwhile, and parking is available. © wcities.com

contact:

tel: +1 512 327 7622
fax: +1 512 328 5632
<http://www.wildbasin.org>

location:

805 N. Capital of Texas
Highway
Austin TX 78746

hours:

Preserve daily dawn-dusk;
office daily 9am-5pm, Sat-

9 Wild Basin Wilderness Preserve

DESCRIPTION: Founded by seven women, this area was used as an outdoor laboratory for science classes and teacher training. Located on 220 acres of land it offers 2 1/2 miles of trails reserved for pedestrians. No bikes or pets are allowed; neither is picnicking or camping. This is a true wilderness preserve, and many bird watchers come to catch a glimpse of the Black Capped Vireo or Golden Cheek Warbler. © wcities.com

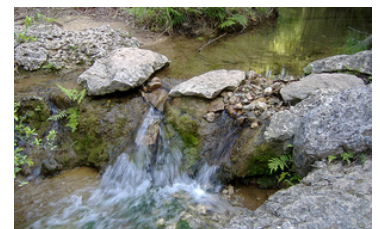


Photo courtesy of rthrap

Sun 8am-3pm. Hiking tours every weekend, weather permitting, stargazing tours twice monthly, weather permitting, generally 8 or 8:30pm to 9:30 or 10pm

contact:

tel: +1 361 594 3383
<http://www.shiner.com>

location:

603 East Brewery St
Shiner TX 77984

hours:

Tours: 10a-11a and
2:30-3:30p Mon-Fri



Spoetzl Brewery

DESCRIPTION: As the oldest independent brewery in Texas, the Spoetzl Brewery has been brewing up Shiner beer since 1909. With five different beers distributed in 20 states, Austin is definitely the home of this local brew. Tours are available in which patrons can sample the variety of brews: Blonde, Honey Wheat, Winter Ale, Summer Stock, or the traditional Shiner Bock. Wholesale prices make this tour a worthwhile shopping experience. The original Spoetzl Brewery in Shiner, Texas (about 80 miles southeast of Austin) is also open to the public for tours, which are free. © wcities.com

Austin Snapshot

Local Info

With its perfect proportions of adventurous spirit and laid-back atmosphere, Austin wins visitors over time and time again. Nestled in the southern portion of the Lone Star State, the capital city doubles as the hub of serious government affairs and the supreme getaway for outdoor recreation and cultural escape.

Downtown

The heart of Austin lays downtown, among the busy streets and inner workings of the state government. The Texas State Capitol--built of pink granite and native limestone and standing 14 feet taller than the nation's Capitol in Washington, D.C.--anchors the area's main thoroughfare, Congress Avenue. The street that once paved the way for horses and carriages now houses some of Austin's tallest buildings, including the futuristic-looking Frost Bank Tower--the first high-rise to be constructed in the U.S. following the September 11, 2001 attacks.

The downtown area juggles work and play with a handful of areas organized especially for after-hours fun. Comparable to New Orleans' famous Bourbon Street, Austin's East Sixth Street is often the first place rowdy tourists visit for a memorable night out. Within an eight-block stretch, more than 100 shot bars, live music venues, dance clubs, restaurants and souvenir shops line the street, which is cordoned off from vehicular traffic most nights of the week.

The post-collegiate crowd heads a few blocks west to one of three nearby areas: the Warehouse District, West Sixth Street or the Second Street District. Each neighborhood offers an array of trendy eateries alongside classy pubs, bars and clubs and is only a pedicab ride away from one another.

As the self-described "Live Music Capital of the World," Austin touts a constant schedule of bands and musicians throughout the city, though most

performances are concentrated in the downtown area. The Red River District, located one block west of IH-35 between Sixth and 10th Streets, attracts a mixture of punk, heavy metal and indie rock acts at venues like Emo's, Mohawk and Red-Eyed Fly, while Stubb's regularly schedules big-time touring acts of all genres at the barbecue joint's outdoor amphitheater.

Other popular downtown music venues include Antone's, Austin Music Hall, La Zona Rosa, the Elephant Room and Cedar Street Courtyard, among others. All of these locations and hundreds of other venues host musicians, film premieres and interactive parties during the South by Southwest Music, Film and Interactive Conference held each March.

University of Texas/ The Drag

Part of Austin's draw is the highly ranked and centrally located University of Texas at Austin. The 40-acre campus sits right in the midst of the city's action, with more than 50,000 students enrolled each semester. The grounds also holds some of Austin's finest museums, including the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum, the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center and the Jack S. Blanton Museum of Art. The campus' western border--Guadalupe Street--is known as the Drag, a mile-long section of coffee shops, cafes and Longhorn-centric stores like the University Co-Op. The open-air Renaissance Market houses local artisans peddling their wares under shady tents, while the nearby Toy Joy stocks the largest array of random baubles fit for all ages.

South Austin

Lady Bird Lake, formerly known as Town Lake, intersects the city just south of downtown, creating the unofficial divide between Central and South Austin. The Lady Bird Lake Hike and Bike Trail keeps Austinites and travelers alike in shape with nearly 10 miles of landscaped trails amid the hustle and bustle of downtown. Zilker Park, a 400-acre park along the southern shores of the lake, provides wide

open space for kite-flying, Frisbee and other outdoor activities, including dancing at the Austin City Limits Music Festival each October. Kayak and canoe rentals let people enjoy a view of the skyline from the water, while Barton Springs Pool, a natural spring-fed swimming hole, offers up a cool and refreshing respite from the infamous Texas heat. A handful of quirky restaurants--namely Chuy's, Shady Grove, Romeo's, Austin Java Co. and Uncle Billy's Brew & Que--line Barton Springs Road, offering quick and easy meal options for those enjoying the beautiful weather year-round.

Along with university students, musicians and outdoorsy-types, Austin also hosts the largest urban colony of Mexican free-tail bats in North America, which take up residence under the Ann Richards Congress Avenue Bridge from March to November. Their nightly flight for food occurs around dusk and attracts hundreds of visitors eager to see the throngs of insect-eating bats take to the skies.

Just a couple blocks south of the bat haven sits the hip and trendy South Congress Avenue, referred to locally as SoCo. This strip, only a mile or so away from St. Edward's University, houses some of the city's most unique shops (Uncommon Objects, Parts & Labour, Lucy in Disguise) alongside hip hotels (Hotel San Jose, Austin Motel, Hotel Saint Cecilia) and locally owned eateries (Zen Japanese Food Fast, Home Slice Pizza, Guero's Taco Bar). On the first Thursday of each month, area businesses keep late hours while hundreds mingle along the street, shopping and enjoying live music during the free event appropriately dubbed First Thursday. Another SoCo highlight: Airstream trailers-turned-food vendors, and not just of the sno-cone variety. From cupcakes to chicken cones (you have to try one to understand), the block of food trailers draws quite a crowd every night of the week.

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