



**nileGUIDE**

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



BruceTurner

# Austin's Best Budget-Friendly Restaurants

## Austin, 1 Day

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# Guide Description



**AUTHOR NOTE:** Just because you're on vacation (or a business trip, for that matter) doesn't mean you can throw finances to the wind and eat extravagantly for each and every meal. To help make the most of your travel dollars, I've put together a list of some of Austin's yummiest spots that just so happen to be easy on the pocketbook, in other words: cheap eats. From greasy burgers and healthful sandwiches to sushi and crepes, this budget guide has got you and your family covered--all you have to worry about now is what to order.

# Itinerary Overview

things to do  
restaurants  
hotels  
nightlife

## Day 1 - Austin



**Zen Japanese Food Fast**  
Healthy Japanese food



**Sandy's Hamburgers**  
Cheap, greasy burgers



**Austin's Tamale House**  
Quick and cheap Mexican eats



**Flip Happy Crêpes**  
Jump for joy



**Dart Bowl Steakhouse**  
Lovers rejoice!



**Mekong River**  
Inexpensive Vietnamese cuisine



**Milto's Pizza Pub**  
Pizza, Greek, Italian



**Pok-e-Jo's Smokehouse**  
No frills, good barbecue



**Thundercloud Subs**  
Austin sandwich tradition



**Texas Chili Parlor**  
Hot, hot, hot!

**contact:**

tel: +512 451 4811  
fax: +512 451 0088  
<http://www.eatzen.com/>

**location:**

2900 West Anderson Lane  
Austin TX 78757

**hours:**

M-Sa 11a-10p, Su  
11:30a-8:30p

## 1 Zen Japanese Food Fast

**DESCRIPTION:** The name is accurate, but does not do justice to the heart-healthy offerings of this Japanese eatery. Drop in for lunch or dinner and select from the menu of sushi, refreshing salads and entrees. The familiar types of sushi are available, as well as variations such as teriyaki chicken rolls and tofu rolls. Try some "heart smart" entrees, such as steak and veggies teriyaki and white chicken with broccoli. A low-key, casual atmosphere is the rule here, with customers choosing from a selection of Japanese beers. Other locations include 1303 S. Congress Ave, Austin, TX 78704 (+1 512 444 8081,) 3423 Guadalupe St, Austin, TX (+1 512 300 2633) and 5207 Brodie Ln, Austin, TX (+1 512 899 2222.) © wcities.com



wcities

**contact:**

tel: + 512 478 6322  
[http://austin.citysearch.com/profile/10210777/austin\\_tx/sandy\\_s\\_hamburgers.html](http://austin.citysearch.com/profile/10210777/austin_tx/sandy_s_hamburgers.html)

**location:**

603 Barton Springs Road  
Austin TX 78704-1144

**hours:**

M-Su 10:30a-10:30p

## 2 Sandy's Hamburgers

**DESCRIPTION:** Sandy's is one of those all-American cafes. This one has been around for two decades, its neon custard cone its trademark. So, if you want a bit of classic Americana, drive through and pick up a meal or sit at one of the picnic tables. The menu consists of mouthwatering cheeseburgers and its famous custard cones. Everything on the menu is affordable here. © wcities.com



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**contact:**

tel: +1 512 453 9842  
<http://www.myspace.com/tamalehouse>

**location:**

5003 Airport Boulevard  
Austin TX 78751

**hours:**

M-F 6:30a-3p, Sa 7a-3p

## 3 Austin's Tamale House

**DESCRIPTION:** Small and quaint is how you can describe this place best. But don't let the small factor undermine the Mexican fare dished out here - you can actually watch them cook. Crowded with hungry students, travelers, local patrons, and professionals, the food is delicious but inexpensive. Food includes homemade salsa, breakfast tacos, migas, enchiladas, chalupas et al. You can call ahead and order - with the prices, for a whole baseball team. In spite of the demand and queue, service is quick. Note: no credit cards please. © wcities.com



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**contact:**  
tel: +1 512 552 9034  
<http://www.fliphappycrepes.com/>

**location:**  
400 Jessie Street  
Austin TX 78704

**hours:**  
W-F 10:30a-2:30p, Sa 9a-3p

## 4 Flip Happy Crêpes

**DESCRIPTION:** The French seem to be inspiring the folks in Austin. If the Bistro Le Marseillaise is an out-of-the-box concept, well, Flip Happy Crêpes is an inside-an-Airstream concept. Operating out of a trailer parked off South Lamar Boulevard, the menu has sweet and savory crêpes for all tastes and a mini crêpe and nutella roll up for the kids. Flip Happy also serves tea, coffee and sodas and has a seating area with tables on the lawn. This is one place, even the French will admit, where the crêpes are as good as back home. © wcities.com



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**contact:**  
tel: +1 512 452 2518  
fax: +1 512 452 2761  
<http://www.dartbowl.com>

**location:**  
5700 Grover Avenue  
Austin TX 78756

**hours:**  
Su-Th 9a-12a, F-Sa 9a-1:30a

## 5 Dart Bowl Steakhouse

**DESCRIPTION:** Enjoy bowling while you satisfy your appetite with yummy steaks and chops. You can have breakfast, lunch and dinner at Dart Bowl Steakhouse. A quiet place to chill out with folks and friends. © wcities.com



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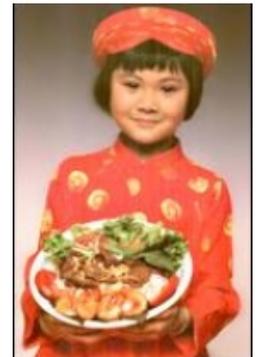
**contact:**  
tel: +1 512 236 8878  
<http://mekongriveraustin.com/>

**location:**  
215 East Sixth St  
Austin TX 78701

**hours:**  
Su-Th 10:30 a.m. - 10 p.m.,  
F-Sa 10:30 a.m. - 11 p.m.

## 6 Mekong River

**DESCRIPTION:** This is a consistently excellent Vietnamese restaurant with an extensive menu of reasonably priced entrees. Located in a roomy, two-story space in the middle of the bar and live music district, they serve a variety of Pho (noodle soup), vermicelli and rice dishes topped with grilled or stir-fried meat and vegetables. No alcoholic beverages are served, but the Vietnamese coffee, iced or hot, is not to be missed. © wcities.com



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**contact:**  
tel: +1 512 476 1021

**location:**  
2909 Guadalupe Street  
Austin TX 78705-3721

**hours:**  
Su-F 11a-10p, Sa 11a-11p

## 7 Milto's Pizza Pub

**DESCRIPTION:** This campus area location offers excellent pizza, Greek items and pasta dishes for eating in, to go or delivery. Prices are reasonable, and the service is generally efficient and friendly. © wcities.com



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**contact:**  
tel: +1 512 338 1990  
<http://www.pokejos.com/>

**location:**  
9828 Great Hills Trail  
Austin TX 78759

**hours:**  
M-Su 11 a.m. - 9 p.m.

## 8 Pok-e-Jo's Smokehouse

**DESCRIPTION:** This warehouse-style restaurant serves reliably good barbecue along with great sides. An entire meal is surprisingly inexpensive. Other locations: 1202-C North IH-35 Round Rock, TX 78681 (+1 512 388 7578,) 2121 Parmer Lane Austin, TX 78759 (+1 512 491 0434,) 4109 Capital of Texas Hwy, Austin, TX 78746 (+1 512 440 0447) and 1000 E 41st St, Austin, TX 78751 (+1 512 302 1200.) © wcities.com



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**contact:**  
tel: +512 452 5010  
<http://www.thundercloud.com>

**location:**  
3200-B Guadalupe Street  
Austin TX 78705

**hours:**  
M-Th 10:30a-10p, F-Sa  
10:30a-11p, Su 11a-10p

## 9 Thundercloud Subs

**DESCRIPTION:** This local chain that boasts the motto "fresh, fast, and healthy" offers sandwiches that taste fresher and less corporate than their competitors. Even better, the prices are affordable. Vegetarians will enjoy the Veggie Delight, a cold sub loaded with mushrooms, avocado, sprouts, black olives, cream cheese, onions, tomatoes and ThunderSauce--their trademark special sauce. The other subs offered are largely made up of traditional deli meats such as smoked chicken, turkey, tuna salad, roast beef and mixed cold cuts. If you're looking for something lighter, try a hummus sandwich or soup and salad. © wcities.com



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**contact:**  
tel: +1 512 472 2828  
<http://www.cactushill.com/TC>  
P/home.htm

**location:**  
1409 Lavaca St  
Austin TX 78701

**hours:**  
M-Su 11 a.m. - 2 a.m.

## A Texas Chili Parlor

**DESCRIPTION:** The Texas Chili Parlor serves up X (mild) chili, XX (spicy) chili, XXX (hot) chili, black bean and sausage chili and vegetarian chili. On the weekends, the special is habanero chile! Despite the name, the Chili Parlor also serves Mexican food, burgers and sandwiches and has a popular bar area. Live music can be heard several nights a week. © wcities.com



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# 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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## Restaurants Insights

Spread out over roughly 300 square miles, Austin offers a limitless supply of dining options, ranging from festival-style handheld bites to indulgent, multi-course meals that last hours. Tex-Mex restaurants like Chuy's, Maudie's and Matt's El Rancho and barbecue joints such as Stubb's, Ironworks and Salt Lick might have put Austin on the map for their tried-and-true ways, but some of the city's most daring spots are the most popular. Uchi, a hip sushi restaurant along South Lamar, is the mastermind of nationally recognized chef Tyson Cole, serving innovative dishes to a capacity crowd. Flip Happy Crepes, an Airstream trailer-turned-creperie, has wooed patrons with their sweet and savory French delicacies, including celebrity chef Bobby Flay who challenged the owners

## Austin Snapshot continued

on a Season 3 episode of his Food TV competition, "Throwdown with Bobby Flay." (Spoiler: Flip Happy Crepes won!) Another local favorite, Baby Greens, brings healthy to the drive-thru with fresh salads and house-made dressings. With options like these, it can be difficult to make a decision on an empty stomach.

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### Nightlife Insights

Austin provides something for everyone when it comes to nighttime entertainment. The title of "Live Music Capital of the World" is well deserved, as live music bellows from not just bars and clubs, but restaurants, coffee shops, museums and more on a nightly basis. For some of the city's best up-and-coming acts, check out Antone's, the Mohawk or Hole in the Wall, while big-name touring groups stop by Stubb's, La Zona Rosa or Austin Music Hall. Couples (or courageous singles) can get their two-steppin' on with the help of house bands at Donn's Depot and Broken Spoke.

The bar scene in the capital city is varied--the collegiate crowd heads to the infamous East Sixth Street, where shot bars and dance clubs share the street with souvenir shops and tourist-driven restaurants. The Warehouse District and West Sixth Street areas attract more sophisticated clientele. Hotspots like the Belmont, Union Park and the Ranch couple breezy rooftop patios with swanky cocktails and skyline views. Casual spots like Opal Divine's, the Key Bar and Ginger Man serve pints and more to a laid-back crowd.

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### Things to Do Insights

Part of Austin's appeal stems from the array of outdoor activities the area offers. From hiking and biking to window-shopping and bat-watching, there's something for every level of physical activity. Tourist hot spots are scattered throughout the city--Mount Bonnell offers a short 100-step trek to a sweeping view overlooking Lake Austin; Zilker Park provides hundreds of acres of wide open space for sports and the like right in the city center. Bicyclists take to the Hike and Bike Trail around Lady Bird Lake, while others opt for the Veloway, a paved closed course for bikes and rollerbladers only.

Cultural opportunities also abound in Austin, with a combination of museums, music and special events. The Jack S. Blanton Museum of Art--the latest addition to the University of Texas campus--spans centuries and genres of painting and sculpture, while the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum encompasses the pride of the Lone Star State with its larger-than-life exhibits and state-of-the-art technology that makes taking a step back in time fun for all ages. Smaller museums and galleries make way for the local artisans--Wally Workman Gallery exhibits oils, watercolors and other media from area artists, as does Women & Their Work, Yard Dog, Flatbed Press and a handful of other galleries.

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### Travel Tips

#### Getting There

##### Air

Austin-Bergstrom International Airport (ABIA) +1 512 530 ABIA <http://www.abia.org/>

ABIA is located eight miles from Austin and is serviced by the following airlines:

American Airline (+1 800 433 7300/<http://www.aa.com>) America West (+1 800 235 9292/<http://www.americawest.com>) British Airways (+1 800 247 9297/<http://www.british-airways.com>) Continental (+1 800 525 0280/<http://www.continental.com>) Delta (+1 800 221 1212/<http://www.delta.com>) Frontier Airlines (+1 1 800 432 1359/<http://www.frontierairlines.com>) Southwest (+1 800 435 9792/<http://www.southwest.com>) Northwest (+1 800 225 2525/<http://www.nwa.com>) United (+1 800 241 6522/<http://www.ual.com>)

Car Rental: Alamo (+1 800 327 9633/<http://www.alamo.com>) Avis (+1 800 831 2847/<http://www.avis.com>) Budget (+1 800 527 0700/<http://www.budget.com>) Dollar (+1 800 4000/<http://www.dollar.com>) Enterprise (+1 800 325 8007/<http://www.enterprise.com>) Hertz (+1 800 654 3131/<http://www.hertz.com>) National (+1 800 227 7368/<http://www.nationalcar.com>) Thrifty (+1 800 367 2277/<http://www.thrifty.com>)

Shuttles: SuperShuttle (+1 800 BLUE VAN (258 3826)) +1 512 258 3826 Carey

Austin (+1 512 929 5009/<http://www.carey-austin.com>)

**Train** Amtrak services Austin daily from nationwide locations (+1 800 872 7245/<http://www.amtrak.com>).

**Bus** Greyhound (+1 800 231 2222; +1 512 458 4463/<http://www.greyhound.com>) accesses Austin daily.

**Highway** The I-35, I-10, and the US-290 will take you into Austin from any direction.

#### Getting Around

##### Train

Take the historic Austin Steam Train (+1 512 477 8468/<http://www.austinsteamtrain.org>) through Austin. Open year-round on weekends only.

##### Bus

The Capitol Metro Bus (+1 512 474 1200/<http://www.capmetro.org>) serves the airport as well as all areas of the city.

##### Taxi

Ace Taxi (+1 888 582 8646) American Yellow (+1 452 9999; +1 800 874 0278) Austin Cab (+1 478 2222; +1 800 TAXICAB) Roy's Taxi Inc. (+1 482 0175; +1 800 845 ROYS)

#### Traffic Information

To find out city traffic information go to: <http://www.traffic.com/>

If traveling overseas, take the safety precaution of registering your trip at <https://travelregistration.state.gov> and for helpful, practical advice about traveling technicalities and safety standards check out: <http://travel.state.gov/>

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### Fun Facts

#### Austin

**State:** Texas

**Country:** United States **Austin by the Numbers:**

Population: 710,000

Elevation: 597 feet

Average Annual Rainfall: 32 inches

Average Annual Snowfall: .9 inches

## Austin Snapshot continued

Average January Temperature: 50 degrees F

Average July Temperature: 85 degrees F

### Quick Facts:

Major Industries: Oil, Electronics, Computers, Automobile Manufacturing, Aerospace Industries, Agriculture, Telecommunications, Higher Education

Ethnic Mix: Caucasian(65%), African American(10%), of some Latino descent(30%), Asian(4%)

Electricity: 110 volts, 60Hz, standard two pin plugs

Time Zone: GMT- 6

Country Dialing Code: 1

Area Code: 361& 512

### Did You Know?

Austin is not only the state capital of Texas, it is also home to the University of Texas,

Austin. On further note, Austin is the site of the President Lyndon B. Johnson Library and Center.

### Orientation:

Austin is located deep in the heart of Texas, about 160 miles west of Houston, 80 miles northeast of San Antonio, and 200 miles south of Dallas.

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