

TEXAS CAMPING

Your guide to roughing it in the
State and National Parks of Texas



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Texas Camping

Big Bend National Park

nps.gov/bibe/index.htm

Located in West Texas, Big Bend National Park offers expansive views of mountains, canyons, and ancient limestone. One of the largest national parks in the United States, there are plenty of things to do. The best roadside and primitive camping in Texas, there are three campgrounds and numerous backcountry spots to set up camp if you prefer to be nestled in a more secluded area. With over 800,000 acres of beautiful views, visitors will find a range of outdoor activities to indulge in, from kayaking the Rio Grande to backpacking and mountain biking, to fishing and nature watching. Home to over 4,000 species of animals, wildlife viewing is also a popular pastime.

Big Thicket National Preserve

nps.gov/bith/index.htm

Part of the Piney Woods region of Southeast Texas, Big Thicket National Preserve is a must-see for nature enthusiasts. Nicknamed “America’s Ark,” a trip here can be spent canoeing, hiking, biking and horseback riding, while primitive campsites are spread across the sprawling 112,500 acres of land. Big Thicket was the first such preserve in the United States and is where to go to find a diverse group of plants and animals, from longleaf pine forests to cypress-lined bayous. Perfect for an overnight adventure, you can pitch a tent and wake up to this incredibly diverse stretch of land.

Caprock Canyons State Park

tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/caprock-canyons

Famous for its incredible wildlife, Caprock Canyons State Park is home to the Official Bison Herd of the State of Texas. It’s there that over 10,000 acres are reserved for these beautiful creatures, but the diverse wildlife is only one feature this park is known for. Featuring a rugged beauty, an astounding 90 miles of trails are on offer, perfect for campers who like to explore nature on foot. While marveling at the bison and hiking the trails might fill up your itinerary, visitors can also ride horses and go mountain biking. There are even eight equestrian campsites available with corrals.

Colorado Bend State Park

tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/colorado-bend

One of the biggest outdoor attractions in Texas, Colorado Bend State Park is the perfect combination of scenic vistas and outdoor activities. Located just a short drive from Austin, it is also a go-to destination for Texas campers, where group primitive campsites, backpack camping sites and drive-up sites are available. The highlight of the park is Gorman Falls, a 65-foot waterfall that cascades into a lush fern-covered grotto. Visitors will also find plenty of scenic swimming holes to cool off on hot summer days, in addition to a variety of opportunities to go fishing, paddling, caving and birding.

Davis Mountains State Park

tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/davis-mountains

A pure Texas experience, camping in the historic Davis Mountains State Park means you can bring your horse along to camp. Located in West Texas, the horseback riding trails here are 5,700 feet in elevation. Various primitive and developed campsites are available, where you can get stunning view of the mountains in addition to a lodge and on-site motel. Spend your days hiking, birdwatching or mountain biking, and when the sun goes down there are various stargazing tours that are popular. For a unique experience, go birdwatching at “the best little bird blind in Texas” where you’ll find an enclosed viewing area and feeding station.

Enchanted Rock State Natural Area

tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/enchanted-rock

Located just outside of Llano in central Texas, Enchanted Rock State Natural Area is most famously known for its enormous piece of pink granite rock, one of the largest natural rock formations in the United States. Walk-in campsites and tent pads are available in addition to primitive hike-in campsites, where ample amounts of shade and amazing Hill Country views offer a fantastic place for a picnic and respite after a day of adventure. Spend your nights stargazing after a memorable day in the outdoors, as popular activities include rock climbing and hiking through the 11 miles of hiking trails.

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Garner State Park

tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/garner

Offering a wide array of outdoor recreation, Garner State Park boasts 1,774 acres of beautiful Hill Country. The Frio River winds through the park and its 11 miles of trails offer scenic vistas for adventurous travelers. Campers can choose from tent camping, screened-in shelters and on-site cabins peppered throughout the park. Perfect for a relaxing weekend adventure, you can soak in beautiful country views and spend your afternoon tubing, kayaking and hiking. On hot summer days, swimming and tubing in the Frio River are an excellent way to cool off, while the park's concession building hosts 1940s-style jukebox dancing.

Guadalupe River State Park

tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/guadalupe-river

A beautiful 1,938-acre park and home to the four-mile stretch of the Guadalupe River, the Guadalupe River State Park is the perfect area to set up camp. Pitch your tent at one of the campsites near the water or scope out a secluded spot for ultimate tranquility. A popular destination in the summertime, visitors will find three campsites available that offer the perfect gathering spot for friends and family. Just a short drive from San Antonio and Austin, parkgoers are spoiled for choice in the beautiful scenery. On the river, you can swim, fish, tube and canoe while 13 miles of hiking and biking trails are ideal for those who prefer to explore on land.

Inks Lake State Park

tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/inks-lake

Nestled in the Texas Hill Country, Inks Lake State Park boasts a variety of rocky landscape and outdoor adventures. Featuring a scenic topography with sparkling blue waters and colorful rock outcrops, campers can explore the nine miles of picturesque hiking trails. Take a dip in the refreshing Devil's Waterhole and nestle in at one of the 22 cabins or campsites by the water. Just an hour northwest of Austin, the park is the perfect weekend getaway in the summer where you can swim, boat, water ski and scuba dive. Due to its constant lake level, the park is accessible all year-round.

Lost Maples State Natural Area

tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/lost-maples

A post-card perfect area in the fall with its vibrant array of colors, Lost Maples State Natural Area is also a great place to go camping. Located just two hours northwest of San Antonio, nature enthusiasts can soak in views of abundant wildlife and steep canyon walls that highlight the scenic Sabinal River. Hiking, swimming and fishing in the Sabinal are popular outdoor activities, while those interested in catching the fall foliage will need to plan their trip around mid-October to mid-November. Over 30 campsites are available with water and electricity, and if you prefer more seclusion, you can backpack to the six primitive campsites.

Padre Island National Seashore

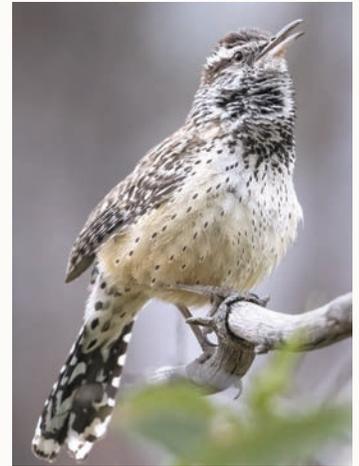
nps.gov/pais/index.htm

A unique experience along the Gulf Coast, camping overnight on the Padre Island National Seashore is the perfect escape for beach lovers. Experience sea, sand and wildlife viewing here, as the 70 miles of coastline, dunes and prairies separate the Gulf of Mexico from the Laguna Madre. The longest remaining undeveloped stretch of barrier island in the world according to the U.S. National Park Service, a camping trip here offers days filled with salty breezes running through your hair and the serene sounds of waves, a combination that is sure to have your worries melt away. Five year-round campgrounds are available for public use, where you'll find remote stretches of seashore and plenty of water-based activities.

Palo Duro Canyon State Park

tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/palo-duro-canyon

Known as the "Grand Canyon of Texas," Palo Duro Canyon State Park is an excellent location for outdoor enthusiasts. The second-largest canyon in the United States, its array of multi-colored terra cotta that illuminate the sunken valleys is a sight to behold. There are plenty of spots for tent camping, RV camping, and equestrian campsites, while cabins are available to rent on the canyon rim and canyon floor. Campers can hike, bike or horseback through this spectacular canyon along its 30 miles of trails. Serving as an inspiration to the famous American painter Georgia O'Keefe, it's safe to say the park's spectacular views are majestic, to say the least.



Cactus Wren

True to their namesake, these birds make their nests among the cacti in Big Bend National Park.



Lost Maples State Natural Area

The steep canyon walls around the park provide refuge to the plants and animals that call this area home.



Bald Cypress Trees

These trees, with their twisting roots, line the banks of the Guadalupe River.

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