

Austin

The live-music capital, the capitol dome, bat flights and Barton Springs pool

Austin is the capital of Texas and its live-music capital, with 250 venues, the largest state capitol building in America (by square footage), Barton Springs — a 20°C pool year-round — and the world's largest urban bat colony. It is young, outdoorsy and hot, and the food is brisket, breakfast tacos and Tex-Mex.

At a glance

AIRPORT	AUS (Bergstrom), 15 min to downtown
BEST SEASON	Mar-May and Oct; summer is 38°C+
GETTING AROUND	Car useful · CapMetro bus and MetroRail

When to go

March (SXSW), October (ACL) and spring wildflower season (March–April) are peak. Summer is very hot — plan for indoors or water at midday. November–February is mild and quiet.

Getting around

Downtown, South Congress and the UT campus are walkable. CapMetro buses cover the city; MetroRail runs north to Leander. A car is needed for the Hill Country, wineries and Hamilton Pool.

What to see

State Capitol	The largest state capitol in America, taller than the US Capitol — free tours daily.
Congress Avenue Bridge	1.5 million Mexican free-tailed bats emerge at dusk, March to October.
Barton Springs Pool	A 3-acre natural spring pool in Zilker Park, 20°C year-round.
South Congress (SoCo)	Vintage, food trucks, Allen's Boots and the Jo's coffee sign.
East Austin	The bar and brewery district, with Franklin BBQ at its north edge.
Mount Bonnell	The highest point in Austin — 100 steps to the Colorado River view.
The Blanton	UT's art museum, with the Ellsworth Austin project rooms.
Rainey Street	Historic bungalows turned into bars on the waterfront.

Tours worth booking

Austin food and food truck walking tour	3 h · Food & wine · 4.7/5 (1860 reviews)
Texas Hill Country wineries day trip from Austin	7 h · Food & wine · 4.8/5 (1620 reviews)
Space Center Houston admission with NASA tram	4-6 h · Culture · 4.8/5 (6420 reviews)
Fort Worth Stockyards cattle drive and rodeo	3 h · Culture · 4.7/5 (2840 reviews)
San Antonio River Walk boat cruise	35 min · Boat & beach · 4.6/5 (5180 reviews)
San Antonio Missions bike tour	4 h · Adventure · 4.9/5 (1240 reviews)

Where to stay

The Driskill Hotel	Austin · Downtown · Historic · From \$320
Fairmont Austin	Austin · Downtown · Luxury · From \$340
Hotel Saint Cecilia	Austin · South Congress · Design · From \$450
Austin Proper Hotel	Austin · Downtown · Design · From \$360
Kimpton Hotel Van Zandt	Austin · Rainey Street · Design · From \$260
Hotel Ella	Austin · University Area · Boutique · From \$220

Day-by-day itineraries

Austin in 1 day	suitesandsunsets.com/itineraries/austin/1-day-itinerary
Austin in 2 days	suitesandsunsets.com/itineraries/austin/2-day-itinerary
Austin in 3 days	suitesandsunsets.com/itineraries/austin/3-day-itinerary

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