

THINGS TO DO IN AUSTIN

1. GO ON A HISTORIC TOUR

Get out there and experience Austin's [history](#). Head to the [Austin Visitor Center](#) and sign up for one of the guided [Downtown Walking Tours](#) of landmarks and local heroes. Or download the free [Walk of the Town](#) app (from the Google Play or the App Store), featuring three downtown audio tours narrated by local Austin experts. Free, self-guided historic walking tours offered by [Preservation Austin](#) lead you to the stately Capitol building on Congress Avenue, iconic music venues, noteworthy African American historical sites, and more. Join [Six Square Historic Tours](#) and experience one of Austin's fascinating Black cultural districts. Or delve into Austin's African American history on wheels with [Black History Bike Ride](#).

2. TOUR THE TEXAS STATE CAPITOL BUILDING & GROUNDS

Take a free guided tour of the granite [Texas State Capitol](#), a National Historic Landmark. Look up to spy the Texas star on the dome in the ornate rotunda. See courtrooms and chambers where state Senators and House members meet. And explore hidden spaces like the subterranean vault. Then, walk the grounds and read the inscriptions on notable monuments.

3. VISIT THE UMLAUF SCULPTURE GARDEN

Walk leafy trails that lead to outdoor artworks by Charles Umlauf at the [UMLAUF Sculpture Garden & Museum](#). Spend a few hours exploring the picturesque Sculpture Garden and indoor gallery.

4. DISCOVER THE TEJANO WALKING TRAIL

Take off on the [Tejano Walking Trail](#), a self-guided tour of more than 20 culturally significant Hispanic sites in the East Cesar Chavez and Holly neighborhoods.

5. SEE THE NEILL-COCHRAN HOUSE MUSEUM

Visit the [Neill-Cochran House Museum](#) and take a self-guided tour through Austin's history. The museum showcases the city's cultural, economic, and architectural transformation from 1855 to the present day.

6. GO ON A MURAL TOUR

Take a self-guided tour of Austin's iconic murals, including *Greetings from Austin* at South First and Annie Streets; *Hi, How Are You* at Guadalupe and 21st Streets; and *i love you so much* mural painted on the wall of [Jo's Coffee](#) on South Congress. Create your own itinerary and explore more [murals](#) with the help of [Austin's Best Murals](#) blog and [tour guide](#).

7. VISIT MEXIC-ARTE MUSEUM

The [Mexic-Arte Museum](#) houses a collection of traditional and contemporary Mexican, Latino, and Latin American art and cultural items in downtown Austin. Explore the galleries and be sure to check out the exterior mural along Fifth Street.

8. EXPLORE THE BULLOCK

Spend a day exploring Austin's [Bullock Texas State History Museum](#), which features fascinating exhibitions, and films at the Bullock IMAX Theatre and Texas Spirit Theater, plus the Museum Store for great Texas-themed gifts to take home.

9. TAKE THE KIDS TO THINKERY

Kids can paint, climb, and make a splash at [Thinkery](#) Austin's interactive children's museum where little ones have fun while learning.

10. WATCH AN ART HOUSE FILM OR CLASSIC FLICK

[AFS Cinema](#) presents classic, independent, and global films on its two big screens. Don't miss the full bar, with beer on tap, as well as concessions that include snacks from local purveyors like [Lick Honest Ice Creams](#). Head over to locally owned [Violet Crown Cinema](#) to see indie and documentary films shown on four screens. The [Paramount Theatre](#) is a century-old performance venue and movie theater in the heart of downtown Austin. Originally opened as a vaudeville house, its eclectic entertainment ranges from [music](#) to comedy shows.

11. VISIT THE CONTEMPORARY AUSTIN

See exceptional artwork in beautiful spaces while enjoying deals offered by [The Contemporary Austin](#). Admission is free on Thursdays to both the [Jones Center](#) and [Laguna Gloria](#) locations. On other days, buy a ticket to one venue, then visit the other for free within seven days.

Visitors at the Blanton. Courtesy of Blanton Museum of Art.

12. VISIT AUSTIN'S CULTURAL CAMPUS

The [University of Texas at Austin](#) is home to an impressive collection of museums, including the [Blanton Museum of Art](#), the [Harry Ransom Center](#), [LBJ Presidential Library](#), and the [Texas Science & Natural History Museum](#).

13. TOUR THE GOVERNOR'S MANSION

Be regaled by the historic stories told during a tour of the [Texas Governor's Mansion](#), which has served as the governor's residence since 1856. Make a tour reservation at least a week in advance.

14. HEAR LIVE MUSIC OUTDOORS

Several of Austin's most popular music venues feature live shows outdoors, including rock and alternative at [Mohawk](#), dance at [Cheer Up Charlies](#), and all genres at [The Far Out Lounge & Stage](#). Check out even more [outdoor venues throughout Austin](#).

15. TOUR AUSTIN CITY LIMITS LIVE

For the ultimate Austin music tour, visit [Austin City Limits \(ACL\) Live at The Moody Theater](#) and get a behind-the-scenes look at where America's longest-running television music series is taped.

16. ENJOY A PERFORMANCE IN THE PARK

Enjoy a free show in a beautiful outdoor setting. The annual [Zilker Summer Musical](#) offers live theater from mid-July through mid-August on an outdoor stage under the stars at the [Zilker Hillside Theatre](#).

17. SEE A LIVE SHOW AT GÜERO'S TACO BAR

On Wednesday evenings, order a cold margarita and find a seat in the Oak Garden at [Güero's Taco Bar](#) to see musicians performing as part of Sun Radio's *Texas Radio Live* series.

18. WATCH A MOVIE AT THE DRIVE-IN

Motor over to the [Blue Starlite Urban Drive-In](#) to catch an indie film or cult classic at Austin's popular drive-in movie theater. Check out their location Downtown or in Mueller.

Free Week. Credit Renee Dominguez.

19. EXPERIENCE A FREE MUSIC FEST

Every January, venues on [Red River](#) join in [Free Week](#), a showcase of mostly local music that has every bar packed and every stage rockin'. Besides catching popular acts, you'll have the chance to sample scrumptious food from local eateries. In July, Red River music venues offer free admission for Hot Summer Nights, featuring four days of shows by over 120 local and national artists.

20. SEARCH FOR VINTAGE TREASURES IN NORTH LOOP

North Loop stores [Room Service Vintage](#) and [Blue Velvet Vintage Clothing](#) are fantastic vintage finds. Room Service has bigger items and kitsch, while Blue Velvet stocks mostly clothing and accessories. Stop into [Monkies Vintage & Thrift](#) for retro tees and western wear.

21. GO DANCING AT BROKEN SPOKE

Do some two-stepping at [Broken Spoke](#), an old-fashioned honky-tonk known for its chicken-fried steak and free dinner show, with live bands Tuesday through Saturday evenings.

22. ENJOY A FREE SYMPHONY

Classical music lovers won't want to miss [Austin Symphony Orchestra's](#) Hartman Foundation [Concerts in the Park](#), held on the lawn at the [Long Center](#). On Sunday evenings during the summer, bring a lawn chair or blanket and kick back under the stars, listening to classical music while soaking in city skyline views.

23. SHOP SOUTH CONGRESS

Take a [shopping](#) stroll along [South Congress](#), known for its funky stores and chic boutiques. Check out the kicks at [Allens Boots](#), affordable jewelry by local artists at [Paper Work](#), and beautiful retro wares at [Feathers Vintage](#).

24. LISTEN TO LIVE GOSPEL MUSIC AT BRUNCH

Make a reservation for Sunday Gospel Brunch at [Stubb's Bar-B-Q](#), an Austin music institution that serves up lip-smacking barbecue along with some of the best live bands around, all for one reasonable price.

25. EXPLORE THE WHOLE FOODS FLAGSHIP

Stop at the original flagship [Whole Foods Market](#), where you'll find four [restaurants](#), a beer and wine bar, a food truck, and rooftop events.

26. BROWSE AN ICONIC RECORD STORE

With a soft spot for Texas musicians, Austin's iconic [Waterloo Records](#) presents free in-store performances by emerging local musicians. Take time to flip through the shop's extensive selection of vinyl. Check out more [music and record stores](#) in Austin.

27. RENT A BIKE

Zip around town and do some sightseeing on your own on a bike rented from [Mellow Johnny's Bike Shop](#). Bikes start at \$40 for full-day rentals. Or look for one of the 60+ bike-share stations throughout downtown Austin and rent a BCycle 24 hours a day.

28. VISIT ZILKER PARK

Stop and smell the roses at [Zilker Park](#), a 360-acre oasis in the heart of the city that's home to the blooming [Zilker Botanical Garden](#) (reserve tickets online in advance) and [Barton Springs Pool](#) (reservations recommended). On the west side of Zilker Park, don't miss hands-on exhibits, programs, and activities for visitors of all ages at the [Austin Nature & Science Center](#).

29. PLAY A ROUND OF DISC GOLF

Enjoy a round of disc golf in scenic settings like the [Disc Golf Course](#) in [Zilker Park](#), the [Roy G. Guerrero Disc Golf Course](#) in East Austin, and the [Mary Moore Searight Disc Golf Course](#) in South Austin.

30. EXPLORE THE TEXAS HILL COUNTRY

Drive out to the [Hill Country](#) for spectacular [hikes](#), state [parks](#), and picnic spots. Spend the day at picture-perfect parks like [Emma Long Metropolitan Park](#) (prepaid passes required Friday through Sunday and holidays), [Reimers Ranch Park](#) (daily use fee payable in cash only), [Lockhart State Park](#) (online reservations recommended), and more.

Butler Hike & Bike Trail. Credit to Jeff Djayasaputra.

31. BIKE THE HIKE-AND-BIKE TRAIL

Rent a [bicycle](#) from [Barton Springs Bike Rental](#) & Tours and bike the 10-mile [Ann and Roy Butler Hike-and-Bike Trail](#) that skirts the glittering waters of Lady Bird Lake. Insider tip: Snap a selfie with the statue of Austin music legend Stevie Ray Vaughan stationed along the route.

32. HIKE MOUNT BONNELL

Take a hike up the stone steps to [Mount Bonnell](#) and get a panoramic view of the Austin area. This Lake Austin landmark has been a popular tourist destination since the 1850s.

33. EXPLORE THE GREENBELT

Hike or bike along the [Barton Creek Greenbelt](#) to reach Gus Fruh, a swimming hole known for its famed Urban Assault limestone rock wall that's a favorite of climbers. Explore further to discover the hidden Twin Falls and Sculpture Falls areas.

Congress Avenue Bridge Bats. Credit BentoBox Photos.

34. SEE AUSTIN'S FAMOUS BATS

Head to the [Congress Avenue Bridge](#) to witness a staggering 1.5 million Mexican free-tailed bats fly into the sky from beneath the bridge nightly from spring through fall.

35. SWIM IN A SPRING-FED POOL

Take a dip in one of Austin's most popular spring-fed [swimming holes](#), located in the heart of the city. [Barton Springs Pool](#) in [Zilker Park](#) maintains a refreshing temperature of 68 degrees year-round and has plenty of grassy areas for people-watching.

36. TAKE THE KIDS TO MUELLER LAKE PARK

Grab a healthy snack at the [Texas Farmers Market](#) on Sunday mornings, then explore [Mueller Lake Park](#). The park features paved walking trails and a large playground that kids just can't resist.

37. EXPLORE ST. EDWARD'S GREENBELT

Experience a lush hidden escape within the city limits at the quiet, 80-acre [St. Edward's Greenbelt](#), with lots of easy trails and a swimming hole with an old-fashioned rope swing.

38. DIVE INTO DEEP EDDY POOL

The huge [Deep Eddy Pool](#) is the state's oldest pool. Sunbathe on the grassy hill overlooking Lady Bird Lake in scenic West Austin, then stop by neighboring [Pool Burger](#) for burgers and tiki drinks after your swim.

39. PADDLE LADY BIRD LAKE

Get on the water at [Lady Bird Lake](#), where you can rent stand-up paddleboards, kayaks, and canoes from [Rowing Dock](#), [Austin Kayak Tours](#), [Zilker Park Boat Rentals](#), and [more](#).

40. SEE THE PEACOCKS AT MAYFIELD PARK

Originally an early 1900s summer retreat for the family of prominent Austin politician Allison Mayfield, [Mayfield Park](#) is now a beautiful public green space known for its colorful strutting peacocks.

41. SHOP LOCAL AT A FARMERS MARKET

You won't be able to resist the homemade treats and gourmet snacks at the [SFC Farmer's Market Downtown](#), held on Saturdays in historic [Republic Square](#). Be sure to check out other [Austin farmer's markets](#).

42. SAMPLE FOOD TRUCKS AT THE PICNIC

A [food truck](#) stop is a must. Post up at [The Picnic](#), offering plenty of picnic tables and a variety of food trucks, including [Coat & Thai](#) and [King of Lobster](#). Order takeout or dine-in on the covered patio.

43. SIP A PINT ON A PATIO

Enjoy a craft beer and handmade pizza on the spacious patio at the [ABGB](#). [Last Stand Brewing's](#) outdoor beer garden offers more than 10 house-brewed beers on tap. Or sit on the patio and sample [Hold Out Brewing's](#) array of house draft beers, including pale ales, lagers, and IPAS. Don't miss Hold Out's happy hour from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday for buy-one-get-one burgers and discounted appetizers, beers, and cocktails.

44. HAPPY HOUR AT THE LITTLE LONGHORN

The [Little Longhorn Saloon](#) is the center of Austin's [honky-tonk](#) country music scene, and there's never a cover charge. It's also known for its happy hour, with \$2.50 Lone Star 12-ounce draft beers from 5 to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Friday.

45. GET A BURGER TO GO AT SANDY'S

Taste an Austin tradition at the roadside [Sandy's Hamburgers](#), open since 1946. Must-orders include the double cheeseburger with fries, frozen custard, and frosty root beer.

46. DINE AT A CONVENIENCE STORE

Make like an Austinite and stop in at [Quickie Pickie](#), a neighborhood market, and eatery featuring breakfast tacos, locally roasted coffee, and 27 taps.

47. DRINK AT A DIVE

Pair your margarita with sizzling fajitas at [El Arroyo](#) (famous for its hilarious marquee sign messages out front). Or, toast the man in black at the [Mean Eyed Cat](#), a Johnny Cash-themed bar that has a happy hour Monday through Friday.

48. TRY TACOS FROM A FOOD TRUCK

[Tacos](#) are an inexpensive and delicious dining option for breakfast, lunch, or dinner! There are loads of amazing places to try, including [Veracruz All Natural](#), [Pueblo Viejo](#), and [El Primo](#).

49. PLAN A PICNIC AT AUDITORIUM SHORES

Bring the kids and the dogs for a picnic at [Auditorium Shores](#), along Lady Bird Lake. Fly a kite at the expansive, grassy park or ride a bike to catch a picturesque view of the downtown skyline.

50. ATTEND ONE OF THE MANY FREE EVENTS IN AUSTIN

Free events and festivals are happening year-round in Austin with something for everyone. Listen to live music at [Free Week](#) (January) and [Hot Summer Nights](#) (July), fly a kite at the annual [ABC Kite Fest](#) (April), shop local vendors at the Pecan Street Festival (March & September), meet notable authors at [Texas Book Festival](#) (November) and see what local artists are working on during the [Austin Studio Tour](#) (November).

Need more insider advice? Call or stop by the [Austin Visitor Center](#) for local tips, and check out the [online Gift Shop](#) for unique, local items!