GOOD TIMES IN AUSTIN

A big city with a small-town heart, the Texas capital is packed with great music, culinary prowess and a sociable streak that’s impossible to resist. Check out these places where Austinites go to unwind.

SIGHTS

Ann and Ray Butler Boardwalk
Gaze at the downtown skyline from a series of boardwalks on this scenic 10-mile trail, which loops around Lady Bird Lake, a reservoir east of the downtown area.
> austintexas.gov;
1820 Lakeshore Blvd.

Bat Colony Under Congress Avenue Bridge
Every year up to 1.5 million Mexican free-tailed bats make their home on a platform beneath the Congress Avenue Bridge, forming the largest urban bat colony in North America. It’s an Austin tradition to sit on the grassy banks of Lady Bird Lake and watch the bats swarm out to feed on insects. It looks a lot like a fast-moving black river. Don’t miss this nightly show; August is the best time to see it.
> Congress Avenue

Zilker Park
This 351-acre park is lined with hiking and biking trails. The park also provides access to the famed Barton Springs natural swimming pool and Barton Creek Greenbelt. Find boat rentals, a miniature train, a playground and a botanical garden.
> austintexas.gov;
2100 Barton Springs Rd.

EAT

Amy’s Ice Cream – South Austin $ The South Congress Avenue location of this beloved local ice cream chain shares its daily flavors on a chalkboard out front. Pick your favorite topping to add from a list that includes hot fudge, crumbled Oreos and pecan praline.
> amysicecreams.com;
1301 S. Congress Ave.

Franklin Barbecue $ This famous barbecue joint serves lunch only, and only till it runs out – usually well before 2 p.m. To avoid missing out, you should get in line by 10 a.m. (9 a.m. on weekends). Just treat it as a tailgating party: bring beer or mimosas to share and make friends. And yes, you do want the fatty brisket.
> franklinbarbecue.com;
900 E. 11th St.

Uchiko $$$ Chef Tyson Cole opened this North Lamar restaurant that describes itself as “Japanese farmhouse dining.” It’s hard to imagine being treated to delicacies as fantastic as these in any Japanese farmhouse, though. Try the kamo kamuri – seared duck breast with blackberries – or any and all of the fantastic seafood.
> uchikoaustin.com;
4200 N. Lamar Blvd.

Veracruz All Natural $ Two sisters from Mexico run this East Austin taco truck (actually an old bus), which may serve the best tacos in town. Order a migas breakfast taco at the window, then add a quesadilla or torta for variety. Take your buzzer (yes, this food truck has a buzzer) and grab a picnic table.
> veracruzallnatural.com;
1704 E. Cesar Chavez St.

White Horse $ Two-steppers and hipsters mingle like siblings in a diverse but happy family. Play some pool, take a dance lesson or step outside to sip a microbrew on the patio. The honky-tonk features live music nightly and whiskey on tap.
> thewhitehorseaustin.com;
300 Comal St.

DRINK

ABGB $$ Settle in at a picnic table inside or outside at this convivial brewery and beer garden that’s also known for its great food. The boar, pork and spinach pizza? Oh yes, you do want a slice of that thin-crusted specialty pie. Live music daily except Monday and Thursday.
> theabgb.com;
1305 W. Oltorf St.

Easy Tiger $$ The one bar on Dirty 6th that all locals love? Easy Tiger, an inside/outside beer garden overlooking Wacker Creek. The place welcomes everyone with an upbeat, communal vibe. Craft beers are listed on the chalkboard, and artisanal sandwiches are made with bread from the bakery upstairs.
> easytigeraustin.com;
709 E. 6th St.

ENTERTAINMENT

Broken Spoke
Country music legend George Strait reportedly once swung from the wagon-wheel chandeliers at the Broken Spoke, a true Texas honky-tonk. Dance lessons are offered from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Wednesday to Saturday. As the sign inside says, “Please do Not!!!! Stand on the Dance Floor.”
> brokenspokeaustin.net;
3201 S. Lamar Blvd.

Esther’s Follies
Drawing from current events and pop culture, this long-running satire show has a vaudevillian slant, with musical numbers and a magician.
> esthersfollies.com;
525 E. 6th St.
Accommodations: $ <150, $$ 150-250, $$$ >250

For More Information
Get a copy of Lonely Planet’s Pocket Austin ($13.99) or download the eBook ($9.79). Austin is available on our Guides app, too.

WHERE TO STAY

for old-world charm
Driskill Hotel $$$
A beautiful 19th-century hotel, this place is pure Texas, with native stone, wall-mounted horns and leather couches.
» driskillhotel.com

for the budget-conscious
Firehouse Hostel $
In a former firehouse, this downtown hostel still feels fresh, and its location opposite the historic Driskill Hotel is perfect.
» firehousehostel.com

for greenery
Habitat Suites $
This quiet, eco-friendly place is north of downtown. Practical travelers will get a lot for their money here.
» habitatsuites.com

for a romantic getaway
Heywood Hotel $$$
The first boutique hotel in hip East Austin, the Heywood is a seven-room, sophisticated oasis. The attractive rooms are designed for privacy.
» heywoodhotel.com

for river views
HI – Austin $$
This 47-bed hostel is located on a shady street right on the shore of Lady Bird Lake. It’s clean and cheerful with great views of the water.
» hiusa.org/austin

for midcentury design
Hotel San José $$
This is a chic SoCo retreat of stucco bungalows, a bamboo-fringed pool and a bar known for its celebrity-spotting potential.
» sanjosehotel.com

SIGHTS
1 Ann and Roy Butler Boardwalk
2 Bat Colony Under Congress Avenue Bridge
3 Zilker Park
4 EATING
5 Amy’s Ice Creams – South Austin
6 Franklin Barbecue
7 Uchiko
8 Veracruz All Natural

DRINKING
1 ABGB
2 Easy Tiger
3 White Horse
4 Broken Spoke
5 Esther’s Follies

SLEEPING
6 Driskill Hotel
7 Firehouse Hostel
8 Habitat Suites
9 Heywood Hotel
10 HI – Austin
11 Hotel San José

MAP KEY

Fall 2018