

What to Do in Austin

Adults:

1. **Live music:** It's no secret that Austin is the live music capital of the world. Check out some of the recommended spots:

Threadgill's: Portions of classic Southern dishes are generous at Threadgills, the restaurant/music venue where Janis Joplin once waited tables. 2 locations: Threadgill's North at 6416 North Lamar, and Threadgill's South (World Headquarters) at 301 West Riverside Dr.

Guero's Taco Bar: a South Congress Restaurant, features interior Mexican food with a hint of Tex-Mex. Everything from handmade corn tortillas & Mole to authentic Tacos al Pastor. Don't worry if there's a wait, you can enjoy live music, full bar and appetizers in our Oak Garden. 1412 S Congress Ave, Austin, TX

Stubb's: More than a famous barbecue joint, Stubb's is a favorite local entertainment venue that hosts regional and nationwide acts like Weezer, Los Lonely Boys, and Adele. Don't miss the Gospel Brunch on Sundays, which includes a soulful performance, Southern-style buffet and a make-your-own-Bloody-Mary bar. 801 Red River, Austin, TX

Broken Spoke: If you want to do the Texas two-step, this is the place to go. The dance hall is internationally known as an authentic honky-tonk. Willie Nelson, George Strait, and Dolly Parton have performed here. Don't miss the memorabilia room, aptly nicknamed "the tourist trap room," which is filled with photos, hats, and other country-music treasures. 3201 S. Lamar Blvd., Austin, TX

Continental Club: The retro Austin relic opened in 1957 as a swanky private supper club, but in the decades since, it's transformed into a mecca for roots, rockabilly, country and swing music. A classic neon sign hangs above the entrance, and custom hot rods line South Congress Avenue in front of the dimly lit club. 1315 S. Congress Avenue, Austin, TX

Elephant Room: Open since 1991, this jazz club is a cozy and intimate basement venue featuring live music every day of the week. Shows begin at approximately 9:30pm. 315 Congress Ave, Austin, TX

Saxon Pub: has been the location for films, videos and countless live recordings. On any given night you might see a major celebrity from the film or music industry either having a beer or sitting in on stage jamming with the locals. It is also known for booking some of the greatest music legends around. Whether it's one of the incredible free weekday happy hour shows, a weekend matinee or a late night performance by the next big thing, join us and find out why we are Austin's choice for live music! 1320 S. Lamar, Austin, TX

2. **Nightlife:** Sixth Street is one of the most iconic streets in Austin. It's the epicenter of what made Austin the "Live Music Capital of the World." There are three sections of Sixth Street in Austin: West, East and what locals refer to as Dirty. We refer to the section of Sixth Street that stretches from Congress Avenue to I-35 as Dirty Sixth. There are actually quite a few wonderful businesses on Dirty Sixth that aren't as "dirty" as you might imagine. So here are the diamonds in the rough; the best of the best on Dirty Sixth Street.

The Driskill Hotel & Bar, Driskill Hotel Austin: There is nothing classier than the historical and haunted Driskill Hotel. Located at Sixth and Brazos, its cowboy decor is far from a hipster's ironic attempt at being Texan. Rather, it holds a traditional and tasteful representation of the true spirit of Texas. This is great place to start or end the night, where you'll find live music almost every night of the week. 604 Brazos St. Austin, TX

Buffalo Billiards: catty-corner to The Driskill Hotel, this Wild West-themed bar is a playground for your inner child. Considering there's 22,000 square feet of entertainment, if you're bored, then you're not trying. They have pool tables, shuffleboard tables, darts, and, if all else fails, they have oodles of TVs to keep you entertained. 201 E. 6th St., Austin, TX

The Parish: this is one of the best music venues in town. Alongside supporting up-and-coming local artists, they host well-known musicians without the high price tag. Be sure to stop by to see who's playing—if the show isn't already sold out. You may stumble upon your new favorite band. 214 E. 6th St., Austin, TX

Midnight Cowboy: you may miss Midnight Cowboy as you continue down Dirty Sixth because it's a modern day speakeasy, trying to remain unnoticed. Only a red light leads the way to this reservation-only cocktail bar, which gets its name from the once secret brothel in the same location: Midnight Cowboy Modeling Oriental Massage. This unique space and the outstanding cocktails are a must, so be sure to plan ahead and make a reservation. 313 E. 6th St., Austin, TX

Alamo Draffhouse Ritz: Cold beer, hot movies, and delicious snacks and meals; The Alamo Draffhouse is dinner, drinks, movies and events, all under one roof. You don't go to the Ritz to see a movie, you go for the sing-alongs, quote-alongs and performances such as Master Pancake Theater. 320 E. 6th St., Austin, TX

Maggie Mae's: features live music seven days a week. The venue kind of feels like a hodge-podge of bars all in one, but they have the best rooftop patio on Dirty and some of the coolest lounges attached (Gibson Guitar Lounge and Les Paul Lounge both feature amazing guitarist memorabilia). Definitely worth a visit, even if it's just to people-watch from the rooftop. Maggie Mae's boasts several types of entertainment, including a sports bar, an authentic English Pub, a New Orleans style courtyard beneath the stars, and three different stages outfitted for live music. Maggie Mae's consists of four historic buildings, beautifully restored, which together make for one of the largest entertainment venues downtown. 323 E. 6th St., Austin, TX

Iron Cactus: Iron Cactus is a triple threat: Mexican food, margaritas and an amazing rooftop patio. 606 Trinity St., Austin, TX

Pete's Dueling Piano Bar: I often equate piano bars with Billy Joel, but Pete's Dueling Piano Bar is far from the soft rock of good ole' Billy. What started as a one-man show grew into a dueling spectacle of good times and good music. Stay five minutes and they'll have you singing and laughing along to whatever they play. You don't have to make reservations, but if you go with a large group you may want to call ahead. There is a cover charge, depending on the day of the week and the time you arrive. 421 E. 6th St., Austin, TX

Chez Nous: Don't let the location fool you, located just outside the craziness of Dirty, this amazing and authentic French bistro bears mentioning. Started by three Parisians over 30 years ago, the food at Chez Nous is top-quality. They're even open for lunch if you are totally adverse to nighttime on Dirty Sixth. Be sure to try the escargot! 510 Neches St., Austin, TX

Casino El Camino Bar & Grill: This neighborhood bar and grill has been around since 1994. Since then, it has earned recognition from the Food Network and local publications, including the award for "Best Jukebox" from the Austin Chronicle. We had many locals tell us Casino El Camino had their favorite burger in town. 517 E. 6th St., Austin, TX

Esther's Follies & The Velveeta Room: What goes best with a plate of laughter? More laughter, which is why we lumped these two comedy venues together. Esther's Follies offers sketch comedy acts with a side of magic, while The Velveeta Room is straight-up stand up. You can spend your

entire evening on Dirty at these two venues alone, and I highly recommend doing so. Esther's Follies: 525 E. 6th St.; The Velveeta Room: 521 E. 6th St, Austin, TX

Easy Tiger: Basically the last bar on Dirty before getting to I-35, Easy Tiger is not your average, German-inspired beer garden. They have a killer bake shop, which makes specialty breads, pretzels and cookies; several of their meats are made in-house; and they have over 30 local beers on tap. During warmer months, the back patio is equipped with ping pong tables. The patio backs up to Waller Creek, giving it a fun and friendly backyard vibe. Try anything on the menu! You won't be disappointed. 709 E. 6th St, Austin, TX

- 3. Street Art and Murals:** You've almost certainly seen photos of Austin's most famous murals—"Greetings from Austin" and "i love you so much" to name a couple—and those are practically obligatory souvenir photo ops. But don't stop there! One of many beautiful things about Austin is that art can be found nearly everywhere you look. Our city is blanketed in street art of both the commissioned and the illicit varieties. Keep your eyes peeled as you explore and you'll find photo-op worthy spots as unique as you are. To get the most bang for your buck (it's free!).
- 4. Austin Eats Food Tours:** We invite you to join us for one of our food tours, each approximately 3-4 hours in length and sampling 4-5 local eateries. We'll indulge in the tastiest local eats from chef inspired dishes, to juicy burgers to decadent sweets; and share lots of Austin lore along the way. Weekly public tours include: East Austin Happy Hour- Fridays 4pm; Brunch,Bbq & Brewery- Saturdays 10:15am; Best Of Austin Food Truck-Saturdays 10am; Pub & Grub-Saturdays 11am; South Congress-Sundays 9:30am;. 4511 Avenue F, Austin, TX; www.austineatsfoodtours.com.

Check out www.austintexas.org/visit/things-to-do/tours, for a list of other tours available in Austin, including Brewery Tours, Ghost Tours, Music Heritage Tours, and more!
- 5. SOCO (South Congress):** the hippest, hottest, most diverse street in Austin Texas. SOCO is a half mile stretch of Congress Street with a variety of things to do. With hotels, shopping, entertainment, the coolest restaurants and food trailers, and live music, you won't be disappointed! It's got cava, boots, a barbershop, malts, guacamole, burgers, sunglasses, Mexican folk art, venison, vintage clothing, prosciutto, menudo, crushes, cupcakes, ice cream cones, bistecca, quail, sangria, a soda fountain, the spirit of Stevie Ray and so much more! See what SOCO has to offer by checking out www.doingthestreets.com/southcongress. The site offers a virtual tour of south congress, the latest tweets, menus, events, specials and parking tips, all in one place.
- 6. Harry Ransom Center:** One of the world's finest cultural archives houses a rare Gutenberg Bible, 30 million literary manuscripts, the Watergate papers, the world's first photograph and "Gone with the Wind" collection. Hours: Tuesday/Wednesday/Friday: 10am-5pm; Thursday: 10am-7pm; Sat.-Sun.: noon-5pm. 300 W. 21st St., Austin, TX 78713

Family:

- 7. Bats!** Austin proudly hosts the largest urban bat colony in North America. Approximately 1.5 million Mexican free-tailed bats call the Congress Avenue Bridge their summer home. Hundreds of people gather nightly to see and hear the bats' emergence into the sky, where they will gobble literal tons of insects before returning to the roost. The bats at the Congress Avenue Bridge are currently emerging between 8:15pm and 9:00pm nightly. For information on viewing times and parking, visit: www.batcon.org/our-work/regions/usa-canada/protect-mega-populations/cab-intro/cab-emergence-times. The physical address for the bridge is 305 South Congress Avenue, Austin, TX 78704. For information on bat watching boat cruises, please contact: Capital Cruises (www.capitalcruises.com) at 512-480-9264; or Lonestar Riverboats (www.lonestarriverboat.com) at 512-327-1388.

8. **Mt. Bonnell – Mayfield Park – Laguna Gloria:** This trifecta of outdoor fun is an unbeatable way to spend a sunny morning. Start with an early climb of the 100 stairs to the top of Mt. Bonnell. At 775 feet, the highest point in Austin offers a spectacular panoramic view of the city. Just a few minutes' drive down the mountain you'll find the entrance to Mayfield Park, a peaceful garden and nature preserve inhabited by dozens of peacocks. Right next door sits Laguna Gloria, the former estate of philanthropist Clara Driscoll. Now part of The Contemporary Austin, the lush grounds are open for the public to enjoy. Parking located at: 800 Mt. Bonnell Rd., Austin, TX 78731
9. **Cathedral of Junk:** Looking to take a walk on Austin's weird side? Don't miss local yardist Vince Hannemann's backyard ode to discarded treasures. Imagine a multi-story outdoor I Spy museum of times gone past. It's like that, only weirder. You must call to arrange a visit and be sure to bring along a \$10 donation for your group. 4422 Lareina Drive, Austin, TX
10. **The Boardwalk at Lady Bird Lake:** This 1.3-mile ADA-friendly boardwalk skirts the edge of Lady Bird Lake, connecting to the 10-mile Ann and Roy Butler Hike-and-Bike Trail. The scenic path offers amazing views of the city, the lake, and the wildlife. Sunsets here are hard to beat. Located at Sandra Muraida Way and W. Cesar Chavez St., Austin, TX 78701
11. **Texas Capitol + Downtown walking tour:** You don't have to be interested in history or politics to appreciate a visit to the Capitol. Whether you take a free guided tour of the building or wander on your own, you'd be remiss not to spend some time in the rotunda. The ceiling is breathtaking and the "whispering gallery" acoustics are a blast to play around with. The building, clad in distinctive pink granite, sits on 22 acres of grassy lawn with several hills. The Capitol Visitor Center is worth your time, too. Several downtown guided walking tours begin at the Capitol. Visitor Center located at 112 East 11th Street, Austin, Texas 78701, parking garage located at 1201 San Jacinto Blvd. Parking is free for the first 2 hours, \$1.00 for each half hour thereafter; maximum daily charge is \$12.00.
12. **Zilker Park:** This 350-acre wonderland will keep your brood busy for days. Zilker Botanical Garden displays an impressive array of plants, ponds, waterfalls, and an assortment of pioneer buildings. Cool off with a dip in Barton Springs Pool's 70-degree spring-fed water before hopping on the Zilker Zephyr, a miniature train that takes kids of all ages on a 25-minute ride through the park. Relish a rest in the shade while the little ones go wild on the playground before finishing your day at the UMLAUF Sculpture Garden. 2100 Barton Springs Rd., Austin, TX 78746
13. **Austin Aquarium:** The Aquarium features thousands of species! Including Sharks, Stingrays, Corals, Lorikeets, Toucans, Macaws, Tropical Fish, Rain Forest Area including exotic reptiles and amphibians; Giant Pacific Octopus, and on select days....Mermaids! 13530 N. Hwy 183 #101, Austin, TX, 78750
14. **Austin Zoo:** The mission of the Austin Zoo & Animal Sanctuary is to assist animals in need through rescue, rehabilitation and education. Located on the southwest edge of Austin, off Highway 290 West and Circle Drive
15. **Pioneer Farms:** Six themed historic areas are open for self-guided walking tours: an 1841 Tonkawa Encampment, an 1853 Walnut Creek Greenbelt, an 1868 German Emigrant Farm, an 1873 Texian Farm, an 1887 Cotton Planter's Farm and an 1899 Sprinkle Corner rural village. In each area you can step back in time and experience Texas history first-hand. 10621 Pioneer Farms Drive, Austin, TX 78754
16. **The Thinkery:** an evolution of the Austin Children's Museum, it's Austin's sparkling new home for "why" and "how." A place where science and families play side by side. Where people connect with ideas by doing, making and experiencing. Designed for families to play and learn together, the Thinkery succeeds in being fun for kids and grownups alike. The STEM-based exhibits encourage

creative problem solving through hands-on projects and tons of activities. It's likely that the kids will end up wet, so a spare set of clothes may come in handy. 1830 Simond Ave, Austin, TX 78723.

17. **Austin Nature & Science Center:** provides hands-on educational exhibits and recreational activities that increase awareness and appreciation of the natural environment. Kids can even dig for dinosaur bones! Located on the western edge of Zilker Park, they are dedicated to the exploration of the natural world. 301 Nature Center Drive, Austin, TX 78746
18. **Boggy Creek Farm:** East Austin urban farm located two miles from downtown offering hyper fresh produce, eggs, dairy, meat & canned goods. Open Wednesday thru Saturday 8am-1pm. 3414 Lyons Rd., Austin, TX 78702
19. **The Bullock Texas State History Museum:** offers three stories of eye-popping exhibits for kids and parents, including a full-size tepee, the Capitol's original Goddess of Liberty statue and a 1941 AT-6A "Texan" airplane. After exploring the extensive collections, catch a performance of The Star of Destiny, a thrilling special-effects show held in the 200-seat Texas Spirit Theater, the biggest multimedia theatre in the state. 1800 N. Congress Avenue, Austin, TX 78701
20. **Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center:** Don't let the name fool you—this special place is so much more than wildflowers. Gardens, trails, wildlife, and award-winning architecture all in a gorgeous setting. The Luci and Ian Family Garden alone is worth the trip The Center's gardens display the native plants of the Central Texas Hill Country, South and West Texas, while the Plant Conservation Program protects the ecological heritage of Texas by conserving its rare and endangered flora. 4801 La Crosse Ave., Austin, TX 78739
21. **Austin Rock Gym:** indoor rock climbing facility has up to 30 foot-tall state of the art sculpted, textured climbing walls featuring fun, thought-provoking routes for every ability. With almost 10,000 sq. feet of climbing, a large lead climbing area and a huge bouldering cave there is plenty of climbing for everyone. 4401 Freidrich Lane, Suite 300, Austin, TX 78744
22. **Dinosaur Park:** a unique outdoor museum setting with realistic life-size dinosaur replicas ranging from the 2-foot long Compsognathus to the 85-foot long Brachiosaurus. Walk through a tree-lined nature trail and imagine real dinosaurs in a natural environment. Other activities include a fossil-dig, playground, picnic area, and a Dinosaur Store stocked with a variety of gifts sure to please any dinosaur fan. Open Tuesday-Sunday (closed Mondays) 10am-4pm and located just outside of Austin at 893 Union Chapel Road, Cedar Creek, TX 78612
23. **Jumpoline Park:** indoor arena is filled with gigantic slides, bounce houses, obstacle courses and much more! We are a family fun center so parents can also jump with the kiddos, we have different sections to accommodate small children, different activities, and older kids. 13801 N Burnet Rd. #200, Austin, TX 78727
24. **Millennium Youth Entertainment Complex:** sits just east of downtown and mere steps from Rosewood Park. The complex includes a host of attractions, including a movie theater, bowling alley, indoor roller-skating rink, food court and arcade. Guests may rent out various portions for private parties and events. 1156 Hargrave St, Austin, TX 78702; www.myec.net
25. **Tour Downtown Austin:** Austin Duck Adventures' quirky downtown tour blends local history with kid-friendly fun. Venture off on an amphibious vehicle that can traverse land or sea (or rather, lake) and hit all the hot spots – Sixth Street, the Texas State Capitol, Bullock State History Museum, the Governor's Mansion and Lake Austin – as a guide provides historical details and anecdotes. The best part for pint-size tour guests: the captain's occasional call for quacking at locals along the way. 602 E. Fourth Street