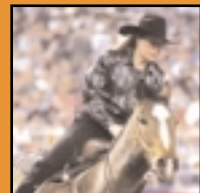


# LARGER THAN LIFE

As anyone who has been to Texas can tell you, Texas is larger than life. In a place where modern day cowboys meet the high-tech world of the 21st century, Texas is indeed unlike any other place you have been to. But to get a real feel for the state, you need to get out and check it out for yourself. The following is an overview of each region you will drive through during your tour of the state.



## BIG BEND COUNTRY

This mountainous region of Texas is west of the Edwards Plateau and bounded on the north by New Mexico and on the south by the Rio Grande. At the heart of this region is the border town of El Paso, a historically significant town once called by the Spanish "El Paso del Rio del Norte" or "the pass of the north." Centrally located where Texas, New Mexico and Mexico meet, El Paso incorporates a mixture of Indian, Anglo and Hispanic influences. Today, El Paso offers the Wilderness Park Museum, the Tigua Indian Reservation, and the three historic missions: Ysleta, Socorro, and San Elizario, which predate the more popularly known California missions.

When traveling north, visitors will come upon the southern edge of Fort Bliss, which encompasses more than 1 million acres, an area larger than Rhode Island. Fort Bliss is the center for all Air Defense activity in the Army.

Travel east of El Paso to the eastern range of the Rockies to the Guadalupe Mountains National Park. In the park, El Capitan at 8,078 feet fronts Guadalupe Peak, Texas' highest mountain at 8,749 feet. Fort Davis' restored calvary fort is located between Big Bend's Chihuahuan Desert and the Guadalupe Mountains. Built in 1854, the fort served as a base to fight hostile Indians and provided a secure passage for wagon trains and stagecoaches through a wide stretch of overland trails.

To the south lies Big Bend National Park, an 801,163-acre park located deep in the Chisos Mountains that extends 1,100 square miles into the Chihuahuan Desert, the highest and wettest desert in North America with 8 to 12 inches of rain a year. Located in Brewster County, the park was the first national park created in Texas. This recreational area is a favorite among campers and rafters who enjoy the 70 different kinds of cacti and more than 400 species of birds, including the Colima warblers that return each spring to breed exclusively in the Chisos Mountains.

## THE TEXAS PANHANDLE PLAINS

Better known as cattle country, the Texas Panhandle is a land of big skies, great plains and real cowboys with a traditional Texas flair.

Lubbock is a modern yet remarkably clean metropolis that is home to award-winning vineyards, including the Llano Estacado Winery, Teysha Cellars and Pheasant ridge Winery. Lubbock's Ranching Heritage Center focuses on the Panhandle history and the dramatic geography and geology of the region including Palo Duro Canyon. The striking canyon is located adjacent to the multicolored cliffs of Caprock Escarpment, a dividing line between the High Plains and the Rolling Plains.

## SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

The South Texas Plains, also called the Llano Estacado or "staked plains" slices through the "Golden Spread," the richly mineral, agricultural and industrial region of Texas. The plains are the southernmost extension of the Great Plains of the United States. The High Plains are nearly flat except in areas where erosion has etched out a series of spectacular canyons.

South Texas combines a little of the old and new together. In San Antonio, the memory of the 189 Texas volunteers that valiantly died while fighting to stop the armed forces of Mexico's self-proclaimed dictator, Santa Anna, is kept alive at the Alamo. Much of the old is kept alive in San Antonio's legendary fiestas. In contrast, San Antonio's contemporary flair is displayed through its art museums, theaters and symphony which rank among the nation's finest.

## TEXAS HILL COUNTRY

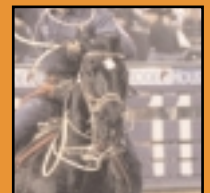
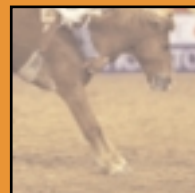
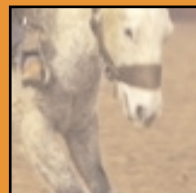
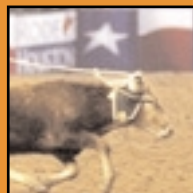
Home to dude ranches and historical traditions, the Hill Country is a vast, big-shouldered land of steep hills covered by live oaks and junipers with spring-fed streams that flow beneath limestone cliffs and caverns. The region is an area of diversity, from the nightlife scene of Austin to the perfect climate and natural attractions of Kerrville to the German heritage found in New Braunfels.

At the heart of this region is the state capital of Austin, a city famous for its music community, energetic nightlife, 300 days of sunshine, hiking and biking trails and a chain of lakes that extend 150 miles long that attracts fishermen, boaters, and water sport enthusiasts.

Kerrville, the area believed by many to have the most ideal climate in the nation, attracts thousands annually to its cedar and oak-covered hills, beautiful streams lined with cypress and breathtaking green valleys where white-tailed deer abound. Kerrville's Hill Country Museum houses artifacts, antiques and memorabilia in the former romanesque stone home of Capt. Charles A. Schreiner.

Quaint restaurants that specialize in German staples, such as sausages, wurst, breads and sauerkraut, can be found in nearby New Braunfels. In fact, wurst is so popular in New Braunfels that it is honored each November at Wurstfest, also called the "Sausage Festival." In addition, New Braunfels is home to the natural bridge caverns with its spacious rooms and corridors that stretch more than a mile to an underground creek and beautiful cave formations. A 200-acre drive through Hill Country on the Natural Bridge Wildlife Ranch provides a close up look at birds, wildlife and exotic species as they roam freely and are hand-fed by visitors in their cars.

Settled in 1846 by German families, Fredericksburg is richly endowed with historic tradition. German is still heard in this small town of 7,000 plus people and local bakeries turn out fresh pastries and bread daily.



## GULF COAST

Extending along the Gulf of Mexico more than 600 miles and reaching inland 30-60 miles, the Gulf Coast is characterized by sand dunes, emerald marshlands and wildlife refuges surrounded by major cosmopolitan cities, such as Houston. The resort towns and coastal cities of Corpus Christi, Galveston, South Padre Island and Port Aransas dot the Texas coastline.

Named after Sam Houston, hero in the defeat of Santa Anna's Mexican troops at San Jacinto and first president of the Republic of Texas, Houston is Texas' largest oil town. It is also home to the Astrodome, Space Center Houston and a variety of museums, colorful festivals and outdoor theaters.

Located just 30 miles east of Houston at the northern end of Texas' Gulf Coast is the beach community of Galveston. Galveston features a respectable collection of restored Victorian buildings in the Strand Historical District.

Corpus Christi, the "sparkling city by the sea," is a paradise for beach goers, windsurfers and surfers alike. Visitors flock to the area's Padre Island National Seashore, the largest undeveloped barrier island, for its camping, surfing, swimming, fishing and hiking. Nearby, Port Aransas is home to the 3,700-acre Mustang Island State Park. Endangered whooping cranes can be viewed there.

## PINEY WOODS

The Piney Woods of East Texas, with its moist woodlands, swamps and millions of acres of pine forests, is a favorite among campers, fisherman and hikers. Characterized by blooming dogwoods, roses and magnolias, the region has a touch of southern charm to it.

Nacogdoches is like a step back into time. Built in 1779 as a Spanish and Indian trading post, it was where the first two newspapers were printed, where "Three-Legged Willie" Williamson held court with a pistol, and was headquarters for four unsuccessful attempts to create the Republic of Texas. Today, you can take a walk through Millard's crossing, a collection of restored 19th century buildings furnished with antiques and pioneer memorabilia. North Street, once called "La Calle del Norte" or "The street of the north" is believed to be the oldest public thoroughfare in the United States, having been used by the Indians before Spanish explorers named it.

Similarly, the vintage riverboat town of Jefferson offers its own charm and antique shops to explore. Marshall, once a stop of the stagecoach and train lines, features bed-and-breakfasts in refurbished homes and offers tours of restored mansions.

## PRAIRIE AND LAKES

A region of miles of grassy prairies, sparkling lakes and rich soil that is ideal for farming, the Prairies and Lakes region has the densest population located in the area known as The Metroplex, an area that includes Dallas and Fort Worth.

Fort Worth, better known as "Cow Town," is the place where the Wild West meets the 20th century. Executives wear cowboy hats and boots while talking business at Billy Bob's Texas, the largest honky tonk. But for all its cowboy feel, Fort Worth is undoubtedly a cosmopolitan city.

Conversely, Dallas is squarely rooted into the 20th century. It offers an exciting nightlife, exceptional cultural arts museums and more shopping centers per capita than anywhere else in the United States.

## TALKING LIKE A NATIVE

With their infectious y'all's, Texans will soon have the most resistant visitor talking Texan like the best of them. But to truly talk like a native, you need to brush up on some of their words and phrases.

To get you started, we've compiled a handful of the Texan words and phrases that you'll hear throughout the Lone Star State.

### All swole up

Similar to aggravated, but occasionally means an individual that is self-absorbed and proud.

### Blue Norther

Cold air that sweeps over the Gulf which can drop temperatures 25 degrees in an hour.

### Crusty

Bad tempered woman, man or horse.

### Frog-strangler

Lots of rainfall.

### Heaven

Having

### Squaddies

A common term used in the 19th century for cowboys.

### Yonder

Another way of saying "over there."

## INTERESTING TEXAN SAYINGS

"He's all hat and no cattle."

"Nervous as a fly in a glue pot."

"He's just as happy as if he had good sense"

"He'd have to stand up to look a rattler in the eye."

"I want you to jump when I say frog."

"He's so poor he'd have to borrow money to buy water to cry with."

"He was born tired and never got rested up."

For more Texan Talk, A Texas Dictionary of the English Language can be found online at <http://homepages.skylink.net/~howler/Texas.htm>