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With 268,569 square miles of land, Texas has everything—majestic mountains and desert areas in the west, dramatic canyons in the Panhandle, rolling hills in the Hill Country, sandy beaches along the Gulf Coast, and dense forests in the east. There are not only lively cities and charming small towns, but also places to get away and enjoy solitude. People can find everything from art museums, birding, and caves to mountain biking, surfing, and zoos.

Until people experience Texas, they may not fathom how big the state really is. To drive across the state from Orange, near the Louisiana border, to El Paso, near the New Mexico border, takes about 12 hours, not counting time for the requisite stops for necessities like food and drinks.

Because the state is too large to cover in so few pages, this booklet serves as a quick look at the colorful and distinctive land called Texas.

Enjoy!
From 1519 to the present, six nations have governed the land now known as Texas. Their role in the state’s formation is often represented by displays of six flags. Some areas of the state recognize more than six flags, including the flags of the Fredonian Republic, Long Republic, and Republic of the Rio Grande, all of which represent regionally recognized efforts to break free of Mexican governance. Other flags had meaning as well, such as the 1835 Gonzales "Come and Take It" flag that heralded the beginning of the Texas Revolution and the white silk banner with the figure of a woman—symbolizing liberty—that traversed the field at San Jacinto when Texas won its independence. This is a look at six of the flags often flown to recognize the nations that governed all or part of Texas.

### Captions

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<td>1</td>
<td>The Texas Longhorn is the state’s official large mammal. See page 37 for more state symbols.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Presidio La Bahia hosts a re-enactment of the Goliad Massacre each March.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Known as “The Father of Texas,” Stephen F. Austin established the first Anglo-American colony in the Tejas province of Mexico. This statue by Elisabet Ney, stands in the capitol.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Fort Davis National Historic Site includes ruins and restorations. Many of the Texas frontier forts feature living history days.</td>
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1. Texas in the United States
2. Texas in the Confederacy
3. Texas as a Republic
4. Texas Under Mexico
5. Texas Under France
6. Texas Under Spain
The Term “Texian”

is used to describe early Anglo-American settlers in Texas and citizens of the Republic of Texas. But after Texas joined the United States in 1845, “Texan” became much more common.

Historic Forts and Presidios

Throughout Texas history, whether during exploration, colonization, revolution, or expansion, Texans were busy establishing forts, presidios, military camps, barracks, and stockades to ward off potential enemies. In fact, far more forts and presidios were constructed in Texas than the few still standing today. During the 19th century alone, considered the state’s expansionist period for Anglo-Americans, more than 30 defensive forts were built across the state.

Restoration and conservation efforts have opened up many of these remaining forts, such as Fort Davis, the Alamo, and Fort Defiance, to give visitors an opportunity to imagine the heat of the battle while wandering the grounds and examining ramparts, cannons, towers, and blockades.

Visit texastimetravel.com/node/28663 for details on the historic forts and presidios.

For more information about almost any topic in Texas history—A to Z—visit the Handbook of Texas Online: tshaonline.org.
SIX FLAGS OF TEXAS TIMELINE

UNDER SPAIN
1519–1685; 1690–1821
- Spanish rule over Texas may be noted by one of two flags. The first is the four-square alternating red and white blocks with the lion of Leon and castle of Castile. The second is the red- and-yellow-striped Spanish flag, depicting the lion and castle on a shield topped by a crown.
- Spain was the first European nation to claim what is now Texas, beginning in 1519. More than 100 years before the Pilgrims set foot on Plymouth Rock, Alonso Alvarez de Piñeda was busy mapping the Gulf Coast from Florida to Yucatán, claiming the land for the government of Spain. Meanwhile explorer Hernán Cortés was establishing a Spanish presence in Mexico.
- A few shipwrecked Spaniards, like Alvar Nuñez and Cabeza de Vaca, and explorers such as Vásquez de Coronado, occasionally probed the vast wilderness. Other than such explorations by conquistadors, Texas, at the northernmost tip of the land claimed by Spain in the Americas, was mostly ignored.
- Colonization came slowly, following the creation of missions. More than 100 years passed before Spain started the settlement of Ysleta, established in 1681 in present-day El Paso.
- Gradually expanding from Mexico, other Spanish missions, forts, and civil settlements followed for nearly a century-and-a-half until Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1821.

UNDER FRANCE
1685–1690
- France’s time in Texas is symbolized by the French royal ensign for ships and forts, which features golden fleurs-de-lis on a white background.
- Although Spain had claimed Texas, most of the territory had no Spanish presence at all. In 1685, French nobleman René Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, founded a colony called Fort St. Louis on Lavaca Bay in an area he mistakenly believed to be where the Mississippi River emptied into the Gulf of Mexico. The effort was doomed by a series of calamities—shipwreck, disease, famine, hostile Indians, and internal strife, resulting in La Salle’s murder. By 1690, the settlement was abandoned.
- The Spanish recognized the threat of colonization by other European powers and moved up the Neches River, building its first East Texas mission, San Francisco de los Tejas, near present-day Weches.
- The French tried another colonization effort in the 1700s, and the Spanish again moved to strengthen their claim by building more missions. Settlements around the missions became the towns of San Antonio, Goliad, and Nacogdoches.
The red, white, and blue Texas flag, with its lone star, represents Texas (as both a nation and a state) since it was adopted in 1839. Texas independence was recognized by the United States in 1837, France in 1839, and England and the Netherlands in 1840.

Sam Houston, hero of San Jacinto, was the republic’s first president from 1836 to 1838, and he served another term as president from 1841-1844.

The Texas Declaration of Independence was drafted on March 2, 1836, and independence lasted for almost a decade. The Republic of Texas endured epidemics, financial crises, and continued clashes with Mexico. The Mexican army made an abortive attempt to recapture San Antonio.

Although the Republic of Texas was independent, most of its citizens favored statehood. The U.S. Congress was reluctant to admit another state that allowed slavery, but a compromise was reached. On Dec. 29, 1845, the state was legally annexed by the United States.

The first national flag of the Confederate States of America, known as the Stars and Bars, signifies Texas’ time in the Confederacy.

Sixteen years after Texas joined the United States, the Civil War broke out. Gov. Sam Houston urged Texans to stay aloof or re-establish a neutral republic but was driven from office.

In February 1861, Texas voted to side with the Confederacy. Texas provided both men and supplies to the Confederacy. And, like all states in the doomed Confederacy, it faced devastation and economic collapse.

The last battle of the war was fought in Texas at Palmito Ranch near Brownsville. The Confederates claimed victory even though Robert E. Lee had surrendered a month earlier.

The historic version of the Stars and Stripes featuring 28 stars recognizes when Texas joined the union and became the 28th state.

Texas recovered from the devastation of war more quickly than other Confederate states. Thousands of Longhorn cattle were running free on Texas lands, and there was a demand for beef in northern markets. The legendary trail drives met that demand and brought much-needed cash to Texas.

At 10 a.m. on Jan. 10, 1901, the Lucas oil well blew in at Spindletop, and Texas entered the modern era. Cheap fuel changed Texas and world history, revolutionizing transportation and industry.

By the mid-20th century, Texas industries were sprouting in a fertile climate of advanced technology.

When NASA established its presence near Houston in the 1960s, Texans took part in the exploration of a new frontier.
THE CAPITOL

Austin became the capital city in 1839. The capital was later moved to Houston in 1842, then Washington-on-the-Brazos before returning to Austin in 1845. The Texas Constitution, adopted Feb. 15, 1876, authorized the sale of public land to finance a new state capitol in Austin.

- The builders accepted as payment 3 million acres of land in 10 counties of the Texas Panhandle. This land became the famed XIT Ranch.
- Original plans called for construction with Texas limestone. After the cornerstone was laid on March 2, 1885, concerns arose about the uniform quality of limestone from then-available quarries.
- Owners of Granite Mountain at Marble Falls in Burnet County offered building stone, free of charge, to the state. The structure was completed with the Sunset Red Texas Granite that makes the Capitol so distinctive.
- Architect Elijah E. Myers designed the Capitol in the Renaissance Revival style. The building was dedicated on May 16, 1888, and was occupied a few months later in September.
- Covering 2.25 acres of ground with some 8.5 acres of floor space, the Capitol was said to be the seventh-largest building in the world at the time of its construction.
- A four-story, more than 650,000-square-foot underground extension was added in 1993. Additional renovations to the 1888 Capitol, including new plumbing, electrical, and communication systems, were completed in 1995.
- The building stands 302.64 feet tall, measured from the oval walk at the south entrance to the tip of the star in the Goddess of Liberty’s hand at the top of the dome. It is 14.64 feet taller than the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C.

The Legislature of the State of Texas

- The Texas Legislature meets every two years.
- It convenes in January every odd-numbered year for a session lasting no more than 140 days.
- In addition, the governor may call a special session at any time.
- The Legislature has two chambers—the Senate and the House.
- The Senate has 31 members who serve four-year terms.
- The House has 150 members who serve two-year terms.

Captions

1. Many monuments and statues can be found on the Capitol grounds.
2. In the center of the rotunda floor is a terrazzo design of the “Seals of the Nations.”
3. Looking up, the star in the ceiling of the Capitol dome has letters between the points spelling out “Texas.”
This is an overview of the state showing interstates and major highways. It is not intended for use as a travel map. Colors indicate the seven Texas travel regions. The next 14 pages feature each region.

The Seven Travel Regions of Texas

- Big Bend Country
- Gulf Coast
- Hill Country
- Panhandle Plains
- Piney Woods
- Prairies and Lakes
- South Texas Plains
Texas Travel Information Centers

1. **Amarillo**  
   I-40  
   806-335-1441

2. **Anthony**  
   I-10  
   915-886-3468

3. **Austin**  
   Capitol Visitor Center  
   512-463-8586

4. **Denison**  
   US 69/75  
   903-463-2860

5. **Gainesville**  
   I-35  
   940-665-2800

6. **Langtry**  
   US 90/Loop 25  
   432-291-3340

7. **Laredo**  
   I-35 at US 83  
   956-417-4728

8. **Orange**  
   I-10  
   409-883-9416

9. **Texarkana**  
   I-30  
   903-794-2114

10. **Valley (Harlingen)**  
    US 77 at US 83  
    956-428-4477

11. **Waskom**  
    I-20  
    903-681-2780

12. **Wichita Falls**  
    I-44/US 287, Exit 1C  
    940-723-7931

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**The Texas Department of Transportation operates 12 Travel Information Centers at points of entry to the state. Professional travel counselors welcome visitors and provide literature and information on travel, safety, and tourist destinations.**

Working with the Texas State Travel Guide and the Texas Official Travel Map, counselors expertly chart routes to any area of Texas, pointing out the most convenient short-line directions or leisurely scenic drives. They supply comprehensive statewide travel publications, plus detailed brochures about towns, attractions, and points of interest along the way.

The Texas Travel Information Centers served 2,225,097 customers in 2018. Travelers stopping at the travel information centers had access to more than 3 million pieces of literature, making them the largest outlets of travel literature in the state and some of the largest in the nation.

The Texas Travel Information Centers are open daily except New Year’s Day, Easter, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day.
Discover Untamed Landscapes and a Hint of the Wild West

Visitors to this beautiful natural region find high-country adventure after adventure because the Big Bend Country is chockful of outdoor opportunities like hiking, camping, horseback riding, mountain biking, jeep touring, river rafting, and more. The landscapes in this region of the state are straight out of an old Hollywood Western, with thorny, sun-bleached, and jagged terrain. Ancient rock lays exposed in rocky mountains more than a mile above sea level. Survival became a way of life for those who settled in this rough, remote area. Although early explorers couldn’t tame the land, they made it more accessible. Today, excellent highways span the wilderness, leading to sites where the great Comanche War Trail swept across two nations, conquistadors and cavalry troopers scanned the horizon for danger, and cowboys made their home on the range.

FOR MORE INFORMATION on the Big Bend Country region, go to TravelTexas.com.

Regional Highlights

- **El Paso**: Museums, missions, and Franklin Mountains State Park
- **Big Bend National Park** and **Big Bend Ranch State Park**: Great scenery and hiking opportunities
- **Guadalupe Mountains National Park**: The highest peak in Texas
- **Fort Davis**: Historic fort, state park, and McDonald Observatory
- **Alpine**: Art and high desert
- **Marfa**: The Chinati Foundation and mystery lights
- **Midland**: Petroleum history and West Texas nature preserves
- **Odessa**: Meteor Crater and the Presidential Archives and Library
- **Terlingua**: Ghost town and chili cookoffs
- **Monahans Sandhills State Park**: Surf the dunes
- **Del Rio**: Amistad National Recreation Area and ancient pictographs
- **Fort Stockton**: Paisano Pete

Captions

1. Texas’ oldest mission, Ysleta Mission in El Paso, was established in 1682.
3. Rafting the Rio Grande is one way to experience the river and the Chihuahuan Desert landscape.
GULF COAST

Big-City Buzz Yields to Quaint Villages and Sunny Beaches in this Diverse Region

Between the moss-draped bayous of Louisiana and the sunny shores of Mexico, you’ll discover the 624-mile stretch of the Texas Gulf Coast. Here, you’ll find a wealth of natural harbors, historic fishing villages, busy ports, offshore islands, sheltered bays, and recreational areas sprinkled along the seashore. Campers and anglers enjoy superb oceanfront parks, while nature-lovers delight in some of the best opportunities for birdwatching in the Western Hemisphere. A seaside playground, South Padre Island draws tourists from across the globe and enjoys acclaim as one of the best beaches in the world.

Regional Highlights

- **Houston area**: Museum and theater districts, Houston Astros, Space Center Houston, Kemah Boardwalk, and San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site
- **Galveston**: Historic homes and Moody Gardens
- **Corpus Christi**: Texas State Aquarium and Padre Island National Seashore
- **South Padre Island**: Water sports, beaches, and fishing
- **Brownsville**: History, nature parks, and Charro Days
- **Beaumont**: Museums and Spindletop-Gladys City Boomtown
- **Orange**: Shangri La Botanical Gardens and the Stark Foundation museums
- **Port Aransas**: Mustang Island State Park, beaches, and fishing
- **Rockport/Fulton**: Goose Island State Park and Fulton Mansion State Historic Site
- **National wildlife refuges and Coastal Birding Trail sites**

**CAPTIONS**

1. Jetties, like this one near Boca Chica Beach, are popular fishing spots.
2. Space Center Houston is the official visitor center for NASA Johnson Space Center.
3. Dolphins interact with visitors at the Texas State Aquarium in Corpus Christi.

FOR MORE INFORMATION on the Gulf Coast region, go to Travel Texas.com.
HILL COUNTRY

Nature and Charm Abound in Rolling Hills, Spring-Fed Rivers, and Historic Towns

Lush green slopes, rocky landscapes, and bubbling springs are just some of the delights of the Texas Hill Country. You’ll also be amazed by rolling hills and river valleys that were shaped by ancient seas, enormous geological forces, and millennia of erosion. Today, skyscrapers stand in cities just miles away from open space teeming with native wildlife. Visitors explore cliff-edged lakes, dude ranches, deep canyons, and state parks that offer historic treasures and natural beauty. It’s a land to cherish—rich with Texas’ handsome capital city, charming small towns, cool water activities, highland vistas, and more.

CAPTIONS

1. The Pedernales River is one of the many clear streams in the Texas Hill Country.
2. Inner Space Caverns in Georgetown is one of the most accessible caves in the state.
3. There are lots of riding opportunities at dude ranches around Bandera.
4. The Bullock Texas State History Museum in Austin tells the state’s story through the early 1970s.

Regional Highlights

- **Austin**: The State Capitol, Bullock Museum, Barton Springs, and music
- **Fredericksburg**: German culture, wineries, Enchanted Rock State Natural Area, and Luckenbach
- **San Marcos**: Aquarena Springs and The Wittliff Collections
- **New Braunfels**: Wurstfest and the Comal River
- **Kerrville**: Folk music, arts and crafts, and food festivals
- **Caves**: Cave without a Name, Longhorn Caverns, Natural Bridge Caverns, Inner Space Caverns, and Caverns of Sonora
- **State Natural Areas**: Devil’s Sinkhole, Lost Maples, and Hill Country
- **Swimming holes**: Hamilton Pool and Blue Hole
- **Bat watching**: Ann Richards Bridge, Eckert James River Bat Cave, and Old Tunnel State Park
- **Dude ranches and river resorts**: Highland Lakes and recreation
FOR MORE INFORMATION on the Panhandle Plains region, go to TravelTexas.com.

PANHANDLE PLAINS

Big Skies, Deep Canyons, and Wide Expanses Highlight this Cowboy-Spirited Frontier

What better way to understand the frontier and the people who settled it than to browse the fascinating museums and experience the rugged beauty of the Texas Panhandle Plains? Resilient men and women shaped the heritage of this region. The Panhandle Plains slice through what residents call the “Golden Spread,” which refers to this immensely rich agricultural, mineral, and industrial area.

Those who travel these wide-open spaces find many opportunities for camping amid scenic vistas, nature photography, and exploring the paths of the ancient people who once roamed this land.

CAPTIONS

1. Palo Duro Canyon, south of Amarillo, is known as the “Grand Canyon of Texas.”
2. The American Wind Power Center in Lubbock houses the largest windmill collection in the world.
3. Perryton’s Wheatheart of the Nation Celebration features one of the many rodeos in this region.
4. Fort Concho in San Angelo is one of the best preserved frontier military posts west of the Mississippi.

Regional Highlights

- Amarillo: Quarter Horse Museum, Cadillac Ranch, Discovery Center, and Route 66
- Lubbock: Ranching Heritage Center, Buddy Holly, natural history, and Texas Tech University
- Canyon: Palo Duro Canyon State Park, TEXAS, and the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum
- Abilene: Frontier Texas!, The Grace Museum, and National Center for Children’s Illustrated Literature
- San Angelo: Fort Concho, art centers, and a river walk
- Wichita Falls: Waterfalls and bike races
- Mineral Wells: Crazy Water and Lake Mineral Wells State Park and Trailway
- Buffalo Gap: Historic village
- Dalhart: XIT Ranch
- Quanah: Medicine Mounds
- Possum Kingdom State Park
- Caprock Canyons State Park and Trailway and official bison herd
- Fort Griffin State Historic Site
PINEY WOODS

East Texas Appeal is Accentuated by Historic Sites and Majestic Forests

To appreciate the vast East Texas Piney Woods—with acreage almost equaling that of all the forests of New England—get out and explore on a walk or a drive. This isn’t the open prairie that often comes to mind when you picture Texas. The Piney Woods were the first part of Texas to be settled by Anglo-American pioneers. Steamboats once traveled on rivers and bayous, including the beautiful Caddo Lake. Plantation homes were part of the Old South lifestyle. Today’s travelers savor outdoor recreation in verdant landscapes and enjoy historic structures in delightful small towns.

CAPTIONS

1. Longview is designated the “Balloon Capital of Texas” and holds events like the Great Texas Balloon Race.
2. Dancer at Alabama-Coushatta Reservation near Livingston.
3. Ride on a Texas State Railroad train between Palestine and Rusk.

Regional Highlights

- **Huntsville**: Prison and Sam Houston Memorial museums
- **Tyler**: Rose Garden and Museum
- **Texarkana**: Stand in two states at one time
- **Jefferson**: Historic homes and Caddo Lake
- **Longview**: Balloon races
- **Palestine** and **Rusk**: Ride the historic Texas State Railroad
- **Nacogdoches**: The Oldest Town in Texas
- **El Camino Real de los Tejas** historic sites
- **National Forests**: Angelina, Davy Crockett, Sabine, and Sam Houston
- **Big Thicket National Preserve**
- **Dogwoods and azalea festivals** in spring
- **Lakes** for fishing and recreation

FOR MORE INFORMATION on the Piney Woods region, go to TravelTexas.com.
The Nasher Sculpture Center is one of many art museums in the Dallas/Fort Worth area.

The State Fair of Texas offers food, a midway, shows, and more from the end of September through October.

Find sports like major league baseball in Arlington. The Texas Rangers will have a new ballpark in 2020.

Lake Whitney is a popular water recreation spot.
SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

Soak Up the Flavors, Intriguing History, Vibrant Culture, and Stunning Scenery

Welcome to the region where conquistadors planted fortresses for Imperial Spain, where huge ranches flourished, and where Franciscan padres founded graceful missions a half-century before the United States was born.

The South Texas Plains, stretching from San Antonio to the Mexican border, offers a delightful bicultural experience, complete with mariachi music and the tangy taste of Mexican cuisine. There’s a definite Latino flavor made even more exotic by glossy green citrus groves, rustling palms, and blazing bougainvilleas that supply the backdrop for the Lower Rio Grande Valley at the southern tip of the state.

Regional Highlights

- **San Antonio**: The Alamo, River Walk, SeaWorld, Six Flags Fiesta Texas, museums, and mercados
- **Laredo**: Washington’s Birthday Celebration and Border Heritage and Republic of the Rio Grande museums
- **Goliad**: Presidio La Bahia and Goliad State Park with Mission Espiritu Santo
- **Mission**: The National Butterfly Center and Los Ebanos Ferry
- **McAllen**: Quinta Mazatlan and Museum of Art and Science
- **Hidalgo**: Borderfest and the pumphouse museum
- **Alamo**: Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge
- **Poteet**: Strawberry Festival
- **Rio Grande City**: Fort Ringgold—the best preserved fort in Texas
- **Edinburg**: Museum of South Texas History and Lake El Sal del Ray
- **World Birding Centers**: Headquarters at Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park in Mission, also in Edinburg, Hidalgo, McAllen, Roma, and Weslaco
- **Fannin**: State Historic Site

Captions

1. The Alamo, in San Antonio, is Texas’ most famous shrine.
2. Hidalgo’s Borderfest celebrates a different international community each year.
3. Quinta Mazatlan in McAllen is one of the nine World Birding Center sites.
NATIVE AMERICANS: Texas’ earliest inhabitants, the Native Americans, were not a single culture. There were many tribes, including the Apache, Caddo, Comanche, Cherokee, Kiowa, Tonkawa, Wichita, Hueco, and Karankawa. Today, there are three federally recognized Native American tribes in Texas—the Alabama-Coushatta, Kickapoo, and the Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo of Texas.

HISPANIC: European Spaniards changed the New World more than any other people. They came to Texas as soldiers, settlers, and priests. But they changed themselves, as much as they changed the land. They encouraged mixed marriages with Europeans, Native Americans, and Africans, and those blends—mestizos—became known by many names—Mexicans, Tejanos, Hispanics, Latinos, Mexicanos, Mexican Americans, la Raza, and Chicanos.

GERMAN: German Texans are a predominant cultural group in Texas and their traditions, food, and music can be found in many festivals and events throughout the year. The Germans made their way to Texas beginning in the 1830s where they settled in the northwest corner of Stephen F. Austin’s colony. More would immigrate to Texas and eventually found New Braunfels and Fredericksburg.

AFRICAN AMERICAN: Spain declared in 1803 that any African American slave who crossed the Sabine into Texas would be automatically free. Seeking that promise of freedom, many slaves headed for the border and became teachers, merchants, miners, landowners, and more. When Texas won its independence from Mexico in 1836, slavery became legal again. But on June 19, 1865, slaves received word of the Emancipation Proclamation from President Abraham Lincoln that they were freed. The event, which occurred in Galveston, is now celebrated in several states as Juneteenth.

POLISH: Father Leopold Moczygemba, a Franciscan priest, helped bring 100 families from Upper Silesia to Texas and founded the town Panna Maria, which is now the oldest permanent Polish settlement in the United States and the location of the first Polish Catholic church and school. Polish settlements also developed in Cestohowa, Koscikisko, Chappel Hill, and Bryan.

CZECH: Farming, food, and music were a way of life for the Czech immigrants, who settled mainly in the Blackland prairie area. Today, there are many Czech museums and festivals you can attend to get a feel for (and taste of) this culture.

ASIAN: The Chinese were the first Asian immigrants to come to Texas. Around 1870, they came as contract laborers with the railroads to help lay track for what is now one of the largest systems in the nation. In 1902, Japanese migrated to the Gulf Coast where they started rice farms. Today, Asians—also including East Indian, Vietnamese, Lao, and Cambodian—continue to add their languages, religions, and cultures to the Texas mix.

PEOPLE

The Lone Star State gets much of its uniqueness from its beautiful mix of people. Indeed it is this great blend of cultures that gives Texas its lively personality. You can hear it in the music, taste it in the food, sample it at the festivals, and see it in the architecture—Texans are a colorful bunch.

CAPTIONS

1. Congressmanwoman and civil rights icon Barbara Jordan was born in Houston on Feb. 21, 1936.
2. The Mexican holiday Cinco de Mayo is celebrated in Texas.
3. African American cavalry on the frontier were often referred to as Buffalo Soldiers.
4. The National Polka Festival in Ennis celebrates Czech culture.
Cultural Festivals
A fun way to celebrate the different cultures of Texas is to attend festivals like the Czech Heritage Fest, Kolache Fest, Greek Food Fest, African American Heritage Festival, Germanfest, Oktoberfest, Festa Italiana, Celtic Heritage Festival, Fiesta in San Antonio, Polka Fest, numerous Native American powwows, the Wendish Fest, and more. For more event information, visit the Texas Highways Events Calendar at texashighways.com or traveltexas.com.
The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department manages more than 80 state parks, with features ranging from natural landscapes to outdoor recreational areas to historic sites. Park visitors find abundant camping facilities, hiking, and nature trails; close-up views of colorful birds and wildlife; flora from shady forests to desert cacti; and frequent opportunities for fishing, swimming, and boating. Fishing is allowed in all water-access state parks, and fishing licenses are available at most.

In the Texas state park system, you'll find eerie subterranean chambers, primeval wetlands, mile-high mountain vistas, spectacular canyons, and sandy seashores. The Texas Historical Commission oversees 28 state historical sites, which recall Texas' heritage. Centuries-old Spanish missions, rough-hewn frontier army forts, and dignified mansions from bygone days are preserved.

Most parks charge an admission fee, plus a range of additional fees for camping and other accommodations. A Texas State Parks Pass, available at state parks or by calling 512-389-8900, offers discounts and unlimited entry to the state parks.

FOR MORE INFORMATION on state parks, hunting, and fishing, call Texas Parks and Wildlife at 800-792-1112 or visit texasstateparks.org.

FOR MORE INFORMATION on state historic sites, call the Texas Historical Commission at 512-463-7948 or visit thc.texas.gov.

CAPTIONS

1. A hiker’s dream, Big Bend National Park has trails in the desert, mountain, and river areas.
2. Telescopes are available on a regular basis at George Observatory in Brazos Bend State Park near Rosenberg.
3. Costumed staff re-create early farm life at the Barrington Living History Farm at Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site.
4. Balmorhea State Park has the world’s largest spring-fed swimming pool.

FOR MORE INFORMATION visit nps.gov

National Park Service Areas

- Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument
- Amistad National Recreation Area
- Big Bend National Park
- Big Thicket National Preserve
- Chamizal National Memorial
- Fort Davis National Historic Site
- Guadalupe Mountains National Park
- Lake Meredith National Recreation Area
- Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park
- Padre Island National Seashore
- Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic Site
- Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River
- San Antonio Missions National Historical Park
In the humid marshlands of the East Texas Piney Woods, carnivorous pitcher plants trap unwary insects. Far across the state, red Mexican silenes seek the seclusion of cool canyons. On the sun-swept Gulf Coast, beach morning glories race across lonely dunes. Such is the variety of Texas’ 5,000-plus wildflower species—products of the state’s diverse environment. Bluebonnets, buttercups, and Indian paintbrushes crop up statewide, making colorful highway displays each spring.

While spring is the most spectacular season, other times offer their own specialties. The sun-drenched Trans-Pecos region doesn’t follow the calendar. In almost any month, “spring” follows each rare, welcome rain, when yucca, ocotillo, and cacti erupt in a brief display of blooms.

Throughout the year in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, towering palms stand guard over bougainvillea-draped boulevards. In winter, citrus orchards are heady with the scent of orange blossoms, and giant poinsettias, a major floriculture crop, decorate homes for the holiday season.

Wildflowers of Texas, a brochure published by the Texas Department of Transportation, is available free from all Texas Travel Information Centers and by writing to Wildflowers of Texas, P.O. Box 149249, Austin, TX 78714-9249. Or call 800-452-9292.

FOR MORE INFORMATION about Texas wildflowers see wildflower.org.

CAPTIONS

1. Cactus like this strawberry cactus can be found blooming during springtime in the western part of the state.
2. The bluebonnet is the official state flower.
3. Blooming pitcher plants can be found in the Big Thicket National Preserve near Kountze.
4. Coreopsis is a hardy annual native to the Southern United States.
Texas Highways

POP QUIZ!

TAKE THIS QUIZ TO FIND YOUR TRUE TEXAS IQ:

1) What is the capital of Texas?
2) Where is Sam Houston buried?
3) What mountain range is inside Big Bend National Park?
4) How many miles long is the Texas Gulf Coast?
5) What is the largest city on historic Route 66 in Texas?
6) What is the highest point in Texas?
7) Where was Dr Pepper invented?
8) What famous building is located in San Antonio?
9) What three rivers border Texas?

(Check your answers below)

HOW DID YOU SCORE?

0–2: Yankee. You’ve got some studying to do. Subscribe today!
3–5: Bless Your Heart. Don’t give up, you’ll get there.
6–8: Walkin’ in Tall Cotton. You know a lot about Texas, but we can still teach you a thing or two.
9: You’re a True Texan! You probably already subscribe to Texas Highways, but think about giving your friends and family a gift subscription!

Become a True Texan and subscribe for just $24.95 a year! Visit texashighways.com/subscribe or call us at 800-839-4997.
BIRDS

With three-fourths of all known North American birds represented in Texas, anywhere in the state, anytime of the year, there are birds for the watching. No other state offers the birding variety (or challenge) that Texas does. It’s no wonder Texas is one of the nation’s leaders in nature tourism.

Varied vegetation, altitudes from sea level to more than 8,000 feet, different climate conditions, and a strategic position on the North American continent combine to provide a diversity of bird life unrivaled by any other state. In addition, Texas’ large resident bird population is augmented by migrating species.

THE PANHANDLE PLAINS is home to horned larks, kites and prairie chickens. Its lakes attract mallard, pigeon, and pintail migrant ducks.

BIG BEND COUNTRY features Colima warblers, eagles, canyon wrens, desert-dwelling flycatchers, and tiny verdins that nest out west.

THE HILL COUNTRY hosts flocks of wild turkeys and almost countless resident and migrant species—including rare golden-cheeked warblers. Open terrain is habitat for fleet-footed roadrunners.

THE EAST TEXAS PINEY WOODS is home to several eastern species, including the wood thrush, Acadian flycatcher, and Kentucky warbler. A few swallow-tailed kites may live here and so might the ivory-billed woodpecker, which was once thought to be extinct.

GULF COAST is where most of the more than 600 bird species identified in Texas have been sighted. Numerous shorebirds populate the region—gulls, pelicans, egrets, and roseate spoonbills, plus the world’s few remaining whooping cranes, which winter at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge.

THE SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS’ Lower Rio Grande Valley hosts tropical birds and is the only place in the nation to see such species as white-tipped doves, chachalacas, and green jays.

Texas is home to the Great Texas Wildlife Trails—Heart of Texas, Great Texas Coastal Birding, Far West Texas, Panhandle Plains, and Prairies and Pineywoods. These driving trails help birders and wildlife enthusiasts find the best viewing spots. To learn more about the trails or for information on trail maps, see tpwd.texas.gov/birdingtrails.

... and butterflies, too

• With its many ecological regions and diverse geological and biological features, Texas is also the most butterfly-diverse state in the nation. Of the 772 species recorded in North America (north of Mexico), about 432 have been recorded in Texas. Nearly 300 of those species are found only in the Lower Rio Grande Valley where the winters are mild and the plants are diverse.

• Butterfly watchers from across the globe can spot a multitude of species including swallowtails, whites and sulphurs, gossamer-winged, metalmarks, Heliconians, monarchs, true brush-foots, emperors, leafwings, and skippers.

• For information and images of Texas butterflies, visit butterfliesandmoths.org.

CAPTIONS

1 The chachalaca is named after its raucous call.

2 The great blue heron can be found near wetlands.

3 The Lower Rio Grande Valley is a popular birding region.
TEXAS FACTS

Area
TEXAS’ BOUNDARY extends 3,822 miles with Louisiana on the east, Arkansas on the northeast, Oklahoma on the north, New Mexico on the west, and Mexico and the Gulf of Mexico on the south. The tidewater coastline extends 624 miles.

• TEXAS covers 268,596 square miles (land and water) according to the Statistical Abstract of the United States.
• TEXAS is as large as the following 10 states combined: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and North Carolina.
• TEXAS extends 801 straight-line miles from north to south and 773 miles from east to west.
• THE LARGEST of the state’s 254 counties is Brewster County, in West Texas, which comprises 6,193 square miles. Connecticut is smaller than Brewster County.
• THE SMALLEST is the 149-square-mile Rockwall County, just east of Dallas.

Terrain
• THE STATE’S SURFACE ranges from sea level to mountains more than a mile high. There are sun-baked deserts; rich, black farmlands; humid swamps; vast coastal plains; deep forests; limestone hills; green river valleys; and volcanic landscapes of basalt and granite.

• FORESTS: Trees cover about 38 percent of Texas’ land area. Of the state’s 63.3 million acres of forests and woodlands, 12 million acres are in the East Texas Piney Woods area, which includes all or part of 43 counties. The area includes four national forests totaling more than 637,000 acres and five state forests covering more than 6,900 acres.
• MOUNTAINS: Texas has 91 mountain peaks—all in Trans-Pecos region—that are a mile or more high (1 mile = 5,280 feet). The state’s highest point, Guadalupe Peak, stands at 8,751 feet.
• RIVERS: The Rio Grande winds roughly 1,254 miles, forming the international boundary between Texas and Mexico. Other principal rivers are the Brazos, Colorado, Guadalupe, Nueces, Neches, Pecos, Red, Sabine, and Trinity.
• LAKES: Texas—second only to Alaska—has more than 5,600 square miles of inland water.

• Toledo Bend Reservoir, between Texas and Louisiana, is the largest reservoir in Texas or on its borders with more than 181,600 acres of surface area.

• THE LARGEST BODY OF WATER wholly within the state is Sam Rayburn Reservoir, which has a surface area of 114,500 acres.
• OF TEXAS’ thousands of lakes and reservoirs, most were created to provide flood control and reservoirs. Relatively few were formed by nature.

Population
• ACCORDING TO the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Texas had an estimated 28,701,845 residents in 2018, ranking second among the 50 states. The state is home to six of the 25 largest U.S. cities. Texas is among the 10 fastest growing states and has 40 cities with a population of 100,000 or more.

• THE SIX LARGEST TEXAS CITIES and their populations (based on 2016 estimates) are:

  Houston  2,307,803
  San Antonio  1,520,881
  Dallas  1,361,858
  Austin  958,780
  Fort Worth  875,641
  El Paso  684,506

CAPTIONS
1. Houston is Texas’ largest city with a population of more than 2 million people.
2. Caddo Lake in East Texas was one of the few naturally created lakes in the state.
3. Wool and mohair are another Texas livestock product.
Travel
- Travel and Tourism is one of the most important “export oriented” industries in Texas. According to the Office of the Governor, Economic Development and Tourism, travelers spent $80.3 billion while traveling to or within Texas in 2018. This directly supported 697,000 jobs and generated $7.5 billion in state and local taxes. For the year the gross domestic product (GDP) of the Texas travel industry was $38.5 billion.

Weather
- Texas enjoys generally mild winters, but the summers are hot. In July, the average daytime high statewide is almost 96 degrees. Average annual rainfall varies from less than 9 inches in far West Texas to about 59 inches in parts of East Texas.

Energy
- Petroleum: The first successful oil well in Texas was drilled in 1866 near Nacogdoches.
- From May 2018 to April 2019, Texas produced 1.358 million barrels of crude oil and 9 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. As of April 2019, there 176,879 oil wells and 88,240 gas wells.
- Wind: Texas leads the nation in wind-powered generation capacity—25,629 megawatts with more under construction.

Agriculture
- Farming: Texas’ 248,800 farms and ranches cover about 80 percent of the state’s land area, or approximately 130.2 million acres. Agricultural production and related items totaled an average of $20 billion annually.
- Texas ranks first nationally in cotton production, with 7.016 million 480-pound bales ginned in 2018.
- Other Major Crops include corn, wheat, hay, nursery crops, rice, and citrus.
- Ranching: Texas leads the nation in livestock with 12.3 million cattle and calves, nearly twice as much as the next largest producer. Texas produces 13 percent of the nation’s beef cattle. Texas also leads in hay, sheep, goats, and mohair production.

Innovation
- The U.S. Patent & Trademark Office shows that in 2018, 11,210 patents were issued to Texas residents. That places Texas second in the nation, behind California.

Transportation
- By Land: Texas had 314,319 miles of public roads as of 2017, which is more than any other state. On this system are more than a million signs and markers, as well as 668 rest areas and picnic areas maintained by the Texas Department of Transportation for the convenience and safety of the traveling public.
- By Air: There are nearly 400 public-use airports and three public-use heliports. The state’s two largest airports—Dallas–Fort Worth International and George Bush Intercontinental in Houston—rank No. 4 and No. 16, respectively, as the nation’s busiest airports by total passengers served in 2017.
- By Rail: The state tops the nation in rail miles with more than 10,506 rail miles. Fifty-two freight railroads operate in the state, and 398.2 million tons of freight were carried in 2017. A train can carry more weight than 100 trucks.
- By Sea: The state offers 11 deep water ports with channels at least 30 feet deep along the Gulf Coast, including the Port of Houston, which is ranked sixth for total trade among the nation’s airports, seaports and border crossings through June 2019. Port Laredo ranked No. 2 among all national ports.

Gross State Product
- Texas’ Gross State Product—the sum of monetary value of all goods and services produced in a certain time frame—was estimated at $1.775 trillion in fiscal year 2018. If Texas were a nation, its economy (based on Gross Domestic Product) would rank as the 11th largest in the world.

International Trade
- In 2017, Texas was the top exporting state in the nation, with more than $264.1 billion in exports, according to U.S. Department of Commerce data. The state’s top exports were computer and electronics, petroleum, coal products, chemicals, oil and gas, and transportation equipment. Mexico, Canada, China, Brazil and South Korea were the state’s top export recipients.
- In 2017, imports—mostly energy, machinery, and telecom/high technology equipment—totaled about $263.3 billion. The top 5 countries supplying imports were Mexico, China, Canada, South Korea, and Saudi Arabia.
SYMBOLS

TEXAS HAS DOZENS OF OFFICIAL STATE SYMBOLS AND “CAPITALS” — ALL DESIGNATED BY THE STATE LEGISLATURE.


Official Texas Symbols
Below are a few of Texas’ state symbols. Some are well known, but did you know that Texas has an official state dinosaur? For a complete list of official Texas symbols, see tsl.texas.gov/ref/abouttx/symbols.html.

- **Nickname:** Lone Star State (A)
- **Motto:** Friendship
- **Bird:** Northern Mockingbird
- **Tree:** Pecan (B)
- **Flower:** Bluebonnet
- **Reptile:** Texas Horned Lizard
- **Large Mammal:** Texas Longhorn
- **Small Mammal:** Armadillo
- **Flying Mammal:** Mexican Free-tailed Bat
- **Dinosaur:** Paluxysaurus Jonesi (C)
- **Plant:** Prickly Pear Cactus (D)
- **Fruit:** Texas Red Grapefruit
- **Pepper:** Jalapeño
- **Shell:** Lightning Whelk
- **Sport:** Rodeo
- **Dish:** Chili
- **Bison Herd:** Texas State Bison Herd at Caprock Canyons State Park (E)

Official Capital Designations
The Texas Legislature has designated many symbolic capitals all over the state. To see the complete list, go to tsl.texas.gov/ref/abouttx/capitals.html. Here are a few examples:

- **Alligator Capital:** Anahuac (F)
- **Barbecue Capital:** Lockhart
- **Bluebird Capital:** Wills Point
- **Bluebird Capital:** Sanderson
- **Cactus Capital:** Sanderson
- **Catfish Capital:** West Tawakoni
- **Citrus Capital:** Weslaco
- **Crawfish Capital:** Mauriceville
- **Danish Capital:** Danevang
- **Kolache Capital:** Caldwell
- **Polka Capital:** Fredericksburg (G)
- **Rodeo Capital:** Electra (H)
- **Sausage Capital:** Elgin
- **Sunflower Capital:** Hearne

The Official State Song

**“Texas, Our Texas”**

**Refrain**

Texas, our Texas! All hail the mighty state!
Texas, our Texas! So wonderful, so great!
Boldest and grandest, withstanding ev’ry test;
O empire wide and glorious, you stand supremely blest.

Shines forth in splendor your star of destiny!
Mother of heroes! We come, your children true,
Proclaiming our allegiance, our faith, our love for you.

The Congress of the Republic of Texas adopted the lone star as its seal in December 1836 and added the olive and live oak branches in January 1839. The state seal is identical to the 1839 seal except that the word “State” has replaced “Republic.”

State Seal

Since the earliest days of Texas, a five-pointed “lone star” has been prominent among Texas symbols. The state seal, adopted as part of the 1845 state constitution, features the lone star encircled by olive and live oak branches.

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ROADWAYS

Highway safety relies on the willingness of drivers to act responsibly, whether making a quick trip to the store or a cross-country excursion. Please be aware of the following Texas highway laws:

- Motor-vehicle operators must maintain current liability insurance and be able to show proof if requested by law enforcement.
- All occupants of cars and light trucks, regardless of age or seating position, must wear seat belts.
- Car seats are required for children up to 8 years old or who are less than 4 feet, 9 inches in height.
- It is illegal (with certain exceptions such as parades and emergencies) to operate an open-bed pickup truck, an open flatbed truck, or an open flatbed trailer when children under the age of 18 are occupying the bed of the truck or trailer, regardless of the vehicle's speed.
- Open containers of alcohol are not permitted in the passenger area of a motor vehicle.
- Motorcycle operators and passengers must wear protective headgear that meets adopted standards. Exemptions are allowed for persons over age 21 with certain health insurance and training requirements.

Keeping Roadways Beautiful

While some rules of the road keep people safe, others exist to keep roads free of litter. That’s where the Texas Department of Transportation’s litter prevention programs come in. TxDOT’s Don’t mess with Texas® litter prevention campaign and the Adopt-a-Highway program work closely with their grassroots partner, Keep Texas Beautiful, to keep the state’s roads free of trash.

Since the TxDOT programs’ beginnings in the late 1980s, thousands of tons of trash have been removed from Texas roadways. According to the 2013 Visible Litter Study, littering has decreased by 34 percent since 2009, which saves taxpayers millions of dollars in reduced litter pickups.

In fact, approximately 10 percent of roadways in Texas are adopted and maintained by Adopt-a-Highway volunteers. Over 3,600 dedicated individuals and groups currently oversee adopted stretches of roadway, and this Texas-born program continues to grow thanks to a hardworking core of dedicated volunteers.

Since 1986, the Don’t mess with Texas campaign has channeled Texas-size state pride to remind Texans to keep trash off our roads. The litter prevention campaign has been a great success thanks to the iconic red, white, and blue trash cans and fellow Texans such as George Strait, Matthew McConaughey, and Willie Nelson helping to spread the message.

Don’t mess with Texas has recently enlisted the help of a new “spokesbarrel” to help educate young Texans about the program. Darrel the Barrel makes appearances at events around the state to engage kids of all ages and teach them that Don’t mess with Texas means: Don’t litter!

Don’t mess with Texas has also stepped up its engagement with Texans aged 16-34 with a virtual reality game that uses gamification to let people experience the anti-litter message firsthand in a fun, immersive 360-degree exploration environment set in the beautiful Lone Star State.

Why is littering such a big deal? Not only is it detrimental to the environment and the safety of the traveling public, it’s also against the law. You could be fined up to $500 for littering anything that weighs less than 5 pounds. Toss anything heavier than 5 pounds, and you could face a fine of up to $2,000 and six months in jail.

To order Don’t mess with Texas products, to adopt a highway and more, visit dontmesswithtexas.org.