

TRAVEL FOR AUSTIN FEC

AIR: Austin Bergstrom International Airport (ABIA) is served by all of the major airlines and some of the discount airlines. A website fare finder indicates that a cab from ABIA to the Sheraton will cost approximately \$28 per person, airport fees and a 15% tip included. However, because the city recently deregulated cab fares to allow competition with the Ubers of the city, fares could go down. Uber, Lyft and Ride Austin are also options. The Uber fare from ABIA to the Sheraton is estimated at \$15-20; Lyft estimates a \$14-22 fare. Ride Austin estimates the ride as \$20.42 without a tip. You can go to the Ride Austin web page and download the app. Super Shuttle/Blue Van, a shared van that does not guarantee direct service, is \$12 one way. However, Blue Van has provided a 10% discount. The discount code is T678P and will be available from October 24-30. The discount may be used with advance reservations on the SuperShuttle/Execucar app or at SuperShuttle.com. Also, there should be a link on the Academy website or electronically for automatic use of the discount code. Bus service is available from the airport at \$2.50 for a day pass. The #350 bus comes about every 30 minutes pretty much on the hour and half hour. You must transfer to the #2 bus at Airport and Oak Springs. The #2 bus stops very close to the hotel. The bus ride takes about an hour. The schedule will be different on Sunday.

RAIL: Amtrak runs through Austin, with the station downtown approximately 2 miles from the Sheraton. Cab fare to the hotel is approximately \$10.75 per person, including a 15% tip.

CAR: For those driving, the hotel can be seen from I-35. Hotel parking is \$30/day for self-parking and \$38/day for valet parking, with in and out during the day allowed.

RENTAL CARS: Rental cars are available at ABIA or at a Hertz facility immediately behind the Sheraton, about a five-minute walk from the front of the hotel.

ALTERNATE IN-CITY TRAVEL: For a different kind of travel, try Austin Pedicab Company, 512-210-7914. Pedicabs cost more than the usual cabs, but they can be ordered. There are also horse-drawn carriages downtown.

Judith Helburn

The real weird Austin

We, in Austin are trying to retain our reputation even though we are now the 11th largest city in the US. A taste of weird Austin remains on South Congress, about a mile south of the river [Lady Bird Lake]. Unfortunately, no bus takes you there, but it is only about 2.5 miles from the Sheraton. Take RideAustin or another mode of transportation to Annie St and begin your stroll north on the west side of the street.

You might want to check out almost every shop for the next 3 blocks. Leigheluna has crafts, nice very casual clothes and adult-ish toys. It specializes in Austin made leather goods. The best toy store is Monkey See, Monkey Do. Do stop at the candy store. Close by. Parts & Labour has art, crafts, clothes—but you gotta pick ‘n choose. It is still worth a peek.

Milton’s on the corner has lotsa Mexican. Try the Vespaio deli for lunch—the main restaurant has great Italian. After that comes SoCo books. I can’t resist a book store. And then, Limbo with nice jewelry—not weird, upscale—all made in Austin. My favorite restaurant on the strip is South Congress Café.

Past Monroe is Allen Boots. How can you leave Austin Texas without a pair of cowgirl boots? Then come some funky art shops after which is Maya—yummy clothes. Lucy in Disguise is the perfect place for your new tiara or your wild “diamond” earrings. Perhaps a feather boa? Just stop in and feast your eyes. You could rent almost any costume to impress the NAA. Tesoro’s Trading Post is the place to shop for international crafts of high quality. And if you want TxMex food, across Elizabeth is Guerro’s—very popular. Need a cupcake? Cross the street to the east side and visit “Hey Cupcake” trailer.

Time to go back and put your feet up. Have fun.

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Let's go for a walk: a two mile, about three hour, stroll along Congress

Judith Helburn

The Texas State Capitol is 3 blocks west from the Sheridan. A stroll around the grounds will introduce you to numerous [over 20] sculptures, some of which are pretty interesting. I like the 2 right at the Congress street entrance. It is also a good place to hang out with some coffee.

But the main interest is a walk down Congress to 2nd street. If you start walking south on the west side of Congress, within a block, in the 1100 block, you will come to the **Old Bakery and Emporium**, the first suggested stop. Inside you will find lotsa art and crafts, mostly made by older locals. The prices are really low. I like the cloth purses, but there is also jewelry, quilts, pottery, and other crafty items. Of course, you will find a bunch of Texana.

Along the way there are many places to stop for coffee and food. I'll only mention a few. The next shop of interest is **Consuelo's** between 7th & 8th, which is wild with colorful purses, bags and more. These items are made right next door and are all of vinyl/oilcloth. Look around and enjoy yourself.

On the west corner of 3rd street, are a bunch of **food trucks**, ranging from lobster rolls to tacos. Very popular for the lunch crowd with places to sit—and there are benches all along the way as well.

Turn right on 2nd street and walk past the first block to find a statue of our own **Willie Nelson**. **Second Bar & Restaurant** is a nice place to eat, right on the corner of 2nd and Congress. The good stuff on 2nd street is between Lavaca and Colorado on the south side of the street. My favorites are **Sikara Jewelry** with gorgeous jewelry at reasonable prices [no diamonds here] and **Toy Joy**. TJ is mainly for kids, but I've never walked out without buying something for myself. None of the "Toys-r-us" kind of stuff. It is a riot of color. In-between is **UAL** [United Apparel Liquidators] which has designer samples. You might find a treasure. You might not.

As you head back, you might want to check out our mod **City Hall** between 1st [Caesar Chavez] and 2nd on Lavaca. They always have juried local art on display.

Heading back north on the east side of Congress, you will pass **Modern Market** with wonderful salads. Shortly after that is the **Mexci Arte Museum**, always interesting. Their gift shop is small but fun—lotsa Frieda Kahlo. Between 6th & 7th is the only grocery store in the area as well as a funky coffee/light food place, **The Hideout**.

It's time to head back and put your feet up.

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INDOORS

Listed below, are a few possibilities, most close to the hotel.

The Domain: This is an upscale shopping center about 12 miles north of the hotel just off of Loop 1 (MOPAC). Shops and restaurants abound. Accessing the website (type The Domain in your browser) will give you a list of the various stores.

Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum: Located on the U. T. campus, the LBJ Library has two floors of exhibits and a 7/8 size replica of the oval office as it was during the Johnson Presidency. 1.2 miles from the hotel.

Harry Ransom Center: This museum on the U.T. campus includes one of five Gutenberg Bibles in the United States, the first photographs, Scarlet O'Hara's green velvet dress and much more. 1.3 miles from the hotel.

Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum: This museum is one of the best of its kind and worth a visit even by out-of-staters. There is an IMAX theater as well. About 2.1 miles from the hotel.

State Capitol of Texas: The capitol was built to resemble the nation's capitol and is 14 feet higher (Well, folks, this is Texas!). There are interesting sculptures on the Capitol grounds. 0.7 mi.

Central Market: The choice of fruits, veggies, flowers and cheeses is astonishing. You'll go home envious after a visit. There are two Central Markets. The one at 4001 N. Lamar Blvd. is 3.7 miles from the hotel; the one at 4477 S. Lamar Blvd. is 7.5 miles from the hotel. If you are interested in the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center (see below) and Central Market, go south.

Whole Foods: This is the flagship store of the Whole Foods national chain. The profusion of food is truly amazing. Unlike Central Market, you can get things to eat throughout the store. Like Central Market, there is a restaurant available in the store. For foodies, this is worth a visit. The store is on the edge of downtown at 5th and Lamar about 1.5 mi. from the hotel.

Blanton Museum of Art: On the campus of The University of Texas at Austin, this is one of the foremost university art museums in the U.S, recognized for the collection of European paintings, prints and drawing and modern and contemporary American and Latin American art. The Ellsworth Kelly structure is a must see. 2.2 mi.

The Music: Austin has a good symphony, opera and ballet; however, Austin is famous for the 6th street music scene just a few blocks away from the Sheraton. You can go to a great restaurant for dinner and be with your friends and **then** do 6th street. The music,

ranging from jazz to rock to folk to rap doesn't start before 9 pm and it goes on and on in some 50 bars and restaurants. Great for people watching.

OUTDOORS

Starred options listed below are reasonably close to the hotel.

***Weird Austin:** When travel magazines and articles cover Austin, they almost always cover "near" south Austin. Along South Congress between about 1400 and 1700, mainly on the west side of the street are antique shops, eclectic shops, galleries, restaurants, and some great children's shops. See Judith's walking tour, which also covers Congress Avenue from the Capitol to 2nd Street.

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center: You'll need a car to get to this, about 12 miles from the hotel, but if you enjoy the outdoors, it is worth the trip. The Center includes a 179 acre native plant botanical garden with planting area, wildflower meadows exhibits, a butterfly garden and an observation tower. Interesting architecture.

***Go Batty in Austin:** Not far from the hotel is the Congress Avenue bridge, which from April through October is home to 1.5 million Mexican free-tailed bats—the largest urban bat colony in North America. Each evening about sunset the bats depart the bridge for the nightly feeding frenzy. The best viewing is from behind the Austin American Statesman building across the river.

Zilker Park Botanical Gardens: Although it is a little late in the year for flowers, some will enjoy the beautifully landscaped gardens. The roses will still be in bloom. Even without brilliant blooms, the wonderfully done Japanese garden is worth a visit. There are also early Texas buildings and veggie gardens. Barton Springs, an artesian spring-fed swimming hole open all year round [68 degrees] is also in Zilker Park, across the road.

Umlauf Sculpture Garden and Museum: Charles Umlauf was a world-famous artist. Many of his works can be seen in a compact beautiful outdoor setting close to Zilker Park.

Laguna Gloria Sculpture Garden and Park: Laguna Gloria is a small museum set on a lake with some interesting outdoor sculptures and a lovely setting.

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San Antonio: About 80 miles southwest of Austin via I-35, San Antonio is worth a visit. Main attractions include the River Walk, with a myriad of colorful shops and a mix of excellent restaurants, the fabled Alamo and other missions, an excellent botanical garden, a zoo, and interesting museums.

San Marcos: About 35 miles southwest of Austin on I-35 are two adjacent, large discount malls. If you can't find it here, you aren't likely to find it anywhere: DKNY, Ralph Lauren, Brooks Brothers, etc. etc. etc. This is a true "shop 'til you drop" experience.

Natural Bridge Caverns: Located in the vicinity of Garden Ridge, TX, about 60 miles northwest of Austin, is an impressive underground cavern.
www.naturalbridgecaverns.com

Natural Bridge Wildlife Park: Located close to the caverns. It is one of those drive through animal parks where ostriches stick their heads in your car and eat anything that is loose. There are many other animals too. Not as spectacular as **Fossil Rim**, [see below] but a lot closer.

Fredericksburg: About 78 miles west of Austin, Fredericksburg is an old town in the Texas hill country with interesting buildings and shops and a couple of excellent restaurants. B&B's abound. Some will find the Admiral Chester Nimitz Museum interesting. [WWII-Pacific] **Enchanted Rock** is 18 miles away and is a great hiking area. Think mini Ayers Rock. www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/enchantd.

The LBJ Ranch: The LBJ Ranch is at Johnson City, about 48 miles west of Austin on the way to Fredericksburg. The U.S. Park Service provides a very interesting, narrated tour of the ranch. For more information type "LBJ Ranch" into your web browser.

Fossil Rim Wildlife Center: www.fossilrim.com About 200 miles northwest of Austin (south of Fort Worth) is Fossil Rim Wildlife Center at Glen Rose, TX. This is a park involving about a 10 mile drive where the animals are semi-wild and you are confined to your auto/cage. Buy food pellets before you begin and you will literally have some of the animals eating out of your hand, with their heads through your car window. If you're lucky, you might even attract a giraffe or two. The Wild Rose Inn at Glen Rose is a lovely B & B where you can also arrange for dinner. www.wildroseglenrose.com The Glen Rose Hotel offers deluxe complimentary breakfast, 3 swimming pools [one heated], a wading pool with waterfalls and a wraparound porch, a koi pond and a 15 person hot tub. www.dinosaurvalleyinn.com Also in the area are Dinosaur Valley State Park, golf courses, lakes and rivers.

Barton Springs Country Club: Barton Springs Country Club and Conference Center, on the outskirts of Austin, is probably the nicest golf and tennis resort in the area. There

are three golf courses, some with spectacular scenery. For those interested, this is worth checking out. www.bartoncreek.com

Lakeway Inn: For those interested in golf and relaxation, Lakeway is another near-Austin possibility. www.lakewayinn.com

College Station: Approximately 120 miles northeast of Austin is the community of Bryan-College Station, which includes the Texas A&M campus, and the George H. W. Bush (Bush 41) Presidential Library where Barbara bush is buried.

Bandera: About 120 miles southwest of Austin lies a town that is wall-to-wall dude ranches. For riding, golfing, swimming and a few other activities, this is a fun place and one that is distinctly Texas. Check it out at www.hill-country-visitor.com and select Bandera for the location that you are interested in. This site will get you information about other locations as well.