

AUSTIN

Between art, tacos, boutiques, and music halls, it's impossible not to fall in love with the weirdest city in Texas, finds Sarah Engstrand



DAY 1

Do as the Austinites do and visit a food truck. The city currently has more than 1,000 trucks, and they're an essential part of the culinary scene. Veracruz All Natural makes some of the best migas breakfast tacos in town, a combination of eggs, tortilla chips and various toppings. Just next door is Radio Coffee & Beer, a buzzy cafe-and-beer garden hybrid that has live music and great cocktails in the evenings, and strong coffee to get you started in the mornings.

It's a short walk to Uncommon Objects, an eclectic antique collective that begs to be explored. The prices at this self-described 'emporium of transcendent junk' can be steep, but it's well worth a wander.

For more unique shopping, head to the 2nd Street District or South Congress Avenue, one of the main arteries of Downtown Austin. Wander through the weekend SoCo Select Farmers & Makers Market, where the city's boutique apothecaries, jewelers, artists, poets, bakers,

and musicians set up for the day. Nearby, ByGeorge boutique offers a beautifully curated selection of clothing, accessories and homeware with a distinctly Austin style.

End the night on a picturesque note with a cocktail at El Alma, a bar and restaurant with a patio that looks out over the Austin skyline. The Oasis bar is another local favorite, and a great place to watch the sun set over Lake Travis. Then head back across town to Barley Swine to enjoy an ever-changing and hyperlocal seasonal menu.

Clockwise from left: Sixth Street in Austin, Texas; Green chile pork and steak tacos on flour tortillas from Torchy's Tacos; Allens Boots

DAY 2

With roughly 300 days of sunshine a year, there's no excuse for missing Austin's beautiful Hill Country. The Barton Creek Greenbelt boasts more than 10 miles of pristine trails, rock climbing, bird watching and naturally fed swimming pools to explore. For a quick breakfast option, stop by one of the many cafes in town — Fleet Coffee has some especially creative options.

After an active morning, indulge in some traditional Texas barbecue. The gigantic beef rib at Terry Black's Barbecue is worth the wait. For something special, drive out to Salt Lick BBQ in Driftwood, about 40 minutes from the city. Here, grill masters stoke a massive indoor pit, fueled by live oak and pecan hulls. Using recipes that date back to the Civil War, the team churns out some of the best barbecue in the country. Order the brisket and be sure to ask for 'burnt ends' — they're a delicacy.

Since becoming a tech industry hub, Austin has undoubtedly undergone a certain amount of regeneration and modernization. It's still possible to have a typically Texan time, if you know where to look: the dancehalls. Get roadhouse ready at Allens Boots, where they have an almost overwhelming selection of Western-style boots, hats and accessories.

When it's time to dance, find out why Austin is known as the live music capital of the world at either the Broken Spoke or The White Horse. These old-school honky-tonks are beginner-friendly and offer free dance classes most nights. Don't be surprised to see familiar faces on stage: plenty of country music's top stars come back to play when they're in town.

IMAGES: AWL IMAGES; GETTY; ALAMY



DAY 3

After a long night of dancing, breakfast is in order. Texas French Bread is famous for its challah French toast — the perfect cure for the morning after the night before.

Spend the day exploring the dozens of museums in the city. The Bullock Texas State History Museum offers an interactive glimpse of the Lone Star State's wild west past, and is near the stunning Texas State Capitol, which offers free tours throughout the week. Art lovers are spoiled for choice, but two favorites are the Mexic-Arte Museum, which highlights Mexican and Latin art and culture, and the University of Texas' impressive Blanton Museum of Art, one of the finest art museums in the country.

Austin has enjoyed something of a beverage renaissance over the last few years, and it's worth exploring at least one of the local craft breweries. Treaty Oak Distilling is half an hour outside of the city and makes some incredible spirits, brews and wines. Its whiskeys have even been named some of the nation's best. With an onsite restaurant, tasting room, winery, brewery, bar and live music, it's a warm and spirited ending to a perfect Austin weekend.



The Bullock Texas State History Museum

*Blanton Museum of Art,
University of Texas*

**CALL US**

To book your Austin trip, contact our travel agency — the number's on the back.

// ESSENTIALS

When to go: Summers in Austin tend to be brutally hot and it's almost impossible spend time outside. Instead, visit during late autumn or early spring, when temperatures hover around 80F.

Currency: USD

Language: English

Getting around: Despite the notorious traffic, a car is still the best way to get around Austin. Rideshares like Uber and Lyft are available, or hire a rental. Bird rents electric scooters, which are also a popular way to see the sights.