

OUTDOOR ADVENTURES



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Our great state of Texas is home to some of the most remote and unique landscapes you can find. From the mountain ranges in West Texas to the crystal-clear waters of the Hill Country, there's an adventure for everyone. Whether you're an adventurer at heart or looking for inspiration to explore the outdoors, this list is sure to help you uncover some of the state's best hidden gems.

Canoe at Caddo Lake

tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/caddo-lake

Caddo Lake is like stepping into a time machine and visiting a period in ancient history. Situated on the border of Texas and Louisiana, it offers a unique canoeing experience like no other. With cypress trees and often mossy waters, it's a sought-after place in the world of canoe aficionados. Rentals are available overnight and some of the campsites even have private access straight to the lake.

Hike in Big Bend

visitbigbend.com

Big Bend National Park is said to be one of the least visited parks of the National Parks system. That's not because it isn't amazing, but because of its remoteness from civilization! Set along the border of Mexico, separated only by the Rio Grande, it is definitely one of the most isolated places to visit in the country. There are several sides to this park—desert, river, and mountains. Popular hikes include Santa Elena Canyon, Boquillas Canyon, Emory Peak, and the Window Trail.

Cliff Jump into Jacob's Well

visitwimberley.com/jacobswell

Jacob's Well is tucked away in the small town of Wimberley. Part of the Edward's Aquifer, it boasts crystal clear waters and year-round temperatures of 68 degrees. It is one of the longest underwater cave systems in Texas. Researchers are still not quite sure in fact just how long it is. It has been listed as one of the most dangerous underwater cave diving spots in the world. However, visitors can still test their adventurous spirits by taking a plunge into the first chamber of the cave that is only about 30 feet deep. Enjoy cooling off and jumping into the deep black abyss!

Hike to Gorman Falls

tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/colorado-bend

Located in Colorado Bend State Park about 2 hours northwest of Austin, Gorman Falls is not something you would expect to see in the dreadfully hot and humid South. The lush green falls are created by moss and maidenhair ferns that are constantly soaked by the spring-fed waters falling from above.

Camp at Pecan Flats

tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/inks-lake

Another Hill Country favorite is Inks Lake State Park. Canoes and kayaks are available for rent at the park store. Set out on the lake early and stick close to the shores to catch some glimpses of water snakes basking in the sun on exposed rocks. After, paddle out to the scenic Devil's Waterhole at the east end of the lake. Tie up your canoe here and enjoy some cliff jumping, or head upstream to discover some hidden waterfalls.

Summit Enchanted Rock

tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/enchanted-rock

A 400-foot granite dome and batholith much like Half Dome in Yosemite, located right here in the heart of the Texas Hill Country! It offers a short but steep .7 mile hike to the summit with stunning views of the surrounding landscape. Other than Hueco Tanks State Historic Site, Enchanted Rock has some of the best rock climbing you can find in Texas.

Swim in Hamilton Pool

parks.traviscountytexas.gov/parks/hamilton-pool-preserve

Hamilton Pool is located only about 45 minutes outside of Austin. It is a popular spot to escape the scorching summer heat that is found here in the South. The pool is said to be a collapsed grotto and canyon formed after thousands of years of water erosion and used to be under the ownership of private property. That is until it was discovered by the owners in the early 1800s who wisely chose to open it for recreational use for all to enjoy.

Tent Camp in Caprock Canyons

tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/caprock-canyons

Caprock Canyons is a North Texas must-see. When driving to Caprock you will not be expecting to see this diverse landscape appear out of nowhere among the endless flat plains that make up the panhandle, and then bam! All of a sudden you are surrounded on all sides by serrated red rock escarpments up 1,000 feet high! Caprock offers a variety of tent camping and wilderness camping for those looking to escape the crowded campgrounds. As for wildlife lovers, it is not uncommon to visit these canyons without a sighting of a rattlesnake, so watch your step!

Watch the Sunrise at Garner State Park

tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/garner

Garner is a staple of the Texas State Park system, and it's for good reason. Being the first official park in Texas, it is the most popular park for camping in the state with plenty of trails to choose from. However, with hundreds of campsites, it is still possible to experience the beauty of this park all to yourself. The simple solution is to set that alarm clock early for the sunrise! Waking up early has its perks and watching the first rays of light hit the chilly Frio River and peak of Old Baldy are a few of them!

Hike to the Lighthouse at Palo Duro Canyon

tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/palo-duro-canyon

Much like nearby Caprock Canyons, Palo Duro is a canyon paradise amid rolling flat plains in the Texas Panhandle. Behind only the Grand Canyon, it is the second largest canyon in the U.S. at about 60 miles long. Known for its popularity for mountain biking and equestrian trails, the dominant symbol of Palo Duro remains to be the unique rock formation referred to as the Lighthouse, and with only a 2.7 mile hike in you could be enjoying this as your view too!

Sandboarding and More at Monahans Sandhills State Park

tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/monahans-sandhills

It's never the same park twice. With an ever-shifting landscape that is always at the mercy of the West Texas winds, Monahans Sandhills State Park transforms itself almost daily. Due to its ever-changing nature, the park does not have marked trails. One of the most popular draws at Monahans is the sandboarding. Kids of all ages love surfing, sliding or tumbling down the sandhills, hiking back up and doing it all over again. You can bring your own board or rent sand discs at the park headquarters. There aren't a lot of slopes in Texas, but the hills at Monahans just may be the next best thing.



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