The Lone Star State: Visiting San Antonio Texas

By

Jayne B. Stearns

This beautiful country in which we live was created by immigrants crossing seas and borders in search of a better life. We’re all descendants of “the tired, poor, huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of others’ teeming shores”. And we’re also the result of wars dedicated to separating us from tyrannical regimes intent on suppressing that independence. Nowhere, other than maybe Massachusetts, is this more evident than in the streets of San Antonio, Texas, where history rounds every corner and the fight for independence is reflected in the bullet holes still evident and imbedded the walls of the Alamo. So, if you’re planning on heading to The Lone Star State, visit San Antonio, the place where Texas independence began and cowboys carved their names in history.

Although San Antonio is full of attractions and events, here are the three top must-sees to visit while in there:

* The Alamo - Located in the center of the city. Most don’t realize that the Alamo was only one of five missions established in the early 1700's that included San Jose, San Juan, Concepcion, and Espada. The Alamo was the fifth and last Spanish mission to be built. These missions were more than churches, they became towns with a focus on encouraging the natives to become Catholic in order to be citizens and the Spanish king used them to extend Spanish influence outward from Mexico. With the exception of the Alamo, all four of the missions are still active Catholic parishes. Its where the heroes of American history – Bowie, Crocket, and Travis - lost their lives in the battle with Mexico during the Texas Revolution. And it’s free.
* The Riverwalk-Once described as “America’s Venice”, the Riverwalk winds alongside 5 miles the San Antonio River in the heart of San Antonio. It’s one story below street level and lined with shops, bars, restaurants, musical venues, bright lights, hotels, and just about anything a creative mind can think up. Narrated boat tours of the Riverwalk are a must. They’re inexpensive (around $12, and $9 for senior citizens) and leave the docks every 15 minutes. Experience a mix of Old Texas, contemporary Texas, Mexico, as well as Spanish, German, Greek, Lebanese, French, and TexMex cuisine.  Soon the walk will extend to 13 miles, so make sure your walking shoes are on.
* San Antonio Zoo – One of the best zoos in the nation, it houses 3,500 animals and 600 species all within 35 acres at the headwaters of the San Antonio River. There are interactive exhibits like feeding some of the animals, has the largest collection of birds in the world, a butterfly garden with 30 species of butterflies, a train ride throughout the zoo, and other attractions. You can purchase tickets online before you arrive, for $24.99. This gives you an all-day pass to come and go as you please as well as unlimited train rides.

San Antonio is also the birthplace of the American Cowboy, a fact you can gather from the number of men and women still walking the streets in cowboy boots. According to the International Texas Longhorn Association, “The Texas climate and terrain were conducive to cattle raising, especially Longhorn cattle, whose genetic traits gave them ‘extremely good health, fertility, teeth, disease resistance, and soundness of body and limb’”.

There’s nothing you won’t find in San Antonio and the year ‘round warm weather will make your enjoyment of the city an even better experience.

RESEARCH

1. Historic Sites and Landmarks. San Antonio.com.

<http://visitsanantonio.com/english/Explore-San-Antonio/Arts-Culture/Historic-San-Antonio/Historic-Sites-Landmarks>