

Seven Natural Wonders of Texas

Mountains, forests, cavers and undisturbed beaches welcome visitors

Texas is famous for vast cattle ranches and oil booms, but our natural wonders are what awe and inspire travelers.

“Hiking scenic canyons and dense forests, exploring mysterious caverns, or relaxing on undisturbed beaches are just a few of the ways visitors enjoy the natural wonders that are found throughout the seven regions of Texas,” said Julie Chase, Chief Marketing Officer for the Office of the Governor, Economic Development and Tourism Division.

1) Natural Bridge Caverns – Located 13 miles north of San Antonio, is one of the world’s premiere show caves and Texas’ largest natural attractions. Visitors can view more than 10,000 different formations in its underground chambers. More than 250,000 tourists a year visit this Texas treasure that was recently named to the National Register of Historic Places by the U.S. Department of Interior for sites that have an important role in preserving cultural history.

2) Enchanted Rock – Located just outside the Texas Hill Country town of Fredericksburg, visitors are invited to backpack, camp, hike, rock climb, picnic, bird watch and star gaze in this Texas state park, which is the second-largest granite domes in the United States. The formation rises 425 feet above ground (1825 feet above sea level) and covers 640 acres.

3) Big Bend National Park – Hailed as one of America’s largest national parks, Big Bend National Park encompasses more than 800,000 acres along the Rio Grande River in West Texas. The park ranges in elevation from less than 2,000 feet along the Rio Grande River to nearly 8,000 feet in the Chisos Mountains and encompasses massive canyons, rock formations and vast desert expanses.

4) Padre Island National Seashore – Visitors are sure to soak up plenty of sun on the Padre Island National Seashore, which is the longest remaining undeveloped stretch of barrier island in the world.

5) The Meteor Crater – Visitors can travel back in time in Odessa where they can see the 550-foot meteor crater, the second largest in the nation, which was the result of a barrage of meteors crashing to the earth 20,000 to 30,000 years ago.

6) Big Thicket National Preserve – Nature enthusiasts will want to visit this national preserve where the southwestern desert meets the eastern hardwood swamps and coastal prairies meet the northern piney woods. The preserve is home to diverse plant communities including orchids, cactus, cypress, and pine as well as many species of birds, insect-eating plants and a wide variety of wildlife.

7) Palo Duro Canyon State Park – Famed as the second-largest canyon in the United States, the colorful slopes of the Palo Duro Canyon span approximately 120 miles long, 20 miles wide and 800 feet deep.