

VISIT THE
USA



TRAVEL USA

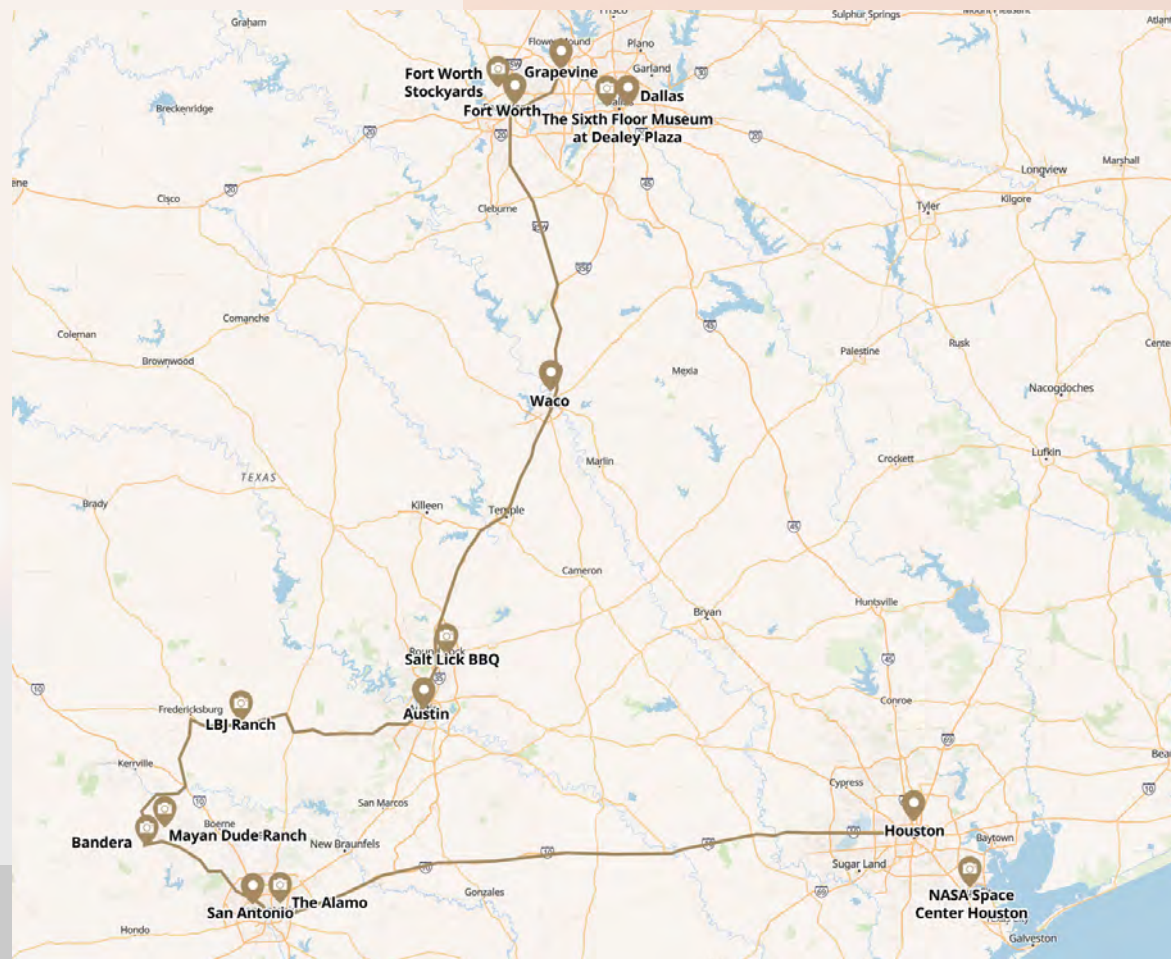


Explore Texas

15 days / 14 nights from NZ \$5,995

Explore Texas

Experience the many sides of the Lone Star State with our 15-day Explore Texas self-drive itinerary. Begin in Houston, discovering the city before spending a fascinating day exploring Space Centre Houston and NASA Johnson Space Centre. Head west to San Antonio for the Alamo and famous River Walk, then venture into Texas Hill Country for two nights at a genuine dude ranch in Bandera, the Cowboy Capital of the World. Continue through the Hill Country, visiting LBJ Ranch and stopping for authentic Texas BBQ at Salt Lick BBQ before arriving in Austin, where live music, food trucks, South Congress and the famous Congress Avenue bats await. Travel north to Grapevine, perfectly positioned for exploring North Texas, and discover its historic Main Street, food and wine scene. Experience the Fort Worth Stockyards, longhorn cattle drive, Championship Rodeo and legendary Billy Bob's Texas before heading into Dallas to explore the story of JFK. From space exploration to cowboys, BBQ and big Texas experiences, discover what makes the Lone Star State unlike anywhere else in America.



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Houston City & Murals Tour / Space Centre Houston & NASA Johnson Space Centre / The Alamo / San Antonio River Walk Cruise / Mayan Dude Ranch - genuine Texas dude ranch experience / LBJ Ranch / Salt Lick BBQ / Texas State Capitol / Sunset Kayak & Congress Avenue Bats / Grapevine Main Street Food Tour & Winery / Texas Wine Country / Fort Worth Stockyards / Fort Worth Herd Longhorn Cattle Drive / Stockyards Championship Rodeo / Billy Bob's Texas - World's Largest Honky Tonk / The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza



Day 1: Welcome to Texas

Howdy, and welcome to Texas! Fly with Air New Zealand non-stop from Auckland to Houston, the starting point for your Lone Star State adventure. After clearing immigration and collecting your luggage, you will be transferred to your downtown hotel and settle in for the next three nights. With your flight arriving later in the day, there's deliberately nothing planned this evening - giving you time to recover from the journey and ease into Texas at your own pace. If energy levels allow head out for dinner and your first taste of Houston's outstanding food scene. From Texas BBQ and Tex-Mex to Gulf Coast seafood and an extraordinary mix of international cuisines, Houston is one of America's most diverse culinary cities. Otherwise, simply enjoy a quiet evening, get a good night's sleep and recharge the batteries. Tomorrow, rested and ready to go, you'll start discovering what **Houston** has to offer.

Overnight: Hyatt Place Houston Downtown or similar

Day 2: Discover Houston | Murals, Tunnels & More

Get your bearings this morning on a guided **Houston City & Murals Tour**, a great introduction to the city's landmarks, neighbourhoods and colourful street-art scene. Afterwards, enjoy free time for lunch before heading underground for a completely different perspective on Houston. Explore the **Downtown Tunnel System**, a fascinating network of air-conditioned walkways beneath the city streets, connecting office towers, shops and restaurants. The remainder of the afternoon and evening is yours to explore. Head to the Museum District for the impressive **Museum of Fine Arts** or **Houston Museum of Natural Science**, stroll through Hermann Park or explore Buffalo Bayou Park. Sports fans may also be able to catch the Astros, Rockets or Texans, depending on the season. And if you're ready for your first taste of authentic Texas BBQ, tonight is the perfect opportunity to seek out some slow-smoked brisket, ribs and sausage.

Overnight: Hyatt Place Houston Downtown or similar





Day 3: Space Centre Houston & NASA Johnson Space Centre

Today is dedicated to one of the great highlights of any visit to Houston - Space Centre Houston and NASA Johnson Space Centre. Rather than visiting independently, we've included a full-day experience accompanied by a NASA expert guide, bringing America's extraordinary space programme to life. Discover the story of human space exploration, see historic spacecraft and learn about the missions, astronauts and technology that have taken us from the lunar landings to today's International Space Station and Artemis programme. Explore NASA Johnson Space Centre, home of astronaut training and Mission Control, with experiences dependent on operating schedules and access on the day. Walk beneath towering rockets, see spacecraft that helped make history and discover the people and technology behind America's space programme. After a fascinating day exploring NASA's past, present and future, return to Houston with the evening free to enjoy at leisure.

Overnight: Hyatt Place Houston Downtown or similar



Day 4: Houston to San Antonio (320 km)

It's time to hit the road. Collect your Alamo rental vehicle from Houston International Airport this morning and choose the style that suits your Texas adventure – a comfortable Standard SUV or, for something with a little more Lone Star character, a Ford F-150 pickup truck or similar. Then point the bonnet west for San Antonio. There's no need to rush - part of the appeal of a Texas self-drive is having the freedom to stop when something catches your eye. Arrive in San Antonio and settle in for the next two nights, close to the famous River Walk. This evening is deliberately free. Take your first stroll beside the San Antonio River, explore the restaurants, bars and patios lining the water, and perhaps start your San Antonio experience with some authentic Tex-Mex and a margarita. Tomorrow you'll discover the city's fascinating history.

Overnight: San Antonio - Element By Marriott San Antonio Riverwalk or similar



Day 5: Discover San Antonio | Remember the Alamo

Spend today discovering one of Texas' most fascinating cities. Begin at **The Alamo**, where the famous 1836 battle became an enduring chapter in Texas history, before exploring the surrounding historic downtown. Then take to the water aboard a narrated **River Walk** cruise, an easy and entertaining way to see San Antonio from a completely different perspective. Later, head up the **Tower of the Americas** for panoramic views across the city and beyond. The remainder of your day is flexible. Explore colourful **Historic Market Square**, visit the **Spanish Governor's Palace**, discover **La Villita Historic Arts Village** or venture south to the **San Antonio Missions**, part of Texas' only UNESCO World Heritage Site. Tonight, return to the River Walk for dinner or seek out another local Tex-Mex favourite - San Antonio is exactly the sort of city where some of the best experiences happen around the table.

Overnight: San Antonio - Element By Marriott San Antonio Riverwalk or similar



The River Walk



Tower of the Americas



The Alamo



San Antonio Missions



Stone Cabin



Day 6: San Antonio to Bandera (85 km) | Welcome to Cowboy Country

Leave the city behind today and head into Texas Hill Country for a completely different side of the Lone Star State. Your destination is **Bandera**, proudly known for its cowboy heritage, and the **Mayan Dude Ranch**, your home for the next two nights. Nestled beside the Medina River across 348 acres of Hill Country, the Mayan has been welcoming guests for generations and provides the opportunity to experience genuine Texas ranch life rather than simply watch it from the sidelines. Settle into your ranch accommodation and enjoy the activities scheduled for your stay. Depending on the programme, there may be horseback riding, hayrides, wildlife encounters, country music, dancing or a BBQ cookout. Meals and activities are all included and are part of the experience, so unpack the bags, slow the pace down and embrace your inner cowboy - you're staying on a Texas dude ranch.

Overnight: Bandera - Mayan Dude Ranch



Horseback Riding



Mayan Dude Ranch Cabin



Horseback Riding

Day 7: Mayan Dude Ranch | A Day in the Saddle

Wake up in Texas cowboy country with a full day to enjoy one of the highlights of your journey - life at the **Mayan Dude Ranch**. Horseback riding is at the heart of the experience, with guided morning and afternoon trail rides through the surrounding Hill Country. Depending on the day's programme, enjoy a cowboy breakfast, wildlife hayrides, roping, hiking, fishing, swimming or country dancing. Explore **Hicksville**, the ranch's own Western village, or venture into nearby **Bandera**, proudly known as the Cowboy Capital of the World. Meals are included throughout your stay, and evenings can bring BBQ cookouts, live country music and other ranch entertainment. Activities vary by date and season, adding to the experience. After Houston and San Antonio, today is about slowing the pace, embracing your surroundings and experiencing the horses, hospitality, traditions and cowboy culture that make this part of Texas so special.

Overnight: Bandera - Mayan Dude Ranch



Roping



Salt Lick BBQ



President Lyndon B. Johnson Ranch

Day 8: Bandera to Austin via Driftwood (210 km) | Hill Country & Texas BBQ

Say goodbye to your ranch hosts this morning and set off through Texas Hill Country towards Austin. Stop near Stonewall at LBJ Ranch, the beloved home of President Lyndon B. Johnson and once known as the Texas White House. Explore the ranch by car, with stops including Johnson's birthplace, family cemetery, Junction School and Show Barn. Continue through the Hill Country to Driftwood for a quintessential Texan experience - lunch at the legendary Salt Lick BBQ, where brisket, ribs and sausage have been smoked over the famous open pit since 1967. Afterwards, make the short drive into Austin, Texas' state capital and one of America's great live-music cities. Check into your hotel for the next three nights before heading out to explore, perhaps beginning around South Congress or finding some live music and settling into Austin's renowned laid-back atmosphere.

Overnight: Austin - ROOST Rainey or similar

Day 9: Discover Austin | The Texas Capital, SoCo & Live Music

Start your day at the Texas State Capitol, a landmark and introduction to the history and politics of the Lone Star State. From here, explore Downtown before heading to South Congress - known as SoCo - where restaurants, music venues and stores give the neighbourhood its personality. Don't miss Allen's Boots, an Austin institution since 1977 and the place to browse cowboy boots, hats and Western wear. Austin's food-truck culture is part of the city's character too, so seek out a favourite for lunch, or try some slow-smoked Texas BBQ, with Terry Black's and Micklethwait both worth adding to your list. Perhaps visit the Bullock Texas State History Museum before getting ready for a night out. Tonight, discover why Austin is the Live Music Capital of the World, with singer-songwriter venues, honky-tonks, blues, rock, country and Americana filling stages across the city.

Overnight: Austin - ROOST Rainey or similar



South Congress Bridge



Texas State Capitol

Universal Studios LA



Bullock Texas State History Museum



Austin, Texas



Barton Springs Pool

Day 10: Austin | Explore Your Way & Bats at Sunset

Enjoy another morning exploring Austin at your own pace. Take a dip at **Barton Springs Pool**, wander through nearby **Zilker Park**, discover some of Austin's colourful murals or venture into **East Austin**, known for its creative character, independent stores, restaurants and galleries. Alternatively, revisit somewhere that caught your eye yesterday or simply follow your interests and see where the morning takes you. After several busy days exploring Texas, we've deliberately scheduled some downtime this afternoon, giving you a few hours to relax and recharge before heading out again. Later, get ready for one of Austin's most memorable experiences - a **sunset kayak tour on Lady Bird Lake**. Paddle towards Congress Avenue Bridge as daylight fades and, during the seasonal bat-viewing period, watch huge numbers of Mexican free-tailed bats emerge and stream across the evening sky. Afterwards, enjoy dinner and your final evening in Austin.

Overnight: Austin - ROOST Rainey or similar



Bat Viewing at Congress Bridge



Sunset Kayak Tour & Bat Viewing

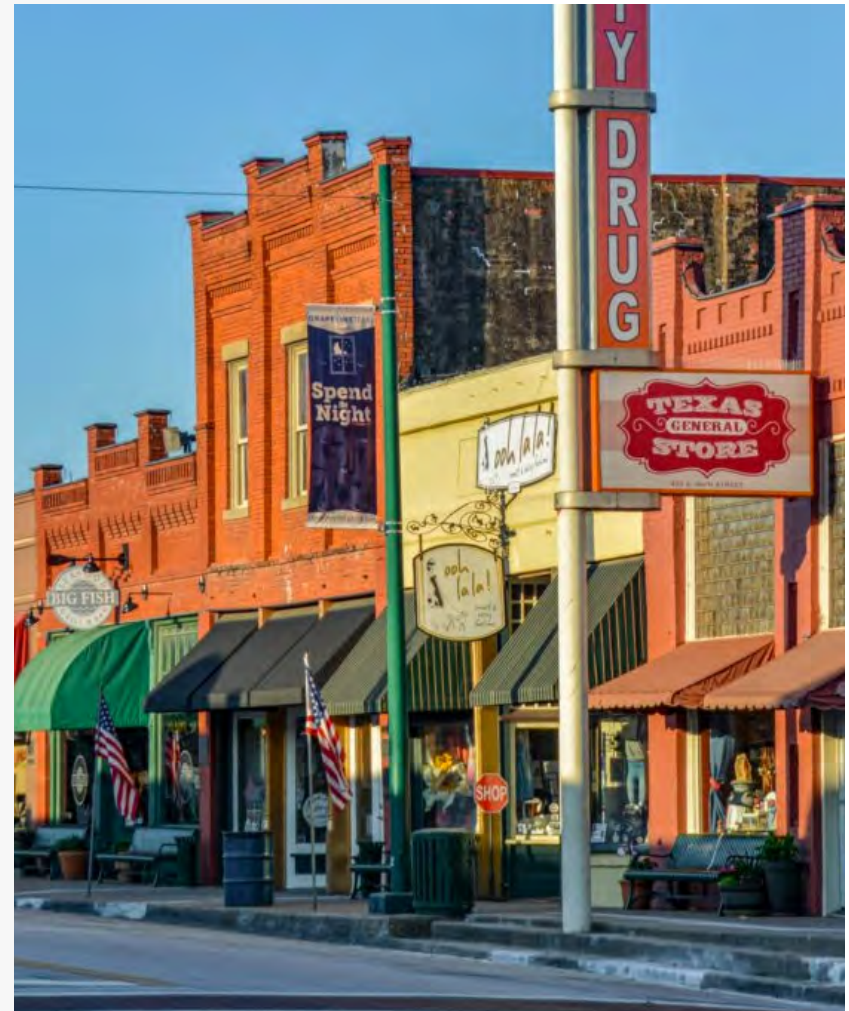
Day II: Austin to Grapevine (335 km) | Welcome to Texas Wine Country

Leave Austin this morning and head north towards the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. Today's journey follows I-35 through Central Texas, passing Waco around halfway. Break the drive here for lunch or explore, perhaps visiting Magnolia Market at the Silos, made famous by Chip and Joanna Gaines. Continue north towards Grapevine, a destination in its own right and ideally positioned between Dallas and Fort Worth, making it the perfect base for exploring North Texas during the final four nights of your Texas adventure. After checking in, take an introductory stroll along Historic Main Street, where beautifully preserved buildings are home to restaurants, boutiques, galleries, winery tasting rooms and entertainment venues. There's no need to do too much this evening. Settle in, enjoy dinner and perhaps sample some of the local Texas wine.

Overnight: Grapevine - Hilton Garden Inn Grapevine at Silverlake Crossings or similar



Grapevine CVB Tower



Historic Main Street



Stockyards Rodeo



Billy Bob's Texas

Day 12: Discover Fort Worth | Cowboys, Cattle & a Texas Rodeo

Break out your cowboy boots and head west today for a full immersion in Texas cowboy culture at the **Fort Worth Stockyards**, around 30 minutes from Grapevine. Drive yourself or consider taking an Uber if you'd like to enjoy a few drinks later tonight. Time your arrival around the **Fort Worth Herd**, the Stockyards' twice-daily longhorn cattle drive along Exchange Avenue, before exploring the district. Wander the brick streets, browse Western stores, visit the **Texas Cowboy Hall of Fame** and soak up an atmosphere where boots and Stetsons never went out of fashion. Stay into the evening for dinner at one of the many restaurants nearby, before hitting the **Stockyards Championship Rodeo** at Cowtown Coliseum, featuring bull riding, bronc riding, barrel racing and roping. Afterwards, head to legendary **Billy Bob's Texas** – the World's Largest Honky Tonk – for live country music, dancing and Fort Worth nightlife. With around 33 kilometres to travel each way, allow 30–35 minutes in normal traffic between Grapevine and the Stockyards.

Overnight: Grapevine - Hilton Garden Inn Grapevine at Silverlake Crossings or similar



Fort Worth Herd



Fort Worth Stockyards

Day 13: Discover Grapevine | Food, Wine & Historic Main Street

Today is dedicated to Grapevine, giving you the opportunity to discover your North Texas base. Explore Historic Main Street, with its historic buildings, boutiques, galleries and winery tasting rooms, before joining a Grapevine Main Street Food & Wine Tour just before lunch. Over the next 2½ hours, taste your way along Main Street, sampling Texas flavours including Tex-Mex and smoked brisket while hearing stories of Grapevine's agricultural, railroad and wine-making heritage. Finish at Messina Hof Grapevine Winery with a taste of Texas wine before enjoying the afternoon at leisure. Browse more of Main Street, visit Nash Farm for a glimpse into 19th-century Texas life, or discover Meow Wolf's immersive art experience, The Real Unreal, at Grapevine Mills. Later, head up the Observation Tower at Grapevine Main Station, browse Harvest Hall, catch the Glockenspiel Clock Tower or simply find a patio and soak up the atmosphere.

Overnight: Grapevine - Hilton Garden Inn Grapevine at Silverlake Crossings or similar



Glockenspiel Clock Tower



Nash Farm



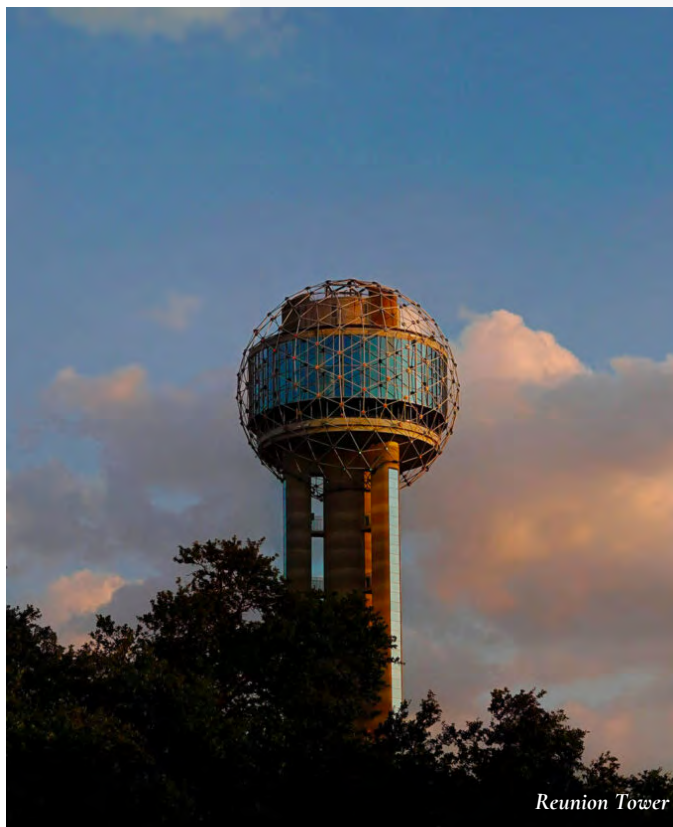
Grapevine Main Street Food & Wine Tour



Observation Tower at Grapevine Main Station



The Sixth Floor Museum Dealey Plaza



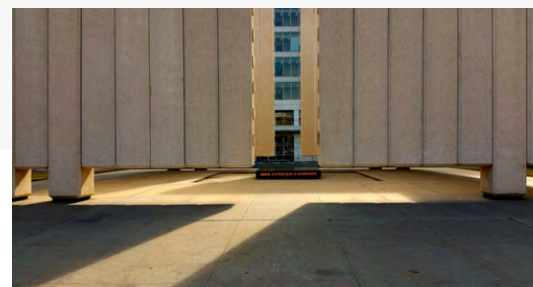
Reunion Tower



JFK Grassy Knoll

Day 14: Discover Dallas | JFK, History & the Dallas Skyline

Head into Dallas today, beginning with a three-hour tour exploring a defining moment in American history – the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Follow the events of November 22, 1963, visiting Dealey Plaza, Grassy Knoll and JFK Memorial, before exploring The Sixth Floor Museum inside the former Texas School Book Depository. Afterwards, discover more of Dallas at your own pace. Explore the Dallas Arts District, take in city views from Reunion Tower, visit the Perot Museum of Nature and Science or explore Dallas neighbourhoods, shops and restaurants. Sports fans should check with Travel USA to see what's happening during their stay, with the Cowboys, Mavericks, Stars and Texas Rangers all based across North Texas. Later, return to Grapevine for your final evening, perhaps celebrating with steaks and seafood at **Mac's on Main**, or keeping things decidedly Texan with Texas chilli and live music at **Tolbert's Restaurant & Chili Parlour**. *Overnight: Grapevine - Hilton Garden Inn Grapevine at Silverlake Crossings or similar*



JFK Memorial

Day 15: Depart Texas or Continue The Adventure

Your Texas adventure may be ending, but there's always more of America to discover. With DFW International Airport just minutes from Grapevine, return your Alamo rental vehicle and connect with flights across the USA or onwards towards home. Alternatively, stay a little longer in Texas. Ranch lovers could add two nights at upscale Wildcatter Ranch near Graham, combining North Texas landscapes with horseback riding, longhorns and a refined ranch-resort experience. Or keep the wheels turning and drive west to Amarillo, where Cadillac Ranch, cattle country and legendary Route 66 await. From here, pick up the Mother Road and continue west through New Mexico and beyond. Like all Travel USA itineraries, Explore Texas is designed as inspiration and a starting point for your own adventure. Add nights, change the pace, include different experiences or combine Texas with another region – we'll tailor the journey around how you want to experience America.



Wildcatter Ranch Restaurant



Amarillo



Cadillac Ranch



Wildcatter Ranch Deluxe Cabin



Your Journey, Your Way

Our Explore Texas itinerary is a suggested journey through Texas, combining city experiences, cowboy country, live music, history, food and the open road. It is fully customisable to suit your travel style, interests and pace - whether adding extra nights, spending longer at the ranch or extending your road trip beyond Grapevine. With Travel USA, every journey can be tailored from scratch, with flexibility around accommodation, sightseeing, length of stay, rental vehicle and travel arrangements to suit preferences, budgets and travel goals.

Best Time to Travel

Texas can be explored year-round, although spring and autumn are particularly appealing, with comfortable temperatures for sightseeing, driving and outdoor experiences. Summer is warm across the state and can be very hot, during July and August, so travellers should be prepared for higher temperatures and plan outdoor activities accordingly. Winter is generally milder, although conditions can vary across such a large state. Travel USA can recommend the best travel period, seasonal experiences and itinerary adjustments to suit your preferred dates.

Accommodation

Travel USA has selected accommodation with location and the journey in mind. Hyatt Place Houston Downtown provides a central base close to dining and attractions, while Element by Marriott San Antonio Riverwalk places you downtown, close to the River Walk. Mayan Dude Ranch offers a genuine dude ranch experience in Texas Hill Country near Bandera. In Austin, ROOST Rainey puts you close to restaurants, music and Lady Bird Lake, while Hilton Garden Inn Grapevine at Silverlake Crossings provides easy access by rental car to Historic Main Street, Fort Worth and Dallas. As with every Travel USA itinerary, accommodation can be customised to suit individual preferences, travel style and budget.

What's Included?

- Airport arrival transfer in Houston
- 3 nights at Hyatt Place Houston Downtown
- Houston City & Murals Tour
- Downtown Houston Tunnel Tour
- Full-day Space Centre Houston & NASA Johnson Space Centre Tour with NASA Expert Guide
- Alamo Car Rental in a Standard SUV or Ford F-150 Pickup Truck
- 2 nights at Element by Marriott San Antonio Riverwalk
- 2 nights at Mayan Dude Ranch, Bandera
- All meals, horseback riding and scheduled ranch activities at Mayan Dude Ranch
- 3 nights at ROOST Rainey, Austin
- Sunset Kayak Tour on Lady Bird Lake
- 4 nights at Hilton Garden Inn Grapevine at Silverlake Crossings
- Stockyards Championship Rodeo at Cowtown Coliseum
- Grapevine Main Street Food Tour & Winery
- 3-hour JFK Assassination & Museum Tour including The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza
- Travel USA Planning Assistance

Pricing:

All of our pricing is based on dynamic rates meaning we will provide you with the best available rate of the day at the time of booking. Our suggested itinerary has been created using fully refundable rates. Final pricing will depend on factors like month of travel, how early you book, availability and whether you choose non-refundable or fully refundable rates.

NZ\$ pricing for our 15 day / 14 night package

- From \$5,995 - \$6,649 pp depending on the month of travel

Terms & Conditions apply - [CLICK HERE](#) or go to www.travelusa.co.nz for more detail

This is a suggested itinerary based on our recommendations. There are no fixed departure dates or schedules so you can customise the itinerary to suit your personal preferences and needs. Contact us with your proposed dates and we will create a personalised travel package just for you.

