



Frequently Asked Questions About Austin, Texas

Have questions about Austin? We're here to help. Here are 20 most frequently asked questions about Austin, Texas: everything from Where is Austin, Texas? to What are the top Austin industries? to What is the population of Austin? to Why is Austin called the Live Music Capital of the World? This list is a great place to start learning about one of America's best cities.

Where is Austin, Texas?

Austin encompasses 272 square miles along the Colorado River in central Texas, 200 miles from the Gulf of Mexico. The capitol city is 200 miles southwest of Dallas, 162 miles west of Houston, 90 miles north of San Antonio, and is the center of the major metropolitan area of Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos.

What is the population of Austin?

Austin is the number one fastest growing city in the United States. According to austintexas.gov the city's population has reached 926,426! That's up almost 10% from 2012, when Austin had a population of just 842,592. The Austin-Round Rock metro area's population surpassed the 2 million mark early in 2016.

Why is Austin called the Live Music Capitol of the World?

Austin has over 250 live music venues and is known for its large music events, like South by Southwest (SXSW) and Austin City Limits. In American music history, Austin has helped start or grow the careers of big time artists like Janis Joplin, Stevie Ray Vaughan, and Willie Nelson.

When was Austin Founded?

German and Spanish pioneers began settling Austin's stretch of the Colorado River in the 1830s, and it was officially incorporated in 1839. Then Republic of Texas President, Mirabeau B. Lamar, proposed moving the capitol from Houston to Austin when he visited the area in 1837-38. Originally called Waterloo, the name changed to Austin in honor of Stephen F. Austin, the "Father of Texas," when it became the capitol.

What is the weather like in Austin?

Austin usually has hot summers and mild winters. On average, temperatures reach the 90s (in degrees Fahrenheit) 116 days per year. Lake Travis and the 100s 18 days per year, with the highest ever recorded being 112 degrees. Winter temperatures occasionally drop below freezing, but usually hover in the low 40s or high 30s. The lowest temperature on record was -5 degrees in January 1949. Snowfall is rare in Austin, and precipitation averages about 34 inches per year.

What are the must-see Austin sights?

Zilker Metropolitan Park has everything from kayaking, to botanical gardens, to a train ride; there's definitely something for everyone. On the University of Texas at Austin campus, the Blanton Museum of Art houses the largest collection in the state, and one of the best university museums in the country. Of course, a visit to Austin is never complete without a trip to the capitol building, which is taller than the Whitehouse and boasts 17 monuments spread across 22 acres of carefully landscaped grounds. If you're in Austin between March & November, it's bat season, and you can't miss out on that! Head down to the Congress Street bridge any night, and you'll be able to watch MILLIONS of Mexican-free tailed bats emerge for their evening flight.

What are the people of Austin like?

Austinites are known for being laid-back, friendly, and eclectic. Over half of Austin's population is under the age of 25, in large part due to the many higher education institutions in the area- making Austin a very hip place to be. Around half of all Austinites are White, and over a third of them are Hispanic.

Who are some celebrities in Austin?

There's a long list of celebrities who have had a soft spot for Austin over the years, the most famous being Stevie Ray Vaughn, Willie Nelson, and Janis Joplin, who's music careers blossomed here. Willie Nelson's ponytails are even featured on official Austin t-shirts at the Austin Visitor's Center. Sandra Bullock owned a home in Austin until her divorce from Jessie James, and Billy Bob Thornton became a transplant in the last few years. Luke and Owen Wilson regularly return to their old UTA alma mater stomping grounds, and there have been multiple sightings of Ryan Gosling and Christian Bale.

What is the nightlife in Austin like?

Nightlife in the Live Music Capitol of the World is dominated by--you guessed it--live music venues. There are tons of concert clubs throughout the city, one of the most popular being The Continental Club. For those who are looking for something a little darker in their nightlife, ghost tours of Austin's haunted sites are available as well. Another great Austin experience can be found on the Congress Avenue Bridge, where hundreds of bats billow from below the bridge, into the dusky sky like smoke.

What is 6th Street?

Austin's 6th Street is a great place to go for entertainment. Between Lavaca Street and IH 35, the Sixth Street Historic District is filled with live music venues, beautiful Victorian architecture, bars, tattoo parlors, restaurants, and art galleries. The street also plays host to the music festival South By Southwest (SXSW) and the Pecan Street Festival.

What are some activities to do in the Austin outdoors?

Austin's "Violet Crown" refers to the purple glow of the hills surrounding the city just after a winter sunset. These hills can be explored via the Violet Crown Trail System, which starts in Zilker Park and ends 30 miles south in Hays County, with multiple trail entrances along the way. Zilker Park There are three man-made lakes nearby: Lake Austin, and Lake Walter E. Long are stocked for recreational fishing, and Lady Bird Lake offers recreational water sports, as well as biking and hiking trails for land-lovers. Austin's "secret stretch" of the Colorado River, near Roy Guerrero Park, offers fishing, water sports, and the Colorado Wildlife Sanctuary.

What lakes are near Austin?

There are numerous lakes that Austinites enjoy. Within the city, there are the Lady Bird, Walter E. Long, and Austin Lakes, all man-made and stocked with fish year-round. Just East of Austin is Lake Travis, one of six Highland Lakes along the Colorado River. Lake Travis is a popular place for water sports, golf, and lake-front real estate. Lakes Lyndon B. Johnson, Georgetown, and Canyon Lake also feature fishing and water sports and are within 60 miles of Austin.

What are Austin's major industries?

One of Austin's major industries is technology, including telecommunications, transportation, and wireless segments; it was dubbed "Silicon Hills" in the 90s, a nickname that is still used today. Healthcare is also a growing industry, expanding as the city's population grows. The University of Texas in Austin plays a key role in developing Texas State Capitol Building Austin's Biomedical and Pharmaceutical industries. In addition, large, nationwide companies like Dell, Inc., 3M, Apple, IBM, Google, HomeAway, UShip, Oracle and Whole Foods Market headquarter or have large regional offices here.

Can I get a job in Austin?

In April of 2013, Forbes named Austin the second best city for finding employment. As of October 2015, Austin's unemployment rate was only 2.9% (staying an average of 2.5% lower than the national unemployment rate), and employment has continued growing in the healthcare and technology fields, fueled by the number of quality higher education institutions in the area. The region's leisure and hospitality sector also continues to expand, adding 2,500 jobs during February 2016 (a gain of 2.2 percent). Health care and social assistance firms added 1,600 jobs during that same month - an increase of 1.7 percent.

The University of Texas at Austin is the most respected institution of the University of Texas system, and was recently ranked #1 among U.S. public universities! It's also one of the largest, with over 39,000 undergraduate and 11,300 graduate students. Other prominent Austin colleges include St. Edward's University, Concordia University, Huston-Tillotson University, Seminary of the Southwest, and The Art Institute of Austin.

Where is the best shopping in Austin?

South Congress Avenue, or SoCo to the locals, features music venues, art galleries, boutiques, restaurants, and food trucks. The Domain, another great shopping area, is 700,000 square feet of shops, most featuring local independent designers. The Second Street District is lined with eclectic, friendly, and often eco-friendly boutiques.

What are some of Austin's largest annual events?

Austin Hosts the annual South By Southwest (SXSW) and Austin City Limits, two of the largest and most popular music festivals in the country. Large sporting events that call Austin home are the Formula One U.S. Grand Prix and, starting in 2014, the Summer X Games. The Pecan Street Festival is another popular Austin event, and features hundreds of artists and craft enthusiasts twice each year. Other than Austin's arts and sporting events, there are a few quirky festivals hosted in Austin. Eeyore's Birthday Party (named after the character from Winnie the Pooh) is an event in April, attended largely by Austin's hippie subculture; it features a maypole, drum circles, and a flower-draped donkey. Spamarama is also a popular Austin event, though its official name is the Pandemonious Potted Pork Festival. Held on April Fool's Day, Spamorama features a cook-off of SPAM dishes, including SPAM ice cream, chicken-fried SPAM, and GuacaSPAMole.

Is Austin prone to any natural disasters?

Austin sits on the Balcones Fault Zone, but no earthquakes greater than a magnitude of 3.5 have ever been recorded. Located at the southern tip of Tornado Alley, Austin does see the occasional tornado, but they tend to be low strength. Because Austin is 200 miles from the Gulf of Mexico, hurricanes don't really effect the city at all. Flash floods can occur in the early summer months, but overall, nature is kind to Austin.

Is Austin pet friendly?

Austin is a very pet-friendly city, with hundreds of pet-friendly hotels, stores, parks, and restaurants. The capitol also hosts numerous dog-friendly events, such as an annual pet parade and costume contest, concerts and movies in the park, "Pug Crawls," and the Bark By Bark West portion of the South By Southwest live music event. There is even "Puppy Love" Street Art and a Bow Wow Chow food truck.

What does "Keep Austin Weird" mean?

Austinites thrive in an off-beat culture, encompassing both liberal lifestyles and an eclectic collection of traditions. "Keep Austin Weird" expresses a very Texan sense of independence, encouraging residents to protect small businesses from being overwhelmed by large corporations and stay away from conservative lifestyles.