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Gay Austin – the best gay hotels, bars,
clubs & more

Although a visit to the great state of Texas may not be on your list of gay-friendly destinations, Austin should definitely be at the top with its eclectic mix of cowboys, hipsters and a colorful LGBT-scene. The city has been put on the map by hosting national events like Austin City Limits Festival and South by Southwest (SXSW). As the capital of the Lone Star state, Austin has a rich historical past, an innovative food scene, art and culture and countless outdoor activities, attractions and venues.

The city has long attracted artists and musicians making it also the live music capital of the world and you can find live music almost everywhere. With the entire city boasting a gay-friendly culture, there's no shortage of LGBT events, gay bars, clubs and attractions. So pack your bags and find out for yourself what makes Austin a weird and fabulous gay destination.

General Tips

With over 300 days of sunshine each year, the best time to visit Austin is during the shoulder seasons, spring (March-May) and fall (September-November). This is due to the very hot Texan summers (June-August) that can see daytime highs well over 90 degrees Fahrenheit. Winter is overall quite mild and dry with highs in the low-mid 60s. As festivals are a popular reason to visit, beware as these large events limit availability and the price of accommodations skyrocket.

As a whole, Texas is a very LGBT-friendly city; however, the main gay neighborhood is East Austin, which is located near downtown. In the downtown warehouse area You'll also find the 4th Street Gay District that has a concentration of gay bars and nightclubs. Other gay-friendly neighborhoods to check out are Clarksville and South Congress. Each one has its own unique character and style. There are tons of cool things to see and do so you'll definitely want to spend [a few days in Austin](#) to really experience the unique vibe.



Image credit:

Transportation & Airport Transfer

Austin-Bergstrom International Airport (AUS) is the main airport serving the Austin metropolitan area. This mid-sized airport is located about 10 miles southwest of downtown and has earned Runner Up for Best U.S. Airport in Fodor's 2019 Traveler Awards. There are two terminals with the main one being the Barbara-Jordan Terminal.

You have a few options to get to and from AUS including Capital Metro Bus Service, rideshare, taxis and car rental. For the fastest and most convenient option, we recommend using a rideshare service like Lyft, Uber or Wingz. The rideshare pick up area is located on Level G of the rental car facility that's across from the Barbara-Jordan Terminal. If you're planning to take a day trip, we also suggest renting a car as your best option to easily get around the area.

Whether you choose a rideshare, rental or taxi the trip to downtown should only take about 15 minutes depending on traffic. The cost for a rideshare will be around \$15 USD and a taxi tends to be a bit more. The Capital Metro Bus Service is Austin's public transportation provider. You should board the high-frequency route 20 to travel to the airport and it takes about 30 minutes one-way.

Gay Hotels in Austin

There aren't currently any gay hotels in Austin, but there are many gay-friendly options.

[The Driskill](#) – iconic Austin hotel that's been serving guests since 1886. Located in a coveted downtown location off 6th Street, it's near Austin's entertainment district, foodie scene and nightlife. It has 189 luxury rooms and suites with grand Texas charm and modern sophistication as well as a 24-hour fitness center, a business center, a Pampered Pet Program and several options for drinks and dining.

[W Austin Hotel](#) – 4-star hotel in the heart of Austin. Each of the 251 modern and upscale rooms and suites are equipped with a minibar, espresso machine and soaking tub. Relax on the rooftop terrace with a stunning outdoor pool and cabanas or at the luxury spa. Have a bite and drink at the signature restaurant offering farm-to-table dishes or enjoy a cocktail at the stylish hotel lounge, tequila bar or record room.

[Omni Hotel Downtown](#) – modern, sophisticated accommodations with an expansive atrium and easy access to the Austin Convention Center, the Texas State Capitol and the 6th Street Entertainment District. Relax in one of the 392 well-appointed rooms and suites or enjoy the sauna, gym, heated rooftop pool and rooftop terrace. On-site dining includes a restaurant, atrium lounge and cafe.

[InterContinental Stephen F. Austin Hotel](#) – located on Congress Avenue in the heart of the city, this luxury hotel offers elegance with an old-world charm. Guest rooms and suites offer original historic floor plans and decor with updated amenities. There's an indoor pool and jacuzzi, fitness center, laundry service and valet parking as well as several on-site dining options including an outdoor terrace, bar and restaurant.

[Wyndham Garden Austin](#) – 3-star hotel situated near Lady Bird Lake, the Texas State Capitol and South Congress Avenue. Guest rooms are simple and comfortable with free Wi-Fi, plush bedding and a mini-fridge. Enjoy the outdoor pool and hot tub, fitness center, on-site dry cleaning and on-site bar and restaurant (dinner only).

[Embassy Suites Hotel Austin Central](#) – located within 5 miles of Downtown Austin and the Austin Convention Center, this 3-star hotel has 260 spacious and modern rooms offering all the essentials. Guests can enjoy a free shuttle service that will take you anywhere within 2 miles, an indoor pool, sauna, gym, and breakfast and an evening reception included with your stay.

Apartments

There are many sites for apartment rentals in Austin, with [AirBnB](#) probably being one of the most popular. Prices are generally comparable to budget hotels, especially if you're willing to get a room in a shared apartment. [Book AirBnB →](#)

There are even a few LGBT-oriented booking sites like [misterb&b](#) with listings from gay hosts for gay guests where you can either rent a whole apartment or a private room in a shared apartment.

Understanding Austin's gay scene is much more easily done with the help of a local and apartment sharing is one of the best ways to meet someone living in the city who knows how things work, where and when are the best nights to go out, and what places to eat at and which to avoid.

Sightseeing & Activities in Austin

[Texas State Capitol](#) – the capitol building with its famous rotunda and (underground) capitol extension are set on 51 acres in downtown Austin. Visitors can enjoy a free guided tour of the interior, visitor galleries, legislative library, exhibits and significant spaces, the Agricultural Museum, gift shop and restaurant. [Book tour →](#)

[Zilker Park](#) – recreational park comprising 351 acres in South Austin where Barton Creek breaks away from the Colorado River. It features picnic sites, the Austin Nature and Science Center, Zilker Botanical Gardens, Zilker Hillside Theater and signature events like a kite festival, summer musical and the holiday trail of lights centered around the 155-foot Zilker Holiday Tree. [Book tour →](#)

[Lady Bird Lake](#) – this section of the Colorado river looks more like a river than a lake and was created by constructing Longhorn Dam in 1960. Today, it's the perfect place for hiking and biking with trails around the lake and a boardwalk, stand-up paddle boarding, canoeing and kayaking and river cruises. [Book tour →](#)

[Barton Springs Municipal Pool](#) – within Zilker Park, this 3-acre pool is fed from underground springs that maintain an average temperature of 68-70 degrees making it great for swimming any day of the year. Depths range from 0 to 18 feet and it's surrounded by grassy areas to lay out and enjoy the sun.

[Congress Avenue Bridge \(Austin Bats\)](#) – this bridge crosses over Lady Bird Lake and is home to Austin's beloved Mexican Free-Tailed Bat population from late March to early fall. The nightly bat flight takes place around and just after sunset, but arrive early to get a spot to watch the hundreds of thousands of bats take flight. [Book tour →](#)

Restaurants & Cafes in Austin

[Perry's Steakhouse](#) – from a modest meat market to locations beyond Texas, this is a chic, upscale steakhouse with award-winning dishes. Located downtown in the historic Norwood Tower, Perry's is known for its handcrafted cocktails and award-winning steaks as well as Perry's Famous Pork Chop.

[South Congress Cafe](#) – serving up southwest inspired favorites, this local eatery has a modern dining room and large outdoor patio. Stop in for happy hour Monday through Friday and enjoy daily drink specials, brunch and dinner menus as well as an extensive cocktail list.

[Hopdoddy Burger Bar](#) – this is not just another burger place. Established in 2010 with a commitment to using the highest quality ingredients and unique and delicious burger concoctions, drop by for hand-crafted burgers on fresh baked buns, hand-cut fries, craft beer and boozy milkshakes.

[Trudy's](#) – this no-frills restaurant and bar has been cooking up Tex-Mex dishes like enchiladas, nachos, and tacos since 1977 and was even voted best margarita. Come in early to enjoy breakfast upstairs, have a drink on their patio with happy hour and daily drink specials and watch the game on TVs inside and out.

[Uchi](#) – translating from the Japanese word for “house,” the original location is in a refurbished South Austin bungalow. This non-traditional take on Japanese food is artfully created by James Beard Award-winning Chef and Owner, Tyson Cole. Enjoy the daily sake social and savor the core and vegetarians menus.

Austin Gay Bars

[Cheer Up Charlie's](#) – vegan bar embracing the queer community, this is everybody's space to enjoy daily happy hour and drink specials like organic juice blend cocktails and kombucha on tap. Relax in the large outdoor space with a parachute-shaded patio to chill out to music and hang out at nightly events.

[Rain on 4th](#) – located in Austin's historic Warehouse District, this popular upscale gay lounge has been serving signature cocktails and small bites since 2004. Check their Facebook page for updates on themed [parties](#) like karaoke nights, Thursday night bingo and weekend drag shows.

[Sellers Underground](#) – a visit to this gay bar located on West 4th Street in the Warehouse District will take you back in time with its 1960's mode-style furniture in a sleek and urban space. Enjoy lounge seating, [party](#) games like Jenga, refreshing drinks, friendly bartenders, happy hour and Sunday funday.

[The Iron Bear](#) – a bar for bears that’s proudly bear owned and operated, yet open to everyone. Leave your drama at the door and come in to relax with a cold drink or take your shirt off and dance all night. Themed nights include Saturday house and electric music, karaoke nights, Sunday Fundays and Musical Mondays.

[Highland Lounge](#) – gay lounge and night club featuring guest DJs, large dance floor, light shows and an outdoor patio. Open Wednesday through Sunday for late night karaoke, weekend drag shows and other themed nights. Check their Facebook page for the latest updates.

[Oilcan Harry’s](#) – Austin’s oldest gay bar open 7 days a week. Here you’ll find classy cocktails, the hottest gogo boys and a large venue with a dance area and lounge space, a disco ball and TV screens. Enjoy happy hour specials, trivia nights, the Super Sunday Divas show and other themed nights and events.

Austin Gay Clubs & Parties

[Lesbutante and the Boss](#) – Austin’s premier lesbian event producers, Kelly Frances and Michelle Solorzano Daly (aka Mitch), host monthly events for the LGBTQ community including ladies' night on every second Friday, pop-up monthly happy hours and the Official Women’s Pride Party.

[Guerrilla Queer Bar](#) – the official “queer grrrl promoters” in Austin, they take over straight bars and venues for queer AF happy hours and dance parties that are trans-positive, all-gender-inclusive, anti-racist, pro-makeout spaces. Check out the Austin Chronicle’s Gay Place on Fridays for updates.

Gay Events in Austin

[Austin Pride](#) – organized by the Austin Gay and Lesbian Pride Foundation, this celebration of Austin’s LGBTQ community takes place in August at Fiesta Gardens drawing hundreds of thousands to attend and participate in the festival and parade that proudly marches throughout the city.

[Austin Black Pride](#) – created in 2016 with queer people of color in mind, it provides spaces and programming that caters to the unique needs of the Black LGBTQI+ community. Join them for events, workshops and presentations throughout the year with special programming during Pride Month in June.

[Austin International Drag Festival](#) – for a weekend every November, one hotel is transformed into The Drag Village with events like performances and panels to educate, support and promote the drag artist community by means of resources and opportunities at showcases, festivals and other mediums.

[San Antonio](#) – about an hour and a half drive southeast of Austin, you'll find a large modern city with a rich colonial past. This includes a UNESCO world heritage site of Spanish colonial missions and the famous Alamo in downtown. A storied history is matched with a confluence of celebrated cultures with heritage events throughout the year. From a cruise along the San Antonio River to breathtaking views from the iconic Tower of the Americas, San Antonio has a little something for everyone. [Book tour →](#)

[Fredericksburg](#) – just over an hour and a half west of Austin, this small town in the Texas Hill Country is known for its wineries and German heritage. Learn about its European roots at the Pioneer Museum, stroll through the town square called Marktplatz, visit the replica of a 19th century German church and visit the National Museum of the Pacific War featuring WWII exhibits. Whether you want to enjoy the great outdoors or shop the Main Street boutiques, you're sure to find an activity, restaurant or event that speaks to you.

[Book tour →](#)

[Waco](#) – an hour and a half drive south of Austin, this central Texas city near the Brazos River was founded in 1849. Attractions include the Cameron Park Zoo, Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum, Dr Pepper Museum (where it was invented), Texas Sports Hall of Fame and Waco Mammoth National Monument (a 100-plus acre stretch of wooded parkland along the Bosque River). For fans of Chip and Joanna Gaines, your visit wouldn't be complete without a trip to Magnolia Market at the Silos. [Book tour →](#)