

Bluebonnets and Sunshine : Visiting San Antonio  
Forensic Genealogy Institute  
March 7-9, 2017

Are you ready for bluebonnets and sunshine?

San Antonio is more than the Alamo! If you've never visited San Antonio, then you're in for a real treat during FGI in 2017. You'd never guess this is the third largest city in Texas because this lovely sprawling city does not have a downtown area dense with skyscrapers. Instead, downtown has numerous wonderful walking areas where one can enjoy the unique Texas-German-Hispanic flair that makes this city famous.



Conveniently located in the heart of the city, the beautifully restored historic Menger Hotel is FGI headquarters for the week. The front door of the Menger is just steps from Alamo plaza where the historic buildings and museum are free for touring on beautiful park grounds filled with soaring live oak trees. We were just here the last week of October and temps were in the mid-80s every day, so plan to enjoy some outdoor time while here.



FGI will be held in the beautiful and historic Menger Hotel established in 1859. We don't have much in the way of old buildings in Texas so it's with great pleasure that we enjoy the beautifully renovated Menger. In most parts of Texas we tend to think of anything built in the 1920s as about as old



as it gets, so truly historic buildings are a real treasure. Just walking into the lobby is a delight for the eyes. In the hotel lobby is the entrance to a unique miniature toy soldier store with dioramas of every possible historical era. This place is for serious collectors, but it's fun to window shop.

In the opposite direction from the Alamo, the Riverwalk is just a couple of short blocks from the Menger. The Riverwalk is distinctive to San Antonio. Over two miles of broad walkways line the San Antonio River loaded with dozens of unique shops, restaurants, and a few museums. Whether you're in the mood for moderately priced Tex-Mex, or want to splurge on the unique offerings created by gourmet chefs, you'll find something to meet your taste and budget. If you want a special dinner out, save up and make reservations for Boudro's Texas Bistro. Pricey, but yum. The river boat tours are affordable and the guides provide history and interesting facts throughout the tour.



March high temperatures average in the 70s, but can be in the 80s and 90s, so you won't usually need a lot of winter clothes for walking around. You'll probably just need a light jacket for evenings.

Spring wildflowers will just be starting to bloom although it'll be a bit early for prime bluebonnet viewing in the Hill Country. Rainfall the previous fall determines how well and when the bluebonnets will bloom, so it's always a guessing game to be there when the flowers are at their best. One of Lady Bird Johnson's pet projects was lining our Texas highways with wildflowers and millions of people have enjoyed the result.

If you have time to add a day or two on either end of your trip it is just about an hour drive to Fredericksburg in the heart of the Hill Country, and Texas





Wine Country (yes, we have a mini-Napa Valley here.) Not quite as beautiful, but hey, this is Texas scrub country. Our favorite winery is Torre di Pietra about ten miles outside of Fredericksburg on the Wine Highway (290). It's not our favorite because of the wine, but because they have live music and an outdoor dance floor.

Fredericksburg was settled by German immigrants in the 1850s, and you can get wonderful German food here including locally made wurst. For a small fee you can walk through the museum buildings of a typical frontier German settlement. There are a couple of nice beer gardens town, some with live music.



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You'll also want to visit the National Museum of the Pacific War. How'd that end up in Fredericksburg? Well, it seems Admiral Nimitz was a hometown boy. The WWII reenactments performed on special dates are worth the trip. The guy with the flame thrower scared us out of our seats.

Just outside of Fredericksburg is the reconstructed frontier Fort Martin Scott adjacent to the brand new Texas Ranger's Heritage Center. That's the infamous law enforcement Texas Rangers, not the baseball team. When we were there last year there wasn't much built yet, but it's going to be pretty impressive when finished. You can walk to both the Fort and the grounds of the Heritage Center in one stop.



Hope this little guide enhances your upcoming trip to San Antonio!

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