

A Little Bit of Heaven

by Colleen Brooks



When traveling through Texas Hill Country, there is certainly no shortage of places to explore and things to do. Often, the rides through this beautiful landscape are just as memorable as the destinations themselves! These three towns each offer something different. Rest assured there's something to be explored and experienced for everyone!



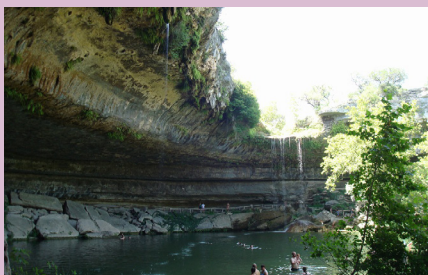
Gruene was once an old cotton town until it suffered the hardships of its cotton gin burning down, the boll weevil blight, and The Great Depression. Its buildings were shuttered for decades until an architectural student discovered them in 1974. Realizing their historical significance, he started the chain of events that led to this quaint little town being added to the National Register of Historic Places, which began its resurgence. Gruene is home to Texas' oldest dance hall, Gruene Hall.

Gruene Hall is still going strong with plenty of live music, their packed photo wall showcasing legends that have performed there such as Garth Brooks, Willie Nelson, and George Strait. The Gristmill now occupies the old cotton gin building, and offers spectacular dining views. There are several other fabulous restaurants, quaint shops, a general store with ice cream and an old fashioned soda fountain, and the Grapevine a wine tasting room. Gruene also offers river activities for the family to enjoy, in addition to monthly market days.

There is also plenty for visitors of all ages in New Braunfels. With a population of over 63,000 New Braunfels is home to beautiful Landa park, a children's museum, the Snake Farm Park, Texas Ski Ranch, and the

Alamo Drafthouse Cinema. New Braunfels offers abundant water sports & tubing down the Comal and the Guadalupe.

Perhaps its most popular attraction among children is its waterpark, Schlitterbahn. Schlitterbahn is 65 acres of water park paradise with waterslides and chutes, a wave pool and water coasters. For the more serene, downtown New Braunfels offers plenty of antiques, small museums, German fare and shopping. Natural Bridge Caverns, located just outside of New Braunfels, is a comfortable 70 degrees year-round and is a great way to cool off on a hot Texas day.



Stepping into Wimberley is like stepping back in time. Beautiful hills, lush greenery, charming shops, and eateries are plentiful in this small town. Wimberley is home to Blue Hole, a popular swimming hole with towering century-old cypress trees. Visitors can also swim at Jacob's Well, and at dusk visit Wimberley's own walk-in movie theater, the Corral. Those more vertically inspired can climb Mount Baldy or Prayer Mountain, as it's also called. Its 218 steps will reward you with a breathtaking view of this charming town and the surrounding Hill Country. Cypress Creek and the Blanco River converge in Wimberley, so it's a great place to spend an idyllic day relaxing in the water. Once you dry off head on over to Wimberley Valley Winery to enjoy a glass of wine.

So many places, so little time. Don't say we didn't warn you - one will definitely capture a special place in your heart!