

Our Great Texas Hill Country

by Colleen Brooks



At long last, the return of spring! A time when the Texas Hill Country is blessed with abundant sunshine and an ever-changing landscape of wildflowers. The bluebonnets, Indian paintbrushes, Indian blankets, and the Drummond phlox all await their audience as they prepare to display their magnificent colors. You will take notice, won't you?

A lovely place for a spring picnic is at New Braunfels' Landa Park. Here you can play a round of mini-golf, ride the paddleboats and the children's train, and hike the trails. New on the scene in New Braunfels is Guadalupe Brewing Company, which pairs well with a visit to Cooper's Old Time Pit Bar-B-Que. Finally, if you're looking to get pampered, give Massage Heights a call. They are new to the Creekside Shopping Center and have ten soothing massage rooms which can easily accommodate any traveler needing a little downtime.

The historic district of Gruene is very enchanting when spring is in bloom! Stroll around the quaint shops, visit their market days (held on the third full weekend of every month), and dine on their patios that overlook the beautiful Guadalupe Riv-

er. You can find these relaxing views paired with fabulous food and drinks at the Gruene River Grill, The Gristmill, or Cantina del Rio. Texas' oldest dance hall, Gruene Hall, has a great lineup planned this spring, which includes Loretta Lynn, Leann Rimes, Roger Creager, Stoney Larue, and Bob Schneider. Just a few steps away at The Grapevine, you can sample good Texas wines and craft beer at their "Come and Taste It" event on the third Thursday of every month.

Taking a drive from Gruene to Wimberley is a must during the wildflower season! There's plenty to do once you arrive in Wimberley, including climbing the steps at Mt. Baldy to get a panoramic view of the Wimberley Valley, or walking the grounds at Blue Hole Park. Market Days is the first Saturday of every month. The EmilyAnn Theatre and Gardens will host their widely-anticipated Butterfly Festival on April 22. Also that weekend, the Wimberley Valley Art League will host their 9th annual Artsfest (April 22-23) at the Waters Point Retreat (also known as Rio Bonito). There are also numerous art galleries and shops on the square in addition to Wimberley Valley Winery, and Wimberley Glass Works, to also keep you occupied. For a meal with a view, visit The Leaning Pear, I'noz deck, or Chef Jay's Back Porch.

To take this gorgeous "wildflower ride" between Gruene and Wimberley, Take FM 306 from Gruene to Purgatory Road. Follow Purgatory Road to the end and make a right onto RR 32. About a mile down, RR32 will end at RR 12. Make a left onto RR 12 and you'll head into Wimberley. This is one of my favorite rides this time of year! Enjoy!

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