

TAKE THE PLUNGE!

It can get a bit warm during a Texas summer. Weeks on end with 3-digit temperatures is enough to put a bit of sweat on any brow. But fear not - the Hill Country has more than a few rivers, springs and lakes to take the edge off the heat. From the banks of the Guadalupe River and tubing in Gruene to the springs in San Marcos there are lots of ways to take the plunge into a bit of cool water. This list of favorite swimmin' holes is hardly comprehensive - there are lots of options not listed here but this is a pretty good place to start. Many of the best plunges are in Texas State Parks. If you are going to visit the state sites, you might want to look into a yearly pass for considerable savings. Remember to take your trash with you and help keep Texas rivers & springs clean and ready for the next visitor. You can check texasheartbeat.com for more aquatic adventures. Stay wet.

FRIO RIVER IN CONCAN

The spring-fed Frio River offers crystal clear water and, depending on the flow, some of the best kayaking and swimming in Central Texas. With a variety of in and out points on the river, you can decide how long you want to stay in the water before hopping in.

With lots of accommodations and only a hop skip and jump from Garner State Park, staying cool is a breeze. Local counties may be dry so be sure to fill your ice chest on the way to the river.

BLANCO STATE PARK

Blanco State Park, along a mile of the Blanco River, is a 104.6-acre park on the southern edge of Blanco, Texas. A favorite for decades with locals, the park has many amenities including camping, picnicking, screened shelters, swimming, tubing, nature trails, and a wildlife viewing station. Its less than an hour from both San Antonio and Austin. The fishin' is almost as good as the swimmin' with anglers casting for bass, catfish, sunfish and rainbow trout (stocked in winter).

HAMILTON POOL

This Travis County plunge is so popular that reservations are required to jump in. In the summer, due to the proximity to Austin, the park is packed with sun seekers. The grotto features a 50-foot waterfall into an emerald green pool. Ferns and moss adorn the roof of the grotto giving it a jungle-like experience. Hamilton Pool is part of the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve and is a protected environment.



MEDINA RIVER

Up Medina and Bandera way is the Medina River which meanders for miles through a canopy of old cypress trees that afford plentiful shade on your downstream journey. To say it's been a local favorite is underlined by the fact the river was named in 1689. The Medina is primarily fed by springs that bubble up from the Balcones Fault, keeping the water cool year round.



GARNER STATE PARK

Garner State Park is probably the most popular natural water destination in the Texas Hill Country. From Spring Break until the onset of Fall, the park is floating thousands of sun-loving rafters, kayakers and tubers. Be sure to bring your own alcoholic beverages and lots of sunscreen.



INKS LAKE STATE PARK

Ink's Lake State Park has it all - you can swim (no lifeguards on duty), boat, water ski, scuba dive and fish to your heart's content. The park also has a large, no-wake zone for paddling. There are 9 miles of hiking trails and is also home to the famous Devil's Waterhole. You can rent paddle boats, canoes, one- to two-person kayaks, life vests and paddles at the park store.

