

Our Great Texas Hill Country

by Colleen Brooks



Welcome to Texas Hill Country, where there is always an abundance of things to see and do! You don't want to miss these charming areas:

New Braunfels is home to the **McKenna Children's Museum, Natural Bridge Wildlife Ranch, Natural Bridge Caverns, and Landa Park**. Plan to picnic at Landa park and enjoy a small hike, paddleboats, a round of mini-golf, and the children's train. New Braunfels' biggest annual event, **Wurstfest**, will be held November 2nd – the 11th and will offer plenty of authentic German fare, beer, and chicken dancing.

If you prefer a more subdued atmosphere, head on over to **Krause's Café and Biergarten, Cooper's Old Time Pit Bar-B-Que, or McAdoo's Seafood Company** – all offer fantastic fare. Also, no trip to New Braunfels is complete without stopping into Texas' oldest bakery, Naegelin's. They've been using the same family recipes since 1868, proving there's no need to mess with perfection!



The historic district of Gruene was once an old cotton gin town until it was devastated by fire, the boll weevil, and The Great Depression. Its buildings were shuttered for many years until an architectural student discovered them in 1974. This started its rebirth and today, it's a charming area that rightly proclaims a spot on the National Register of Historic Places.

Gruene is home to Texas' oldest dance hall, Gruene Hall, which has seen its share of notable performances over the years such as George Strait, Willie Nelson, and Garth Brooks. The collection of photos that adorn its walls pay tribute to this amazing history.

The Gristmill Restaurant now occupies what's left of the former cotton gin building and offers spectacular dining views of the Guadalupe River, in addition to fantastic burgers, Texas-sized onion rings, and my personal favorite, "Gruene beans". Also, check out Gruene's best kept secret, Gruene Lake Village. This newer area offers boutiques, spas, fine dining at The Gruene Door Restaurant, a wine bar, and a martini lounge.

Wimberley is a thriving arts community with unique shops and galleries, live theater, Wimberley Glass Works, and the Cypress Creek Reserve Rum Distillery. It's also home to Wimberley Zip Line, where you can get a bird's eye view of the Wimberley Valley. Nestled in the scenic back roads of Wimberley is one of its best kept secrets, Bella Vista Ranch. Here, you can tour their olive orchard and sample their oils, imported Italian balsamic vinegar, jam, and wine.

Not far down the road is the Driftwood Estate Winery, where a glass of wine and a beautiful hill country view await. When leaving the winery, take a right and set your GPS to the Salt Lick BBQ. They have been featured on the Food Network many times, and their aroma will greet you and begin tantalizing your senses long before you even pull in the driveway.

Fall is a spectacular time to be in the Hill Country! Enjoy your stay in our little bit of heaven.