



## My Drift

**Title: Austin Texas**

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I did a Google search on the most interesting cities in the United States. There were several conflicting answers but the general consensus follows:

**TOP 10 smartasset MOST INTERESTING CITIES**

Rank	Location	Population Growth	Pats per 10,000 Residents	Diversity	Artists, Museums, and Writers / Accountants	Index
1	San Francisco, CA	1.21%	4.57	0.75	0.110	86.39
2	New Orleans, LA	2.39%	5.93	0.53	0.123	82.12
3	Las Vegas, NV	1.54%	2.40	0.60	0.105	80.63
4	Austin, TX	2.43%	2.31	0.52	0.120	78.90
5	Washington, DC	2.06%	2.01	0.59	0.082	78.51
6	Honolulu, HI	0.84%	1.93	0.90	0.108	76.59
7	Oakland, CA	1.32%	0.98	0.79	0.110	74.85
8	Irvine, CA	3.20%	0.75	0.60	0.210	74.60
9	Seattle, WA	2.80%	1.51	0.52	0.117	74.27
10	New York, NY	0.74%	1.68	0.83	0.152	71.05

I have visited every city on this list except one. You guessed it! I have never been to Austin, Texas. How in the world did Austin make this list? Let's find out.

First of all, what makes a city interesting? Think about it. Here are my criteria:

- ✓ Must be exciting with many things to do.
- ✓ Must have many scenic sights to see.
- ✓ Must have great bars and restaurants.
- ✓ Must have fun new and interesting places to explore outside the downtown area.
- ✓ Must have friendly people who actually live in the city – not the suburbs.
- ✓ Must be fairly safe - not overrun with thugs and homeless people.
- ✓ Must be easy to get from one place to another.

**My top 10 interesting cities includes:**

**San Francisco, Las Vegas, Chicago, Seattle, Honolulu, New Orleans, Anchorage, New York, Dallas, and Miami.**

**Austin is the capital of Texas and the seat of Travis County with a population of 960,000. It is the 11th-most populous city in the United States and the 4th-most populous city in Texas after Houston (2,400,000), San Antonio (1,500,000), and Dallas (1,400,000). It is the fastest growing large city in the United States, the second most populous state capital after Phoenix, Arizona, and the southern-most state capital in the contiguous 48 states. Located in Central Texas in the foothills of Texas Hill Country, the city is home to numerous lakes, rivers, and waterways including Lady Bird Lake, Barton Springs, McKinney Falls, the Colorado (Texas) River, Lake Travis, and Lake Walter E. Long. It is the cultural and economic center of the Austin–Round Rock metropolitan statistical area, which had an estimated population of 2,200,000.**



**As you can see, Austin is centrally located. Fort Worth/Dallas is 190 miles north – Houston is 165 miles to the east – San Antonio is 80 miles south – and El Paso is 575 miles to the west.**

**In the 1830s, pioneers began to settle the area in central Austin along the Colorado (Texas) River. In 1839, the site was officially chosen to replace Houston as the new capital of the Republic of Texas and was incorporated under the name Waterloo. Shortly thereafter, the name was changed to Austin in honor of Stephen F. Austin, the "Father of Texas" and the republic's first secretary of state. The city subsequently grew throughout the 19th century and became a center for government and education with the construction of the Texas State Capitol and the University of Texas at Austin. After a lull in growth from the Great Depression, Austin resumed its development into a major city and, by the 1980s, it emerged as a national center for technology and business. A number of Fortune 500 companies have headquarters or regional offices in Austin, including Amazon.com, Apple Inc., Cisco, eBay, Google, IBM, Intel, Oracle**

Corporation, PayPal, Texas Instruments, 3M, and Whole Foods Market. Dell's worldwide headquarters is located in nearby Round Rock, a suburb of Austin.

Residents of Austin are known as Austinites. They include a diverse mix of government employees, college students, musicians, high-tech workers, blue-collar workers, and a vibrant LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) community. The city's official slogan promotes Austin as "The Live Music Capital of the World," a reference to the many musicians and live music venues within the city, as well as the long-running PBS TV concert series Austin City Limits. The city also adopted "Silicon Hills" as a nickname in the 1990s due to a rapid influx of technology and development companies. In recent years, some Austinites have also adopted the unofficial slogan "Keep Austin Weird," which refers to the desire to protect small, unique, and local businesses from being overrun by large corporations. In the late 19th century, Austin was known as the "City of the Violet Crown" because of the colorful glow of light across the hills just after sunset. Even today, many Austin businesses use the term "Violet Crown" in their name. Austin is known as a "clean-air city" for its stringent no-smoking ordinances that apply to all public places and buildings, including restaurants and bars.

U.S. News & World Report named Austin the #1 place to live in the U.S. for 2017. In 2016, Forbes ranked Austin #1 on its "Cities of the Future" list, then in 2017 named Austin the #1 "Next Biggest Boom Town in the U.S." Also in 2017, Forbes awarded the South River City neighborhood of Austin its #2 ranking for "Best Cities and Neighborhoods for Millennials". WalletHub named Austin the #6 best place in the country to live for 2017. The FBI ranks Austin as the #2 safest major city (over 500,000) in the U.S. after El Paso, Texas (population 840,000).

Half of the 10 fastest-growing cities (Austin, San Antonio, Houston, Dallas, and Fort Worth) in the US are in Texas, Why? Well, here are 7 good reasons:

1. **Jobs.** The main reason people move anywhere is for employment. Texas has plenty of high-wage, blue-collar jobs and jobs for university graduates.
2. **It's cheaper.** Texas has a relatively low cost of living, including consumer prices, utilities, and transport costs and, most importantly, housing prices.
3. **Homes.** There is an abundant supply of cheaper land, fewer regulations and a more friendly government than in most other states.
4. **Low taxes.** Texas is one of only seven states where residents pay no personal state income tax.
5. **Family-friendly.** Because of its good-value housing, Texas has been particularly popular with families, and cities like Austin have an above-average number of children.

6. **Texans are normal people. The state likes to proclaim itself as an unpretentious, down-to-earth place where people are easy to get along with.**
7. **And they're not going anywhere. People that move to Texas usually like it and have no desire to go anywhere else.**

**The racial composition of Austin is:**

- **White: 50%**
- **Hispanic or Latino: 34% (29% Mexican)**
- **African American: 8%**
- **Asian: 6%**
- **Two or More Races: 2%**

**Okay, I think we can see that the state of Texas has a lot of things going for it but what makes Austin so interesting?**

**Take a look at these pictures and then read my comments that follow.**



**Austin is a Clean, Growing, and Attractive City**



**Austin Skyline as seen from Lady Bird Lake**



**The Colorado (Texas) River runs through Austin**



**Small and Large Businesses Thrive in Austin**

**Every big city in America has a homeless problem but Austin is doing something about it and chances are good you will not see a homeless person when you visit Austin. Homelessness is down 30% from two years ago. What is Austin doing? Well, they have a plan and it is strictly enforced.**

1. They have enough shelter space to house every homeless person in Austin. Some of this shelter space is designated areas (out of the way) where the homeless can setup their tents. Bathrooms, showers, medical and social services are provided.
2. Austin has laws which prevent the homeless from sitting, lying, or setting up tents in ALL public areas of the city. These laws are strictly enforced. Violators are arrested and put in jail or escorted out of town.
3. Homeless people who obey the law are issued an ID card which entitles them to stay in shelters, free meals, medical care, mental evaluations, and other social services. If you don't have this ID card, life on the streets in Austin is almost impossible.

**(WHY CAN'T THE CITY OF HONOLULU DO SOMETHING LIKE THIS? I WILL TELL YOU WHY – WE HAVE LITERAL GUTLESS GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WHO ARE AFRAID TO DO ANYTHING.)**



Austin Bar Area on Sixth Street



There are a lot of Large Houses in the Suburbs



The University of Texas has the nation's eighth-largest single-campus enrollment, with over 50,000 undergraduate and graduate students and over 24,000 faculty and staff



Darrell K Royal–Texas Memorial Stadium has been home to the University of Texas at Austin Longhorns football team since 1924 - Capacity is 100,119

I've put together some of the best sights in the city, many of which combine Austin's gorgeous skyline, architecture, rivers, lakes, and natural landscape. And you thought all of Texas was flat with a lot of sagebrush, jackrabbits, cows, and a bunch of cowboys.



The Pennybacker Bridge in Austin is a through-arch bridge across Lake Austin which connects the northern and southern sections of the Loop 360 highway, also known as the "Capital of Texas Highway."



Hamilton Pool is a historic swimming hole located 3/4 mile upstream from its confluence with the Pedernales River. Hamilton Creek spills out over limestone outcroppings to create a 50-foot waterfall as it plunges into the head of a steep box canyon.



Lake Travis



Lake Walter E. Long



McKinney Falls



Austin Cowboys, Rodeo, and Cowgirls (Plus several Longhorn Cattle Herds)



**This great nation has everything from traditional little beach towns to quaint old mountain towns. And THEN there's Austin, Texas, hands-down one of the most interesting, strangest, quirkiest, funkiest, and weirdest cities in the United States.**

**Austin doesn't take itself too seriously, and that's precisely why it's so awesome. Here, tacos count as breakfast, toplessness is normal, and bats are one of the biggest sights locals will advertise without skipping a beat. Oh, and the people themselves are pretty awesome, too. Keep Austin Weird is the slogan adopted by the Austin Independent Business Alliance to promote small businesses in Austin. Well, the local population is doing everything they can to do just that.**



**Yes, Austin is the state capital, and there's a beautiful Capitol building to prove it. It's a large city yet it feels like a very quaint little town. Don't expect the fancy teacups-and-pearls version of Texas you've seen in movies. Austin is better described as the funky city that locals wanna "keep weird."**



**Texas State Capitol**



**People play BINGO with chicken sh\*t!! Seriously. Mosey on down to the Little Longhorn Saloon every Sunday and bet on where "Stella" the chicken will poop as she makes her way around the 54 squares for your chance to win BIG MONEY.**

**A bunch of old houses are the city's hippest bars. The historic bungalows on Rainey Street have been turned into bars and restaurants, along with their porches and backyards.**

**Banger's, a Sausage and Beer Garden, will pay for you to get a tattoo of their logo. Now that is customer appreciation.**

**Good coffee and good beer are served under the same roof. There are many Brew & Brew establishments in Austin.**

**Austin has perfected the breakfast taco, and the rest of the country shall be forever grateful.**

**Turtle racing is a totally normal hobby. If you didn't have much luck with "Stella" the chicken, you can head over to Little Woodrow's to try your luck in the Turtle Racing Ring.**



**Austin doesn't have sunsets. It has BAT-sets. Every summer night around sundown, up to 1.5 million Mexican free-tailed bats fly out from under the Congress Bridge. It's a classic sunset view, with a weird and awesome twist.**



**Cocktails and beer come freakishly cheap. Mimosas and Bloody Marys are \$3 a pop at most place. Ultra-strong margaritas are just \$6. Austin's most popular beer is Live Oak Brewing Co. – Hefeweizen brand.**





**Barton Springs**

**Topless swimming is legal at most Austin public pools. Visitors like to enjoy Barton Springs, which is filled with water from underground and one of Austin's most popular public swimming locations. Don't lie – you are looking for a topless lady swimmer. Right?**

**Hundreds of people visit a big pile of junk every day. Yes, the Cathedral of Junk stands quietly in the backyard of a small house on a suburban street on the south side of Austin. Unlike other busybody constructions that we've visited, this one blends with its neighborhood. From the street, it's invisible.**



**Cathedral of Junk**



**The Hula Hut**

**And finally, if you are from Hawaii, Austin has just the place for you. Aloha, Y' ALL! It is called the Hula Hut and overlooks beautiful Lake Austin.**

**Yup, you're a strange one, Austin... and that's why you are the 4<sup>th</sup> most interesting city in the United States. On my Top 10 list, I'm going to replace Dallas with Austin.**

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