

Eleven nearby destinations for spring days filled with river bends, walkable towns, quiet parks and unexpected finds.

By Alyssa Meinke • Photos by Sarah Beal

SPRING IN CENTRAL

Texas gently announces its arrival with wildflowers coloring the roadsides, creeks running a little fuller and families feeling the itch to get out of the house.

Before you plan a distant getaway for this year's spring break, consider our suggestions for close-to-home destinations.

We've spotlighted 11 sites scattered across the Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative service area. Odds are good you haven't visited them all.

In our illustration at right, you can find visual clues to all 11 of the parks, museums, trails and family-friendly attractions in

seven counties. Then read our brief guides to each destination. If you want to turn the visit into a day-trip-worthy adventure, we've added a short list of extra nearby and notable stops.

From limestone caverns and riverfront parks to historic cabins, orchards, quirky museums and walkable downtowns, these locations offer plenty of places to wander and discover. Kids can run, grandparents can reminisce, and travelers of all ages can enjoy a mix of nature, history and small-town charm.

Whether you just hit the highlights or pick and choose different destinations along the way, there are entertaining options to fit every schedule, interest and age.

SPOT THE SPRING GETAWAYS

See how many you can find! Circle the clues, submit your entry online, and you'll be entered for a chance to win a Yeti cooler. Learn more on Bluebonnet's social media or at bluebonnet.coop/springbreak.

Spring break is hiding in plain sight



Joe Stafford illustration

1 THE DINOSAUR PARK

Address: 893 Union Chapel Road, Cedar Creek

Hours: 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Wednesday–Sunday

Phone: 512-321-6262

Website: thedinopark.com

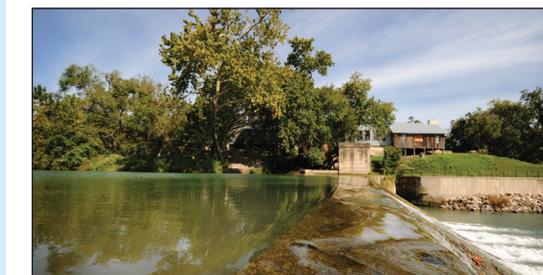
Admission: \$11 for adults and teens; \$10 for children ages 2 to 12; free for children under 2

What to expect: Walk along the shaded half-mile trail to view life-sized dinosaur statues, ranging in length from 2 to 123 feet, with realistic skin-color variations. Kids can dig for “fossils” and enjoy the playground. Bring a snack or lunch to eat at one of many picnic tables; browse the gift shop.



Tips for visitors: Bring a water bottle and comfortable shoes.

Nearby: Make a day of it in Cedar Creek with the Capital of Texas Zoo (family-friendly exhibits featuring local and exotic animals), Cedar Creek Park (a quiet spot for outdoor recreation) or Zip Lost Pines (ziplines and aerial adventures).



2 ZEDLER MILL MUSEUM & PARK

Address: 1170 S. Laurel Ave., Luling

Hours: 8 a.m.–3 p.m. daily

Phone: 512-227-1724

Website: cityofluling.net/273/Zedler-Mill-Historical-Museum

Admission: Free to public daily

What to expect: Walk on-site trails to admire the restored remnants of the mill; then look at artifacts inside the museum, read historical interpretive panels or use your phone to take an audio tour detailing the mill's early operations. The site offers landscaped grounds with walking paths, butterfly gardens, native shrubs and a picnic area overlooking the river.

Tip for visitors: Bring water and snacks for a relaxed riverside visit.

Nearby: The Fritz Zedler Home, Downtown Luling, Luling Oil Museum

FIND MORE SPRING BREAK IDEAS ON PAGES 18-20



3 WONDER WORLD CAVE & ADVENTURE PARK

Address: 1000 Prospect St., San Marcos

Hours: 10 a.m.-5 p.m. daily in spring

Phone: 512-392-6711

Website: wonderworldpark.com

Admission: Adult passes \$25-\$35; children's passes \$20-\$25; train ride \$16 for general admission visitors and \$12 for San Marcos residents

What to expect: Take a guided tour through Balcones Fault Line Cave to explore rock formations, crystal pools and ancient fossils. Visitors can hop on a train traveling through cascading waterfalls and visit the Texas Wildlife Petting Park.

Tips for visitors: Pack a lunch for indoor and outdoor picnic areas throughout the property; wear closed-toe shoes; bring a light jacket (cave is 72 degrees year-round).

Nearby: The San Marcos River, Rio Vista Park, Meadows Center for Water and the Environment



Lower Colorado River Authority photo

4 MCKINNEY ROUGHS NATURE PARK

Address: 1884 State Highway 71 W., Cedar Creek

Hours: Sunrise to sunset daily; varies seasonally

Phone: 512-303-5073

Website: lcraparks.com/parks/mckinney-roughs-nature-park

Admission: \$5 for adults; \$2 for adults 65 and older, as well as military and disabled; free for children under 12 and park pass holders; extra fees for adventure activities such as zip-lining

What to expect: Connect with nature by exploring 21 forested trails covering 17.6 miles. Travel by foot, bike, utility terrain vehicle or horseback to check out wildflower patches, river trails and overlooks, and native Central Texas flora and fauna. Optional adventure courses for a fee include a zip line and high ropes course.

Tips for visitors: Plan your route by studying the 1,140-acre park's map before you head out; pack a water bottle and wear comfortable walking shoes.

Nearby: Bastrop State Park, Lake Bastrop

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Connie Juarez photo

5 JAMES H. LONG RAILROAD PARK AND MUSEUM

Address: 100 NW First St., Smithville

Hours: 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday-Friday; contact the museum before visiting

Phone: 512-237-2313

Website: smithvilletx.org/parks

Admission: Free

What to expect: Exhibits trace Smithville's railroad history from 1886 from its earliest one-room office through the second and third depots and years of passenger service. Visit the park that features a playground nestled between two cabooses.

Tip for visitors: Capture photos of the historic cabooses in the outdoor park.

Nearby: Buescher State Park, Riverbend Park, Main Street



6 GIDDINGS VETERANS HONOR PARK

Address: 198 N. Montgomery Ave., Giddings

Hours: 5 a.m.-11 p.m. daily

Phone: 979-540-2710

Website: giddings.net/parks-of-giddings

Admission: Free

What to expect: Honor area veterans

by visiting the granite monuments and military fleet vehicles on display. Pickleball and tennis courts, a playscape and a splash pad are directly across the street for some fun in the sun.

Tip for visitors: Visit in the morning or late afternoon for shade and comfortable viewing.

Nearby: Lee County Museum at the Schubert-Fletcher House, Simmang Park



7 TEXAS WENDISH HERITAGE MUSEUM

Address: 1011 CR 212, Giddings

Hours: 1-5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday

Phone: 979-366-2441

Website: texaswendish.org/museum

Admission: \$5 for adults; free for children under 12

What to expect: Explore the rich history of Wendish immigrants who settled in Texas in the 1800s. The museum features artifacts, photographs, textiles and historic documents that trace the community's language, religion and traditions. Visitors can tour restored buildings, including a traditional log cabin and barn with antique farming tools, for a hands-on glimpse of 19th-century Wendish life.

Tip for visitors: The gift shop sells dried Wendish noodles you can use to make a delicious, traditional meal.



8 JOHN E. HEJL PARK AT DAVIDSON CREEK

Address: 560 Davidson Creek Park, Caldwell

Hours: Dawn to dusk daily

Phone: 979-567-3271

Website: caldwelldx.gov/parksandrec

Admission: Free

What to expect: Play a round of disc golf, practice your swing in the batting cages, or shoot hoops and play soccer on the courts and fields. Kids can splash in the water play area or climb at the playground while their families relax under covered pavilions with picnic tables and grills. Anglers can cast a line in any of the three fully stocked ponds, where fishing is free and open to the public (visitors must follow Texas Parks & Wildlife regulations).

Tip for visitors: Bring snacks or treats to enjoy a picnic.

Nearby: Bureson County Czech Heritage Museum, open on Saturdays

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9 TEXAS QUILT MUSEUM

Address: 140 W. Colorado St., La Grange

Hours: 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Thursday-Saturday

Phone: 979-968-3104

Website: texasquiltmuseum.org

Admission: \$10 for general admission; \$8 for seniors and students

What to expect:

Explore two restored 1890s buildings showcasing antique and contemporary quilts. Browse thousands of publications and rare textile samples in the Pearce Memorial Library, then step into an adjoining period garden inspired by early Central Texas city gardens. Nearby, a striking 13-by-85-foot mural highlights classic quilt designs. Kids can join a scavenger hunt to spot shapes and patterns throughout the galleries.

Tip for visitors: Free street parking nearby; restaurants within walking distance.

Nearby: Fayette Heritage Museum and Archives, Texas Heroes Museum, Polka Lovers Club of Texas Museum



11 BLUE BELL CREAMERY

Address: 1101 S. Blue Bell Road, Brenham

Hours: Visitor center, parlor and country store: 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday; observation deck open 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Monday-Friday

Phone: 800-327-8135

Website: bluebell.com

Admission: Free

What to expect: Take a self-guided tour through more than 100 years of the company's history at the Blue Bell Museum, where exhibits showcase vintage equipment, memorabilia and photos. From the observation deck, watch as daily ice cream flavors are produced and packaged, with an employee on hand to answer questions about the production process. After the tour, enjoy a scoop of your favorite ice cream flavor in the parlor; then browse the County Store for souvenirs.

Tip for visitors: Pack a cooler — the parlor often features flavors you won't find in stores yet.

Nearby: Old Baylor Park, Antique Rose Emporium



Blue Bell Creameries photo

10 WASHINGTON-ON-THE-BRAZOS STATE HISTORIC SITE

Address: 23400 Park Road 12, Washington

Hours: Grounds: 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m. daily; Washington Townsite Experience, Star of the Republic Museum and Barrington Living History Farm: 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Wednesday-Sunday

Phone: 936-878-2214

Website: wheretexasbecametexas.org

Admission: \$10 for adults; \$6 for children ages 6-17, free for children 5 and younger

What to expect: The 293-acre site is home to Independence Hall, where delegates gathered in 1836 to sign the Texas Declaration of Independence while the Alamo was under siege. Visitors can enjoy Barrington Living History Farm, a self-paced experience showcasing plantation life, and the Star of the Republic Museum, which highlights early settlers and the diverse communities of the Republic of Texas era.

Tip for visitors: Bring sunscreen and water — much of the site is outdoors.



Keep an eye on the mailbox for your

PROXY FORM

One of the benefits of being a **Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative** member is having a voice in cooperative business, including voting on agenda items and the Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting.

This month, members will begin receiving blue envelopes containing their **proxy forms** in the mail. Members who are unable to attend the Annual Meeting may designate another Bluebonnet member to vote on their behalf.



Make sure your voice is heard by submitting your proxy form by May 5 or by attending the Annual Meeting in person on Tuesday, May 12, at The Silos on 77 event center in Giddings.

THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR PROXY FORM

- If you cannot attend the Annual Meeting, you may assign your vote to another member who will attend or to the Proxy Committee.
- The Proxy Committee is made up of directors who are not up for election.
- If you assign your vote to another member, legibly print the name of the person who will serve as your proxy.
- Your account number is printed in the upper left corner of the proxy form mailed to you.
- On the proxy form, print the name on your account exactly as it appears on your Bluebonnet bill.
- Be sure to sign your proxy form. Unsigned proxies cannot be counted.
- If you cannot find your proxy form, you may pick one up at any Bluebonnet member service center. You must write your account number on the form. Your account number can be found in the upper left corner of your bill, below the account name.
- Print clearly and sign your proxy form so your vote can be counted.

Find a complete guide to your **PROXY FORM** online at bluebonnet.coop/proxy



YOU got THIS

Bluebonnet



More ways to manage your account any time you want.

Bluebonnet offers easy-to-use self-service tools that put you in control to set up payments, track electric use, update your contact information or request services.

SIMPLE. SECURE. ON YOUR SCHEDULE.

We've got easy tips and tools to help you manage your Bluebonnet account. Learn more at bluebonnet.coop/yougotthis.

Powering improvements Bluebonnet, LCRA grants boost local nonprofits

BLUEBONNET ELECTRIC Cooperative and the Lower Colorado River Authority recently provided grants to several community nonprofit organizations and projects within the cooperative's service area as part of LCRA's Community Grants program. Bluebonnet, one of LCRA's wholesale electric customers, partners with LCRA to support its members and communities. The next round of applications for community grants will be accepted in July 2026. For more information about this program and the application, visit lra.org/grants.



A \$25,000 grant will help the Cedar Creek Schuetzen Verein, a historic community organization, renovate a portion of Carmine Hall. The community grant, along with more than \$225,000 in matching funds from the organization, will support rebuilding the lower section of the hall, including updates to the kitchen, seating, storage, restrooms, flooring and HVAC system. The work will ensure that Carmine Hall continues to serve as the primary gathering place for local families and organizations. Pictured, from left, are Sherry Murphy, Bluebonnet's Giddings-area community representative; Kyle Merten, Bluebonnet's Brenham-area community representative; Stephanie Lamoreaux, Carmine Hall secretary; David Kieke, Carmine Hall treasurer; Byron Balke, Bluebonnet Board assistant secretary/treasurer; Marlene Waak, Carmine Hall board member; Carol Freeman, LCRA board member; Conway Waak, Carmine Hall board member; Margaret D. "Meg" Voelter, LCRA board member; Tom Drummond, Carmine Hall board member; Vicki Drummond, Carmine Hall vice president of external affairs; Cherrie Wines, Carmine Hall president; Wade Eilers, City of Carmine mayor; Tamara Neese, Carmine Hall member; and Kate Ramzinski, LCRA regional affairs representative.



A \$13,219 grant will help the Carmine Volunteer Fire Department replace its generator with a new, upgraded model to allow the fire station to operate during power outages. The community grant, along with \$3,514 in matching funds from the department, will fund the purchase and installation of the new generator. The upgrade will help ensure firefighters can maintain 24/7 operations during outages, including receiving emergency calls, refilling air packs, charging devices and maintaining critical communications. Pictured, from left, are Kate Ramzinski, LCRA regional affairs representative; Sherry Murphy, Bluebonnet's Giddings-area community representative; Byron Balke, Bluebonnet Board assistant secretary/treasurer; Cooper Meaders, VFD secretary; Margaret D. "Meg" Voelter, LCRA board member; Ryan Smith, VFD captain; Carol Freeman, LCRA board member; Chris Carmean, VFD fire chief; Dennis Gerland, VFD president; Daryl Ray, VFD vice president; and Kyle Merten, Bluebonnet's Brenham-area community representative.



That one recipe everyone loves

ENTER TO WIN!

Share your recipe for a chance to win a **Ninja Foodi** power pitcher system and a **Typically Texas Cookbook!**

Email your recipe to socialmedia@bluebonnet.coop by 5 p.m. March 31.

One winner will be selected. Recipes could be chosen for publication by Bluebonnet. Must be a Bluebonnet member to win. Find out more at bluebonnet.coop/recipes.

Bluebonnet